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BMHP4003

APPLYING PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES IN HEALTH  
AND SOCIAL CARE

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## PSYCHOLOGY FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### INTRODUCTION

This essay explains how psychological perspectives are used to explain human behaviour and mental processes in Health and Social Care. The relation between theoretical perspective and developmental psychology would be discussed. Two life-span theories would be used in relation to 'Childhood' life-stage. Three recent research studies in health and social care, as supporting evidence, would be elaborated on. Psychology separated from Philosophy on the works of Wilhelm Wundt and William James in 1879. Around 1890, Psychology was defined as the science of Mental life, both of the phenomena and of their conditions-the phenomena are such things as we call feelings, desires, cognition, reasoning and decisions (Gross, 2020). According to Griggs (2017), Psychology is the science of human behaviour and mental processes.

There are four psychological perspectives namely: biological, behavioural, cognitive and sociocultural (Griggs, 2017). Modern psychology adds three: psychodynamics, evolutionary and humanistic perspectives (Cherry, 2007). All perspectives are the same in importance. Psychologists use them to work together to give clear meaning of our behaviour and mental processes. When a behaviour like 'aggression' is considered, psychologist who emphasises biological perspective would consider how the brain and nervous system impact aggressive behaviour. A behavioural psychologist would talk about how environmental factors reinforce aggressive actions.

### DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

. The beginning of the adult today was from the womb when fertilization took place. The scientific study of biological, cognitive, social and personality changes throughout the life span is what is called Developmental Psychology (Griggs, 2017). A remarked change during the past forty years is the recognition that development does not take place only in the childhood and adolescence but is a lifelong process (Gross, 2020).

### LIFE STAGES

| Stage            | Approximate range of age |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Prenatal         | Conception to Birth      |
| Infancy          | Birth to 2 years         |
| Childhood        | 2 to 12 years            |
| Adolescence      | 12 to 18 years           |
| Young Adulthood  | 18 to 40 years           |
| Middle Adulthood | 40 to 65 years           |
| Late Adulthood   | 65 years and over        |

(Griggs, 2017)

### CHILDHOOD

Childhood is the chosen life stage for discussion. The term Childhood denotes that period in human lifespan from the acquisition of language at one or two years to the

onset of adolescence at 12 or 13 years. The childhood period is divided into two groups: Early Childhood- ( 2 – 7 ) and Later Childhood ( 7- 12 ). In the Early Childhood period children learn to use symbolic thought and language to control their environment. They can do mental operations using symbols, concepts and ideas to process the information gathered about the world around them. In Later Childhood children begin to reason logically involving the categorization of ideas and an understanding of time and number. (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019a).

## PHYSICAL MILESTONES

Physical milestones, also referred to as developmental milestones, are the changes seen in infants and children as they grow. Particular physical skills are seen at particular stage. Rolling over, sitting without support, drinking from a cup, walking and talking are seen, normally, in the first two years of the infant. (Kaneshiro and Zieve, 2019).

### EARLY CHILDHOOD (2-7 years)

In the early childhood life stage, children feed themselves with minimal spilling. They are able to walk up and down stairs, begin pedaling tricycle, learn to share toys without adult direction, recognize differences between males and females, use more words and understand simple instructions and feed themselves with spoon. Before going to school at six, children are seen doing most things themselves, they enjoy rhymes and word play and understand size and time concepts. (Kaneshiro and Zieve, 2019).

### LATER CHILDHOOD (6-12)

Children at this stage are in the schools. They show skills in team sports such as soccer. They begin to lose “baby teeth” and have permanent ones. Girls begin to show armpit and pubic hair. Breast development is noted. Menarche (first menstrual period) may occur in girls. Boys also have chest, armpit and pubic hair. Voice change also noted. Genital organs begin to enlarge. (Kaneshiro and Zieve, 2019)

## IMPORTANCE OF THE MILESTONES

Parents control these as check list and raise concern when necessary. Healthcare providers get the opportunity to render early developmental services on the needy children. Research has shown that if the developmental services are done in the early stage results are positive. Speech therapy, physical therapy and developmental preschool are examples of developmental services. (Kaneshiro and Zieve, 2019).

## PIAGET’S LIFESPAN THEORY OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Stages of cognitive development

| Stage                | Approximate ages (years) |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Sensorimotor         | 0-2                      |
| Pre-operational      | 2-7                      |
| Concrete operational | 7-11                     |
| Formal operational   | 11+                      |

(Gross, 2020)

A stage in Piaget's four stages deals about changes in intelligence. Hence the stages can be represented as Sensorimotor Intelligence, Pre-operational intelligence etc. The environment in which the children are found and their biological maturation determine the rate at which they move through the stages. (Gross, 2020)

Sensorimotor is the stage for the age from birth to about two years. This is the infancy life stage. Infants learn through their senses ('sensori-') and by doing ('motor') at this stage. Babies at this stage can search for hidden objects. Object permanence is developed. The baby still knows and thinks about an object which is out of sight.

