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*The psychodynamic model of abnormality is useful to an extent. However it has many weaknesses.*

*The psychodynamic model of abnormality was initiated by Sigmund Freud. Sigmund Freud was very interested in hysteria. This is the manifestation of physical causes. He became convinced that unconscious mental causes were responsible not just abnormality but also normality. Freud developed Psychoanalysis. This is a set of techniques for treating the unconscious causes of mental disorders and built up a psychoanalytic theory of how human personality and abnormality develop from childhood. His psychoanalytic approach had a great impact on psychology and psychiatry and was developed by other psychodynamic theorists.*

*Psychoanalysis had a very fixed set of assumptions. One of these is the unconscious processes where many important influences on behaviour come from a part of the mind we have no awareness of called the unconscious. Another assumption is psychodynamic conflict. Different parts of the mind are in constant struggle with each other and the consequences of this are important in understanding behaviour. Freud also believed that behaviour is motivated by sexual and aggressive drives. The drives create psychic energy that builds up and create tension and anxiety if it cannot be released. Another assumption is development where personality is shaped by relationships, experiences and conflict, particularly during childhood.*

*Freud's psychoanalysis is probably the most important psychodynamic theory. His ideas developed and changed over time. In Freudian psychoanalysis, the psyche (mind) is seen as having three main mental processes, innate drives, reason and morality. Freud (1923) divided the psyche into three parts. The first being the Id (unconscious mind). This is the largest part and is innate. It is the source of our desires. It is selfish and operates on the pleasure principle and only wants the gratification it desires. The second is the Ego (Conscious mind). This is fully formed from around two years of age and develops from the Id. The Ego works on the reality principle and is concerned with keeping our thoughts and actions in step with the real world. The third is the Superego and contains moral values.*

*Psychoanalysis had a very fixed set of assumptions that later psychodynamic theorists agreed with to different extents. One of the assumptions was the unconscious processes, where many important influences on behaviour come from the unconscious part of the mind, which we have no awareness of. Another assumption is psychodynamic conflict. This is where the different parts of the mind are in a constant struggle with each other and the consequences of the struggle are important in understanding behaviour. Freud also believed that that behaviour is motivated by emotional drives. Particularly sexual and aggressive drives. These drives create psychic energy that builds up if it cannot be released. Development is another of the*

assumptions, where personality is shaped by relationships, experiences and conflict, particularly during childhood.

When Freud carried out his investigations, he used the case study method when treating his clients. He used to see his clients individually and probed their past and questioned their behaviour. He analysed and interpreted the symbolism in everything they said and did. These methods are still used today. Freud used two particular techniques. The first being free association where the thoughts of the client are analysed by Freud and then interpreted. The second technique he used is dream analysis where the analyst looks at the dreams of a client and tries to decode the symbols to unravel the hidden meaning of the dream.

Freud also used his theory to explain more topics such as personality development and moral gender development. He had the idea that childhood experiences had an effect on the person's personality. Such as the phallic stage, in which the male child is sexually attracted to his mother and the female child is sexually attracted to her father. If there is no father in the daughter's life, or if there is no mother in the son's life then the child may grow to be abnormal.

The psychodynamic model has many weaknesses. It is claimed that the psychodynamic model is not scientific. The evidence that supports the model comes from case studies of individual patients. These case studies are very likely to be biased as they rely on the therapist's interpretations. Also the information is gathered retrospectively from adults recalling their childhood memories. The accuracy of the childhood memories is open to question. Concepts like the Id, Ego and Superego and processes like repression can't be directly observed and measured. Philosopher, Karl Popper (1959) said that the psychodynamic theory fails to produce testable hypothesis and is simply not scientific. Another criticism is that it does not work.

Eysenck (1952) published figures, which suggested that psychodynamic therapy was worse than useless in the treatment of psychological disorders. There has also been claims that psychoanalysis is a just a get rich quick scheme for psychoanalysts, with some people spending most of their adult lives in analysis which costs them a fortune.

It is also claimed that the psychodynamic model is deterministic and pessimistic. Freud's theory has been criticised for suggesting that people's lives are dominated by unconscious drives and childhood experiences. It is argued that his theory is pessimistic because it offers little escape from these determining influences.

Critics argue that psychodynamic theory blames parents for all our abnormalities. It sees the individual as a product of their parenting. There is evidence to support this such as the effects of child abuse on later life.

The psychodynamic model is also culture specific. It only applies to the repressed Victorian period and has little relevance to the open and free sexual expression nowadays. He bases a lot of his theories on childhood experiences but only ever did one case study involving a child.

There are a few positive views to the psychodynamic model. It flourished between 1920s and 1960s, and is still used today. Many psychiatrists favour the model and have adopted it into their practise. Psychoanalysis has been the most influential psychological theory of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It has had a significant effect on a wide range of disciplines such as anthropology, women's studies and theology.

Also, the sharp distinction between abnormality and normality of the biological model is ignored. Doing this, it has created more sympathy for people with psychological disorders. Psychoanalysis is more humane with its focus on talking as opposed to drugs, shock therapy or brain surgery. It also has the power to enhance our understanding of ourselves and from the number of people who testify how it has helped them in their own lives.

In conclusion, the psychodynamic model is useful as it is still being used today by professional psychiatrists and works with many people. However, there are a lot of weaknesses to outweigh the positives, which means that the model can be seriously questioned.