

UNIT SIX

PERSONALITY

Meaning of Personality

- Personality has been defined in many different ways, but psychologists generally view personality as :-the unique pattern of enduring **thoughts,**
feelings, and
actions that characterize a person.

Cont

- the **distinctive and characteristic** patterns of *thought, emotion, and behavior* that make up an individual's personal style of interacting with the physical and social environment.
- A ***relatively stable set of characteristics that influences an individual's behavior***

Defining Some Terms

- **Personality:** A person's unique and relatively stable behavior patterns; the consistency of who you are, have been, and will become
- **Character:** **Personal characteristics** that have been judged or evaluated
- **Temperament:** Hereditary aspects of personality, including sensitivity, moods, irritability, and adaptability
- **Personality Trait:** Stable qualities that a person shows in most situations
- **Personality Type:** People who have several traits in common

6.2. Theories of Personality

- ❖ **Psychoanalytic Theory**
- ❖ **Trait Theory**
- ❖ **Humanistic Theory**

6.2.1. The psychoanalytic theory of personality

Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality: Mapping the Unconscious Mind

- Sigmund Freud, an Austrian physician, developed **psychoanalytic theory** in the early 1900s.
- According to Freud's theory, conscious experience is **only a small part** of our psychological makeup and experience.
- He argued that much of our behavior is motivated by the **unconscious**, a part of the personality that contains the memories, knowledge, beliefs, feelings, urges, drives, and instincts of which the individual is not aware.

Cont

- According to Freud, personality is formed within ourselves, arising from basic **inborn needs, drives, and characteristics**.

- Psychodynamic theories:

Focus on the inner workings of personality, especially internal ***conflicts and struggles***

- He argued that people are in constant conflict between their biological urges (drives) and the need to tame them.

STRUCTURING PERSONALITY

- In Freud's view, personality has three parts which serve a different function and develop at different times:

I. Id

II. Ego

III. Superego

- ❖ According to Freud, the way these three parts of personality interact with one another determines the personality of an individual.

The ID

Operates according to the *pleasure principle*

- The first and most primitive part of the personality.
- The unorganized, inborn part of personality.
- A completely unconscious amoral part of the personality that exists at birth.
- Acts under the pleasure principle- immediate gratification, not willing to compromise.
- Containing all of the basic biological drives hunger, thirst, sex aggression.
 - 2 competing instincts:
 - ❑ Life (sexual) – libid
 - ❑ Death (aggressive)

The Ego

Operates according to the *reality principle*

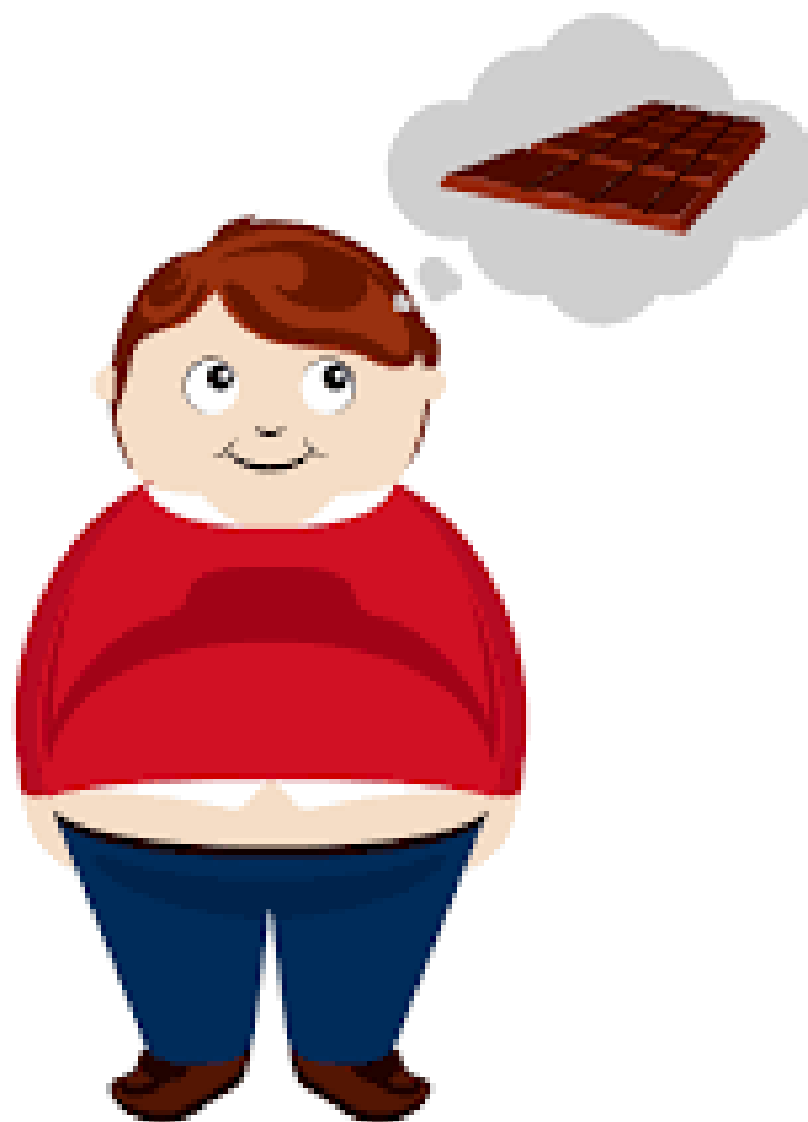
- Is the organized, realistic portion of the psyche
- Arises in first 3 years of life
- Mediates between ID and Superego
- Rational part of mind
 - you can't always get what you want

