

**Theories from the psychodynamic approach have helped to explain how mental health issues may be dealt with. Discuss how mental health issues are tackled by the psychodynamic approach**

The psychodynamic approach highlights the importance of the unconscious mind and early childhood experiences, therefore practitioners of this approach will attempt to deal with the mental health issues of their patients by incorporating these ideas and creating 'therapies' using these bases. The basic concept behind psychoanalysis is that a patient that suffers from mental health problems such as depression can address any regressed feelings thus, the patient gains insight of and can learn to work through their emotional 'baggage'. It is a generalised notion that if the cause of the symptoms were tackled it would only be logical that the symptoms would desist.

The psychodynamic approach is mainly comprised of ideas and notions suggested by Sigmund Freud, based partly on his psychosexual development theory. In essence, the child passes through stages such as oral and the anal. Major conflicts or excessive gratification at any of these stages can lead to fixation, therefore if an adult experiences great personal problems, he or she will tend to show regression (going back through the stages of the psychosexual development) to the stage at which he or she had previously been fixated. Thus because conflicts cause anxiety, and the ego defends itself against anxiety by using several defence mechanisms to prevent traumatic thoughts and feelings reaching consciousness, mental disorders can arise when an individual has unresolved conflicts and traumas from childhood. Defence mechanisms may be used to reduce the anxiety caused by such unresolved conflicts, but they act more as sticking plaster than as a way of 'sorting out' an individual's problems.

Psychodynamic therapy is based on psychoanalysis, and was introduced by Sigmund Freud at the start of the twentieth century. Freud and other psychoanalysts used various methods to uncover repressed ideas, and to permit the client to gain insight into his or her unresolved problems. As a form of therapy the approach uses hypnosis, Freud and Breuer treated a twenty one-year-old woman called Anna O, who suffered from several neurotic symptoms such as nervous coughs and paralysis. Hypnosis uncovered a repressed memory of Anna O hearing the sound of dance music coming from a nearby house as she was nursing her dying father, and her guilty feeling that she would rather be dancing than looking after her father. Her nervous coughing stopped after that repressed memory came to light. However, patients are either hard or impossible to hypnotise and people under hypnosis become very suggestible.

This approach has shown different ways in treating mental disorders, and in doing so have shown inadequacies and ethical implications that are both positive and negative in their therapeutic perspectives. The psychodynamic model also suggests that the individuals are not really responsible for their own mental disorders, this is because these disorders depend on unconscious processes which individuals have no control. However with both of these approaches suggesting that the individual has no responsibility may carry the undesirable effect of encouraging individuals with mental disorders to hand over complete responsibility for their recovery to other people. Also with the psychodynamic approach there is the notion that adult mental disorders have their basis in childhood experiences suggests that parents or other caregivers are at least partially to blame and this can lead to distress within the family. Although it can be argued that at least with the psychodynamics' therapeutic approach, nevertheless the psychodynamic approach has encountered serious problems, with the numerous recent cases of false memory

syndrome. In these cases, patients undergoing psychotherapy have made allegations about childhood physical or sexual abuse that have turned out to have no basis in fact.

However, the psychodynamic approach though positive in many ways is limited because it tends to ignore genetic factors unlike the medical approach and cultural and subcultural differences between societies in diagnosing and giving therapy to those with mental disorders. In its original form, the patients current concerns and interpersonal relationships were de-emphasised and there was undue focus on childhood experiences and sexual problems.