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Introduction

I will be discussing how psychological theories play a role in health and social care practice, I will reflect on theories and research mentioned in task 1, through relating how these theories may be applied as in caring for patients.

Application of Psychological Theories in Health and Social Care

Within task one the theories that were explored were Piaget's theory of cognitive development, and Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. In both theories I explored the infancy stages and three modern pieces of research related to this stage.

Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

Within health and social care Piaget's theory of cognitive development, allows nurses to explore what reactions occur at the infancy lifestage, and assess the possibility of any neurological illnesses. As explained in the ,Newborn Movement Assessment (movement lessons,2016) cognitive function tests can be performed on infants to look for neurological, illnesses such as autism, cerebral palsy and genetic disorders by performing a movement assessment which allows health care professionals to determine if there is functional motor development. (Piaget, 1954) Piaget highlight that at the sensorimotor stage, infants are able to perform simple reflexes that enable infants to react to stimuli. When testing movement

nurses may look for : (movement lessons,2016) Moro reflex,rooting reflex, the asymmetrical tonic reflex ,etc.

Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development

Within Erikson's theory of psychosocial development the infancy stage Known as `Trust and Mistrust` can be used to help new and existing parents create bonds with their baby to form efficient development in later life, `longitudinal studies have reported that a child's ability to form and maintain healthy relationships throughout life may be significantly impaired by having an insecure attachment to a primary caregiver (Winston ,et al,2016)`.Neonatal nurses can educate mothers on methods to care for their children, (NHS,2019) such as breastfeeding, performing skin-to-skin contact, washing a baby,helping a baby sleep, soothing a crying baby, etc.

This would prevent mistrust in later life, and feelings of anxiety and resentment. If an infant is cared for correctly, based on Erikson's theory would lead to the trust state,which means that later on in life a child is less likely to become distrustful of others and is able to form relationships.

Modern Research in Infancy Stage Development

Olfactory conditioning

(Stafford,2012) Olfactory stimulation enables the body to recall lost or forgotten,smell may evoke an emotional response, when recovering a memory. Memories can be triggered in the minds of infants, in association with their caregivers, enabling them to create the schema for mum, in response to a perfume scent.Study shows that an infant is able to react to stimulus in the form of smell as stated :

`The performance of the conditioned response was not affected by the state of the baby during testing, because both awake and sleeping infants exhibited conditioned responses. Furthermore, the expression of the conditioned response was odor specific; a novel floral odor presented during testing did not elicit conditioned responses in the experimental babies. These results suggest that complex associative olfactory learning is seen in newborns within the first 48 hours of life. (Sullivan,1991)` This topic relates to Piaget's theory of cognitive development due to an infant's ability to form `schemas`(Piaget,1954) which enables them to form a mental map, for associating concepts.

Attachment theory

This theory in regards to infancy refers to a child's reliance on an object, person or thing for comfort. This theory relates to Erikson's theory due to it being centered on relationships within infancy and a child's reliance on its mother for physical and social support. This is shown by John Bowlby:

`There is in infants an in-built need to relate themselves to a human breast, to suck it and to possess it orally. In due course the infant learns that, attached to the breast, there is a mother and so relates to her also. I propose to call this the theory of Primary Object Sucking.` (Bowlby, 1958)

Music and cognitive development

It is believed that within the womb babies are capable of responding to music and may later on remember the sound the NHS reports that :

`After birth, researchers found signs that babies in the learning group showed signs of "remembering" the lullaby.` and `researchers also speculate that being exposed to less soothing sounds during pregnancy may have a negative effect on a child's development, but this hypothesis is unproven.` (NHS, 2013)

This would provide a connection with Piaget's theory of cognitive development, as it connects with learning and mental association being formed from within the womb, that may potentially trigger positive or negative cognitive responses, in later life. An infant may potentially react to the sound through triggering feelings of anxiety or fear to the sound and a situation that may have occurred outside of the womb, whilst the baby was inside the womb, creating a schema of fear in response.

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