#### PRE-OPERATIONAL STAGE (2-7)

This is the early childhood stage. Children at this stage have more symbolic and language-based thinking but they are egocentric. The child being egocentric means he cannot recognise the world from other people point of view. (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018) The pre-operational child cannot think logically because they lack mental operations which allow that. However, they can pretend and imagine a play. They can use broom as a horse to ride on. Pre-operational child can crawl and pretend to be dog by barking like a dog. By the end of pre-operational stage the child might have learnt thousands of words. Conservation is another cognitive milestone for consideration. The lack of mental operations affects conservation ability. It is considered that understanding conservation marks the end of pre-operational stage and the beginning of concrete operational stage. (Griggs, 2017) Conservation is the understanding that any quantity (such as number, liquid quantity, length, or substance ) remains the same despite physical changes in the arrangement of objects. (Gross, 2020)

#### CONCRETE OPERATIONAL STAGE (6-12)

This is the third in Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Children in this stage have good understanding of conservation. They can do logical operations in the presence of real objects and understand reversibility. Reversibility is being able to grasp the fact that what can be done can be undone without any gain or loss. Children are less egocentric in this stage. (Griggs, 2017)

#### FORMAL OPERATIONAL STAGE (12+)

This is the fourth and final stage of Piaget's cognitive theory. "Formal" is because members of this group have the ability to deal with the form of an argument without reference to the actual content. In the concrete operational stage Piaget considered intrapositional thinking and in the formal operational stage he referred to interpropositional thinking. To explain this: "If A is taller than B and B is taller than C then A is taller than C" is a form of argument which is logically true, regardless of what A, B, and C might refer to (Gross, 2020).

#### ERIKSON'S PSYCHOSOCIAL STAGE THEORY

Erik Erikson (1963) came out with this psychosocial stage theory to cover the whole lifespan. According to Erikson the society and culture have impact on development

from birth to late adulthood. This theory divides the lifespan into eight stages. Personality development and social development are both considered by Erikson. In every stage we see a struggle between two conflicting personality outcomes: one positive and the other negative. When there is healthy development the positive outweighs the negative. (Cherry, 2007)

**TRUST versus MISTRUST (from birth to 1 year)**

This is the first of the eight stages. The infant develops trust or mistrust depending on how the society meets his demands. Food, comfort, sleep, security would contribute to the infant having trust. On the other hand, abuse, parental mental illness, neglect would result in mistrust. (Cherry, 2007)

**AUTONOMY versus SHAME and DOUBT (from 1 to 2 years)**

The child at this stage begins explore the world by himself. The first stage saw the infant totally depending on caregivers or parents. What the child needs at this stage is support, guidance and safe space. When the child is over restricted at this stage, he feels he is not good for anything so shame and doubt set in the mind. (Cherry, 2007)

**INITIATIVE versus GUILT (from 3 to 5 years)**

Children in this stage can be troublesome to their parents or caregivers. These children are of preschool age and very curious. They can ask so many questions to arouse anger. Caregivers need to have extra patience to contain the children. When the children realize their parents or caregivers are not happy because of their initiatives they feel guilty. When the parents are able to support and encourage all the initiatives the child feels good and the initiative taken becomes positive. (Cherry, 2007)

**INDUSTRY versus INFERIORITY (from 5 to puberty)**

In this stage children at school and other social functions acquire new skills. When they receive the needed support and encouragement, they build self-confidence. Those who would lack the needed support and encouragement would feel inferior. (Griggs, 2017)

Other stages are Identity vs Role confusion (adolescence), Intimacy vs Isolation (young adulthood), Generativity vs Stagnation (middle adulthood) and Integrity vs Despair (late adulthood). (Griggs, 2017)

**CHILDHOOD COGNITION, EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS**

According to Jean Piaget, cognitive development originates from a child's conformity to the environment. The child does well to learn and understand his environment. The knowledge is then organized into 'Schemas'. Schemas are the basic units of the child's knowledge that allow organization and interpretation of information about the world. According to Piaget, there are two processes that impact the development of Schemas and, therefore, learning. Assimilation and accommodation are the processes. Assimilation is the interpretation of new experiences in terms of the existing schemas; accommodation is the alteration of present schemas to allow for new experiences. In early childhood there is the development of theory of mind, which is the understanding of the mental and emotional states of both ourselves and the others. In this theory there is the understanding of false beliefs around four to five

years of age. (Griggs, 2017)

Children, like all other humans, have one thing in common to show emotions: Laughing. This sends a peaceful information to others around. Charlie Chaplin said “a day without laughing is a day wasted”. In the face of some upsetting perception weeping, running, trembling and striking are the ways emotions are expressed. A one-year-old child placed out of the usual place of living, but with the mother present will not cry. Such a child in later years will cry if the mother goes out and leaves him at home. . (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018)

## RESEARCH STUDIES IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### Person-Centered Care for People with Dementia: Opportunities and Challenges

This research aims at bringing down the misconceptions and widespread stereotypes about people with dementia

Determinants for quality of life trajectory patterns in patients with type 2 diabetes:

Aim The purpose of the study was to identify quality of life trajectory patterns and the determinants in patients with Type 2 diabetes.

466 patients with type2 diabetes recruited from five diabetic clinics

Attitudes of healthcare professionals toward people intellectual disability: a comparison with the general population

This study aims to examine HCPs pro-inclusion attitudes toward people with ID.

## CONCLUSION

This essay has thrown light on developmental psychology Physical milestones at various life stages are made clear.

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