The Superego

Moral Conscience

The moralist and idealistic part of personality.

- Develops around age 5
 - Stores and enforces rules
 - Inner voice that tells you not to do something or that what you did was wrong
 - Two aspects (subsystems) of superego:
 - Ego Ideal = parents approve/value
 - Conscience = **parents disapproval**
- part of the personality that makes people pride when they do the right thing and guilt, or moral anxiety when they do the wrong thing



Our personality is a conflict between our unconscious Id and our superego (our moral sense) and our ego (our sense of reality).

■ This constant conflict between them is managed by psychological defense mechanisms.



Freud's Psychoanalysis: Defense mechanisms

➤ Defense mechanism reduce/redirect anxiety by distorting reality

1 Denial:- Most primitive; refusing to believe, denying reality; usually occurs with death and illness.

- claiming and believing that something which is actually true is false.

For example, The dying patient denies the fact of his illness. Or your wife died last night, but, you believe that your wife is still alive.



2. Repression : - pushing unacceptable and anxiety-producing thoughts into the unconscious; involves intentional forgetting but **not** consciously done; repressed material can be memories or unacceptable impulses.

Example:- Woman doesn't recall being raped.

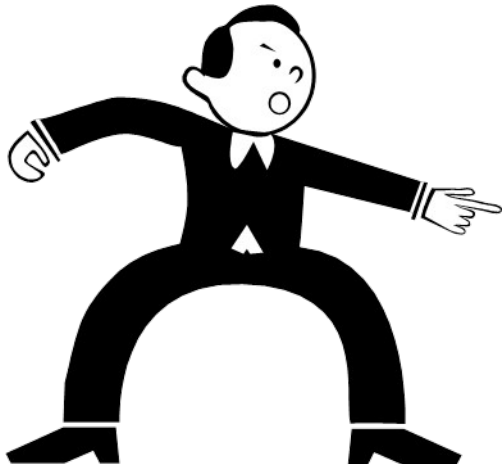
- Ethiopian husband who is defeated by his wife will not remember/ talk it out again.



3. Projection

- Projection :- attributing one's own unacceptable feelings or beliefs to others;

Example :- A husband forgets to pay a bill and blames his wife for not giving it to him earlier.



Conti....

4. Rationalization : -Justifying personal actions by giving “rational” but false reasons for them

Example :- If we fail a test, blaming a teacher for poor exam score

- If our favorite candidate doesn't win the election, we say that it's for the best anyway.
- If we don't complete an assignment, we think the teacher was unfair to have given the assignment.



5. Reaction Formation: Impulses are repressed and the opposite behavior is exaggerated.

E.g. treating someone you strongly dislike in an excessively friendly manner in order to hide your true feelings.

- replacing an anxiety-producing feeling with its exact opposite, typically going overboard; repressed thoughts appear as mirror opposites.



Cont..

