

MODULE TITLE: PSYCHOLOGY FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

MODULE CODE : BMHP 4003

TASK 2

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Students are required to produce a written and logically structured reflective essay (2000 words) that will have a particular focus on the ways in which psychological theories are applied to health and social care practice, with particular emphasis on their own career goals.

Introduction

This work is a reflection on the two psychological theories and research I have worked on in my task 1. I will also be looking at how I can apply the entire studies from this module in the health and social care sector. From task 1, I will be looking at Erikson's and Piaget's perception of the adolescence stage of human development. I will also be looking at other psychological theories that I have learnt and how I will be applying them in the field of health and social care.

Erikson holds the view that the stage of adolescence is the stage when the child does a re-examination of his identity with the aim of discovering who he or she is. It is a point of deciding between self-identity and confusion.

Piaget's cognitive development theory has four stages of development handling growth in their intelligence and thoughts. In his view, the adolescent stage is the fourth stage of his cognitive development theory and it starts from the age of 12, he calls it the formal operational stage.

Erik Erikson

Erik Erikson's adolescent stage of life is the fifth stage of his psychosocial development theory. This is the adolescent stage and falls between the ages of 12 and 18. This is the stage adolescents try to discover their independence and assert a sense of their personality. It is also called the stage of identity versus confusion. (Cherry, 2020)

In Erikson's view, as people grow and evolve through life, they pass through various stages. At each stage, they encounter a growing conflict that they must overcome to advance the rudimentary virtue of that stage. I understand that the conflict at this stage is focused on creating a personal identity, which, if successfully done creates a strong self-identity that lasts for life. (Cherry, 2020). Adolescents feel insecure and confused as to their person and how they fit into society. They try different roles, activities, and behaviours in the process of trying to establish a sense of self. This is significant to their developing a strong identity and direction in life. While those children who are unable to get a direction from trying these various roles end up being what Erikson referred to as role confusion. They are uncertain who they are or what they like. They end up feeling left behind and confused about their role in life.

Jean Piaget 1896-1980

Piaget came up with the theory of cognitive development, which is spread out over four varying stages of mental development. I looked at the fourth stage, which is the formal operational stage: ages 11 and above, it is also the scientific reasoning stage. Piaget adduced that intelligence grows and develops through the four stages. He concluded that children are not less intelligent than adults but rather they think differently. (Cherry, 2020). I understood from the above, at this fourth stage, a person advances on the level of knowledge he has attained but does not alter how he goes about attaining it. I understood from Piaget's work that older children are quicker in thinking and add more quality and quantity to their thinking. This Piaget's observation has made me pay more attention to adolescents whenever I am dealing with them. I now accord them more respect and attention than I hitherto used to. As children grow older, their intelligence changes, they create an imaginative picture of the world different from their cognitive development.

(McLeod, 2021) It is quite amazing how Piaget's cognitive development has been able to remain relevant up to this day.

Human cognition, emotions, and behavioural patterns in adolescents

Cognition: Cognitive development is the development of the adolescents reasoning and thinking skills. (Ramsey, 2020) They now begin to form independent thoughts and create their own questions. They also begin to make their own plans and how to influence relationships. Their thoughts begin to go towards making decisions about their future career and also thinking ahead on how to play their role when they become adults.

Emotions: Most children of adolescent age begin to show strong emotions and feelings with moods becoming unpredictable. They also start becoming sensitive to others, by trying to read and understand their emotions. They begin to have a sense of self-consciousness, thinking much about how he or she looks. Their physical appearance becomes so important to them. They begin to build up their decision-making skills and gradually begin to realise that actions have consequences. (Social and emotional changes: 9-15 years, 2018)

Behavioural attributes: Adolescents start displaying some challenging behaviours based on their emotions. These behavioural changes occur because of some hormonal changes that take place in them currently. (Melbourn, 2018) Among these behaviours are, defiance and getting into a trend of arguing with siblings and parents. They show a lack of respect to other members of the family in this instance they tend to talk back at everyone and name-calling. They also tend to show aggressive or violent behaviour and display fluctuations in their moods.

Providing support while adolescents are growing is very important and caregivers should be able to guide, set boundaries and help them to form positive relationships to help them through the challenges of the period.

