

## Describe and Evaluate features of one approach to Psychopathology

Psychopathology is the study of psychological disorders, their natures and causes. One approach to psychopathology is the psychodynamic approach; literally an approach that explains the dynamics of behaviour-what motivates a person. Freud suggested that unconscious forces and early experience are the prime motivators.

There are some key features to this methodology, the first being that when you repress memories for too long and do not deal with them you can develop psychological disorders known as neurosis. These can manifest as panic attacks, hysterical behaviour, phobias, compulsive or obsessive behaviour. Repressing memories does not mean to make the issues go away; it means to bottle up any bad memories from the persons past and try to forget them. The memories continue to haunt and affect normal day to day behaviour, which becomes neurotic behaviour. According to Freud many of the repressed memories began in childhood and remain in frozen unconscious.

Sigmund Freud believed that much of our behaviour is motivated by our unconscious desires. Freud believed that the mind was made up of an id- unconscious mind, ego-conscious mind and the superego- imposes a moral standard to our thoughts. The id contains Eros and Thanatos. This is the life and death wish. Abnormal behaviour was seen as being caused by these underlying psychological forces, sometimes originating from childhood experiences or an underlying conflict between id and superego. If this is not managed then the person might develop a psychological disorder. The psychodynamic model of abnormality aims to treat mental illness by making the unconscious conscious, through the use of psychoanalytic therapy.

Some positive notes about the psychodynamic model are that the model is very influential and offers a valuable alternative to drugs and surgery. Drugs can have some very unpleasant side effects, surgery can be dangerous, takes time to recover and not always effective. This model also sees each person as an individual which is very different to the biological approach. However there are some downsides to this model. It has been claimed that this model is not scientific and testable because the unconscious id is hidden. The interpretations of what is wrong are based on the therapist's opinions, these could change between each therapist and there is no distinct plan to follow. It is also very difficult to test childhood memories because the parents are not reliable and the patient's memories could be influenced by the therapist. Therefore their memories cannot be accurate to suggest fact. It also criticises parents for their child's ill mental health. The only research method for this approach is to study cases from past therapists.

Some other limitations were that Freud's approach was considered sexist as he only concentrated on males as women were not seen as equals in Victorian times. However Freud himself accepted that his theory was less well developed for women.