6. Regression: involves reverting to immature behaviors that have relieved anxiety in the past.

- acting in ways characteristic of earlier life stages of personality

Example: a boy who has just entered school may go back to sucking his thumb or wetting the bed

5



Cont...

7. Displacement: -expressing feelings toward a person who is less threatening than the person who is the true target of those feelings.

Example:- A husband, angry at the way his boss treated him, shouts at his children.



8. Sublimation: substitute socially acceptable behavior for unacceptable impulses.

Example;- *an aggressive person may sublimate his aggressive behavior in participating in a boxing game.*

- Playing video games instead of getting in a fight.



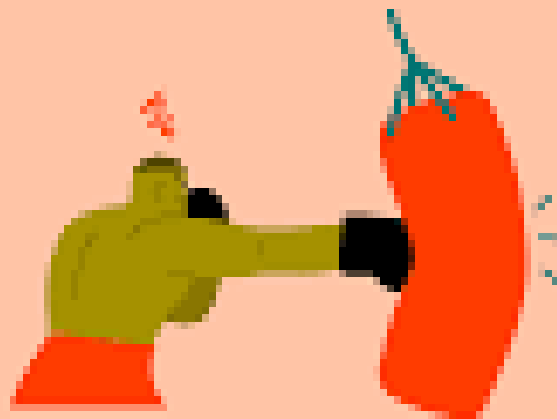
Common Defense Mechanisms



Displacement



Repression



Sublimation



Regression

Name the Defense Mechanism

1. The alcoholic expresses, “I may like to drink, but I’m not an alcoholic.”
2. If you are yelled at by your boss you can’t yell back you will get fired! So, you go home and yell at you loved ones!
3. A woman who loves and unobtainable man and behaves as though she hates him.
4. Olana blames the instructor for an ‘F’ grade when he didn’t study.
5. A man who is sexually aroused by a woman he meets goes home and makes love to his wife.
6. Four- year –old Eden starts wetting the bed after his parents bring home a new baby.
7. A child whose parent was killed in a care crash may grow up with no memory of this event because they have simply pushed this in to unconscious and aren’t aware of it at all.
8. The person who doesn’t study says, “the ‘F’ grade I got on the test was totally unfair.”

6.2.2. The trait theory of personality

Trait Theory - understand individuals by breaking down behavior patterns into observable traits

The trait approach to personality makes three main assumptions:

1. Personality traits are relatively stable, and therefore predictable, over time.
2. Personality traits are relatively stable across situations.
3. People differ in how much of a particular personality trait they possess; no two people are exactly alike on all traits. The result is an endless variety of unique personalities.

the “Big Five” Personality Factors

- Openness to Experience
- Conscientious
- Extroversion
- Agreeableness
- Neuroticism

1. Openness to experience:- refers to a person's willingness to try new things and be open to new experiences

- Open = Curiosity, imaginative, creative
- Resistant = Conforming, predictable

2. Conscientiousness :- refers the tendency to control impulse and act in socially acceptable ways

- Conscientious = Responsible, persevering, self-disciplined
- Impulsive = Quick to give up, fickle, careless

3. Extroversion:- divided into two personality types

- Extroversion = Outgoing – talkative, sociable, adventurous
- Introversion = Shy – silent, reclusive, cautious

Cont....

4. Agreeableness:-refers to the basic emotional style of a person.

- Agreeable = Good-natured, cooperative, secure
- Antagonistic = Irritable, abrasive, suspicious, jealous

5. Neuroticism:- refers to emotional instability or stability.

- Neurotic = anxious, impulsive, worrier, emotionally negative
- Emotionally stable = only has those feelings when the circumstances dictate

6.2.3. Humanistic theory of personality

(Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow)

Humanistic Theories: Focus on private, subjective experience and personal growth

- Humans are free and basically good.
- Humans are inner-directed.
- Everyone has the potential for healthy growth.
- Health growth involves Self actualization:
- Given the right environmental conditions, we can reach our full potential

Cont....

Congruence :- this is displayed by fully functioning people and is a harmony between the image they project to others and their true feelings or wishes.

- To become fully functioning we need:
- Unconditional positive regard
- A situation in which the acceptance and love one receives from significant others is unqualified, no strings attached

Cont....