Reflection on the research in Task One

1. **Hindsight 2020:** This research work looks at the UK government's setting a target of spending £10 billion additional cash on the NHS and the health and social care sector between 2015 and 2020. By the year 2020, this target was not fully actualised. There were still shortages of GP's. The digitalisation of health and social care records was not achieved. Access to mental health therapists experienced an increase from 15% to 25% but it still fell short of the expected target. The government also planned to achieve integrated health and social care services together to make access easier for the people. Though the government had the very good and noble intention to improve the NHS and the healthcare sector at large with its £10billion five-year strategic budget, it still could not totally meet this goal. The lesson from the above is, the government should not come up with gigantic and over-ambitious targets rather, they should look at moderate projects that are achievable and would make a greater impact on the lives of the masses.
2. **The effect of integrated care: a systematic review of UK and international evidence:** In another research titled, 'The effect of integrated care: a systematic review of UK and international evidence'. (Baxter et al., 2018) They looked at how the UK health system responded to the planned integrated system of healthcare delivery as being practised in other European countries. This integrated system idea

was aimed at bringing some units in different hospitals to one of the hospitals, thereby making optimal use of staff and having them work from one place. Their research found that patients' satisfaction showed a marked level of improvement and access to care was enhanced, these showed that there was an upswing in the quality of care being delivered. The work further concluded that there was a huge increase in the level of patient patronage and the NHS is struggling to cope with the financial pull being placed on it.

3. Enabling research in care homes: an evaluation of a national network of research-ready care homes. (Davies et al, 2014) The aim of the research was to create an avenue to make the care homes get involved with research. In the research findings, it was found out that, at the onset, most care homes were set up as non-profit making organisations, with most of their residents as old people being taken care of by only carers excluding nurses. The research was done in collaboration with care home managers and researchers working Dementia and Neurodegenerative Disease Research Network. The researchers came up with the following findings: a) A large percentage of the occupants in care homes were women and most of them were depressed. b) They all had varying health issues. c) Research into care homes operations were very insignificant.

In concluding the report, they pointed out that, 1) there is not enough research work into the operations of care homes. 2) The care homes need to recruit, employ, and train researchers for care homes.

Application of psychological perspectives as my duty to care

Advancement in care and general medical practice has made it possible for psychology to be integrated into healthcare practice. Though I am currently not working as a carer, I can fully appreciate the fact that psychology has been encompassed into care practice. As carers, we are expected to show emotions, empathy, and where necessary sympathy to our service users. I can apply psychological perspectives as part of my duty of care through the following methods:

- a. Operant conditioning: Through operant conditioning, which is also known as instrumental conditioning, a client who is rewarded for a particular behaviour will likely put up the same behaviour again. (Davies et al, 2014). With operant conditioning, a link is made between behaviour and reward. A negative behaviour by a service user that is punished will be minimised and will happen less regularly because of the reprimand that follows such action. The main proponents of this behaviouristic approach are John Watson and B. F. Skinner. I can apply it by promising a service user a walk in the park or a trip to the cinema as a reward for good behaviour. This leads to positive and negative reinforcement.
- b. Classical conditioning: This is also known as respondent conditioning. It is the art of learning through association. (McLeod, 2018) If a service user is reprimanded by a carer, that service user may show some dislike to that carer and subsequently begin to avoid him. So it will be advisable for carers to try to make service users associate a positive emotional experience with their stay in the care home. Ivan Pavlov the Russian psychologist uses the illustration of the dog that associates its feeding time with the sound of a bell.

Therapies I can apply in the course of my duty as a carer:

- a. Systematic desensitisation therapy: This is a behavioural technique that is applied in treating anxiety and other fear-related issues. (Raypole, 2019). This can be used positively when a service user is made to desist in doing something negative or a threat to their health and safety. It is also called gradual exposure therapy and is useful in helping people recovering from drug or alcohol addiction.
- b. Flooding therapy: This therapy is a behavioural applied to help people get over certain fears. (Betterhelp, 2021) It teaches the patient self-relaxing techniques until they get used to the fear-inducing factor.
- c. Aversion therapy: This is also referred to as aversive therapy or aversive conditioning. (Cherry, 2020) I will use this therapy on a person who has addictive behaviour like alcohol use disorder or smoking use disorder.
- d. Token economy: I will use this therapy as a stimulus to get a service user who is prone to misbehaving to produce a desirable behaviour. He will be promised a reward if he behaves well. This works so well with children. Token economy aims to increase positive behaviour and a decrease in negative behaviour.

Conclusion: In conclusion, I have learnt immensely from this bit of psychology that was taught in this module. Both Erikson and Piaget view the age of adolescence to be from the ages of eleven and twelve up to 19 prior to adulthood. While Erikson had an eight-stage human development span, Piaget came up with a four-stage human development span.

The cognitive, emotional, and behavioural attributes of adolescents were also reflected on in this essay. These all reflect that the child is now maturing and gradually beginning to take control of his or her life and to show traits that can distinctly be identified with him. The place of psychology in my role as a carer became clearer to me with the various therapies learnt in the module. I learnt the importance of psychology in helping decision making and understanding human behaviour from this module.

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