

MODULE ONE

INTRODUCTION TO BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

Psychology

Psychology is defined as the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. It is considered to be a science because psychologists attempt to understand people through a careful, controlled observation thereby relying on scientific methods.

Behavior

This refers to all of a person's overt actions that others can directly observe. In other words, behaviors are directly observable and measurable.

Mental Process

Refers to private psychological activities which include thinking, perceiving, feelings, emotions, and motives that others can not directly observe.

Social Psychology

Can be defined as the scientific study of the way in which the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of an individual are influenced by the behavior or characteristics of other people. It can also be defined as a branch of psychology that studies individuals as they interact with others. It also studies how other factors can affect an individual's social behavior.

Goals of psychology

The goals of psychology include the following:

1. Describe
2. Predict
3. Explain and understand
4. Control or influence

Describe.

In some cases, psychologists to describe psychological phenomena more accurately and completely. For instance, information gathered in a survey on the frequency of sexual behavior among college students without the protection of a condom would reveal whether they are at high risk for the spread of STDs such HIV?AIDs.

Explain and understand.

This deals with behavior and mental processes that can be understood when we can explain why they happen. Explanations are usually tentative and are also referred to as theories.

Theories are tentative explanations of facts and relationships in sciences and are subjected to revision.

Why are people more aggressive when they are uncomfortable?

Why are by standers often unwilling to help in an emergency?

Understanding behavior is therefore met when we can explain why an event occurs. Understanding usually means that we can state when the causes of a behavior; for example research on the last question by

bystander apathy has shown that people often fail to help when other no other possible helpers are nearby, why? Because a diffusion of responsibility 'occurs' so that no open person feels required to pitch in, generally, the larger the number of potential helps present, the less likely it is that help will be given now we can explain a perplexing problem.

Prediction

Can we predict when act will occur?

Prediction is the 3rd goal of psychology. Prediction is the ability to accurately forecast behavior. For example psychologists use tests to predict such things as success in school, work or a career.

Notice that the explanation for by stander apathy makes a prediction about the chances of getting help. Anyone who has been stranded by car trouble on busy highway will recognize the accuracy of this prediction.

Control

What conditions influence or affect behavior?

This is psychology's fourth and misunderstood goal because it sounds like a threat to personal freedom. However, control simply means altering conditions that influence behavior in predictable way.

For example:-If a psychology suggests changes in a classroom that help children learn better, the psychologist has exerted control. If the counselor helps a person overcome a crippling fear of heights, control is involved.

In summary, psychology's goals are natural outgrowth of or desire, to understand behavior.

AREAS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Clinical Psychology

A branch of psychology concerned with the study, diagnosis, and treatment of abnormal behavior. It is the oldest as well as the most well-known branch of psychology. Clinical psychologists are trained to diagnose and treat problems ranging from the everyday crises of life such as grief due to the death of a loved one, to more extreme conditions, such as a loss of touch with reality. Some clinic psychologists also conduct research, investigating issues that range from indentifying the early signs of psychology disturbance and studying the relationship between how family members communicate with one another to the understanding of a wide variety of psychological disorders.

Industrial/Organizational Psychology

A branch of psychology that studies the psychology in action at the workplace, including productivity, job satisfaction and decision-making

Health Psychology

The branch of psychology that explores the relationship of psychological factors and physical ailment or disease e.g. health psychologists are interested in how the long – term stress (psychological factor) can affect physical health. They are also concerned with identifying ways of promoting behaviors related to good health. They are also concerned

with identifying ways of promotion behaviors related to good health (such as exercise or discouraging unhealthy behaviors (such as smoking, drinking etc)

Consumer Psychology

A branch of psychology that studies and explains our buying and our effects of advertising a buying behavior mainly dealt with the likes and dislikes and preferences of people.

Environmental Psychology

A branch of psychology, that focuses upon the relationship between people and their physical environment. It is one of the newly emerging and in-demand areas of psychology. Environmental psychologists have made significant progress in understanding how our physical environment affects the way we behave toward others our emotions and how much stress we experience in a particular setting.

Sport Psychology

The branch of psychology that studies the psychological variables that have an impact upon the sportspersons' performance e.g. how stress can affect sport performance, how morale can be boosted the role of self-concept and esteem the impact of crowd behavior etc.

Forensic Psychology

The branch of psychology that investigates legal issues and psychological variables involved in criminal behavior e.g. what factors

determine criminal tendencies, how criminals be reformed deciding what criteria indicate that a person is legally insane and whether larger and smaller juries make fairer decisions.

Counseling Psychology is a psychological specialty that encompasses research and applied work in several broad domains counseling process and outcome; supervision and training career development and counseling and prevention and health. Some unifying themes among counseling psychologist include a focus on assets and strengths person environment interactions development brief interactions and a focus on intact personalities.

ACTIVITY

- 1(a) Using relevant examples, describe the goals of psychology
- (b) Explain the relevant of psychology to you as a Medical practioner.