- **Fully Functioning Person:** Lives in harmony with his/her deepest feelings and impulses
- **Self:** Flexible and changing perception of one's identity
- **Self-Image:** Total subjective perception of your body and personality
- **Incongruence:** Exists when there is a discrepancy between one's experiences and self-image
- **Positive Self-Regard:** Thinking of oneself as a good, lovable, worthwhile person
- **Unconditional Positive Regard:** Unshakable love and approval

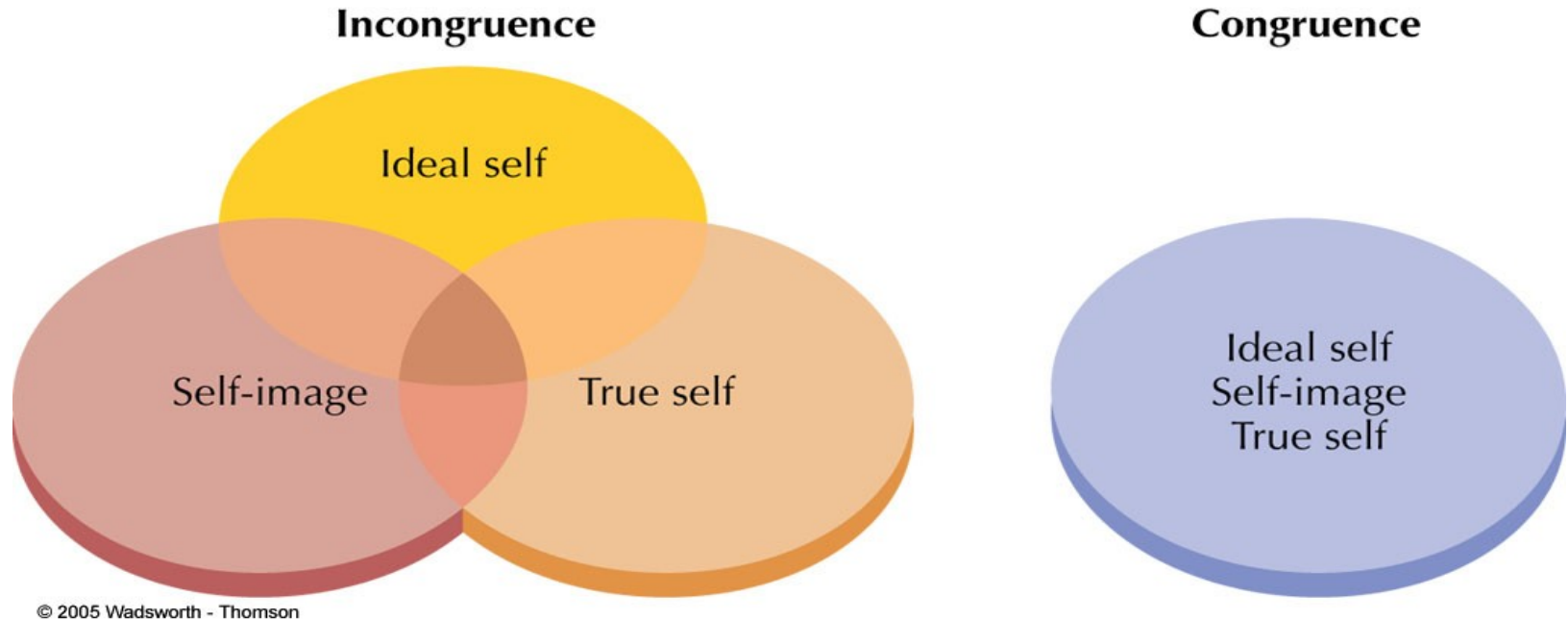
components of the self-concept

Self-concept: our image or perception of ourselves.

1. The real self (one's actual perception of characteristics, traits, and abilities that form the basis of the striving for self-actualization) and

2. The ideal self (the perception of what one should be or would like to be). e.g. From parents.

Cont.....



Incongruence occurs when there is a mismatch between any of these three entities: the **ideal self** (the person you would like to be), **self-image** (the person you think you are), and **the true self** (the person you actually are). Self-esteem suffers when there is a large difference between one's ideal self and self-image. Anxiety and defensiveness are common when the self-image does not match the true self.