PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

KEY DEBATES
- NATURE (biological) vs. NURTURE (learned/society)
- REDUCTIONISM (nature theories) vs. HOLISM
- FREE WILL (ABC Model) vs. DETERMINISM (Social Rank)

NATURE

NURTURE

SCHIZOPHRENIA

DEFINITION
A psychotic disorder where people lose their sense of reality. Covers 1% of the population.

SYMPTOMS
- Hallucinations (see/hear things that aren't there)
- thought disturbances
- Disorganised speech
- Catatonic behaviour (doesn't respond)
- Delusions (errors in reality

BIOLOGICAL THEORY
Dopamine Hypothesis
- Dopamine system is overactive - high levels of dopamine binding to receptors
Brain dysfunction
- Less blood flow in frontal lobe (responsible for logic, reasoning, problem solving etc.)
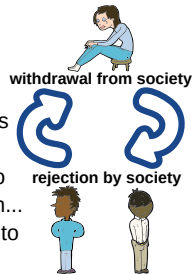- Reduced volume of hippocampus (poor cognitive functioning & accessing/processing memories)

LIMITATIONS
- Ignores nurture - importance of upbringing & life events
- Reductionist- focuses too much on brain abnormalities

SOCIAL DRIFT THEORY
- 'Label' of schizophrenia could lead to the condition worsening - due to the associated stigma around mental illness -> discrimination
- Person withdraws from society (due to symptoms & fear of discrimination) then...
- Leads to rejection by society -> leads to further deterioration of mental health

withdrawal from society
rejection by society

LIMITATIONS
- ignores nature - biological factors (brain dysfunction & hormones)
- doesn't explain cause & effect - just effect of diagnosis

DANIELS ET AL. (1991) STUDY INTO THE EFFECTS OF AMPHETAMINES ON SCHIZOPHRENIA

AIM
To see whether amphetamines affect PFC and WCST performance.

SAMPLE
10 chronic schizophrenics from same hospital

RESEARCH METHOD/ DESIGN
Lab experiment (double-blind) - repeated measures design

PROCEDURE
Participant received dose of amphetamine or placebo

Completed the Card sort test (PFC task) and BAR task (control task) on a computer whilst having SPECT scan
* Did same 2-4 days later but swapped (double-blind) *

FINDINGS & CONCLUSION
- No difference in BAR task (control)
- Small difference between amphetamine & placebo in the WCST as some areas of the prefrontal cortex were active
- **Amphetamines shown to increase the ability of the prefrontal cortex to focus in the WCST.**

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY
- Sample too small (can't be generalised) & culturally biased (unrepresentative)
- Ethical issues: using brain scans for research not medical reasons.

CLINICAL DEPRESSION

DEFINITION
A mood disorder where people have persistent feelings of sadness over a long period of time.

SYMPTOMS
- Low mood (sadness)
- Feeling hopeless
- Low self-esteem
- No motivation/lack of interest in things
- Suicidal thoughts

SOCIAL RANK THEORY (Evolution)
- We behave in a certain way for survival reasons
- When we lose a level of status we can lose confidence in our abilities (depressed state).
- If we to try to regain our rank we may suffer further losses which would be detrimental for our survival (be rejected from the social group). Therefore depression allows us to accept a subordinate role & reduces further conflict.

Higher status (winner)
Lower status (loser)

LIMITATIONS
- Ignores nurture - e.g. other life factors (e.g. trauma)
- Reductionist- ignores complex nature of depression

MODEL
- Depression is the result of an **Activating event,** which leads to **irrational Beliefs,** which then cause **negative Consequences**.
- According to Ellis the 'B' is the most important part of the model.
- Depression = result of irrational beliefs, individuals who are prone to depression will perceive events in a more negative way than other people.

LIMITATIONS
- Ignores nature - disregards role of chemical processes in the brain
- Free will- puts responsibility solely on patient

TANDOC ET AL. (2015) STUDY INTO FACEBOOK & DEPRESSION

AIM
To see whether Facebook use predicted depression.

SAMPLE
854 journalism students from US university (68% female)

RESEARCH METHOD/ DESIGN
Questionnaire (online survey)

PROCEDURE
Completed questionnaire:
1. Facebook usage and surveillance
2. Envy Scale
3. Depression symptoms
*Facebook surveillance involves looking at friends' status' but not commenting or posting own information.

FINDINGS & CONCLUSION
- Heavy Facebook users = stronger feelings of envy.
- Size of the network of FB friends not related to envy. FB envy was a predictor of depression.
- **Use of FB- not directly lead to depression. But, FB envy can lead to depression.**

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY
- Sample culturally biased (unrepresentative & can't be generalised)
- Self-report: participants could have lied due to social desirability.

KEY CONCEPTS
- Good mental health = high self-esteem, autonomy, self-actualisation, accurate perception of reality
- Mental Health Act (1959) - aims to reduce stigma & discrimination
- Difficult to measure as not all problems diagnosed. Statistics: 1 in 4 in UK, affects both sex equally, but men develop sz. earlier than women. Asians more likely to develop depression.

MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM

Healthy	Mild Disruption	Moderate Disruption	Severe Disruption
Normal functioning	Common and reversible distress	Significant functional impairment	Severe and persistent functional impairment

APPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS & SCANS
- Wisconsin Card Sort test (WCST)- frontal lobe function
- Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) – severity of depression
- PET scan - shows blood flow in the brain

USE OF DRUGS TO TREAT CONDITIONS
Depression: *anti-depressant drugs* increase the number of neurotransmitters in the brain (serotonin or noradrenaline). Excess serotonin helps the neurons communicate better, which helps people feel less depressed.
Schizophrenia: *anti-psychotic drugs* act by blocking some of the dopamine receptors. By reducing the level of dopamine, it reduces the effects of the psychotic episode.

PSYCHOTHERAPY – talking therapies (no drugs)
CBT – aims to change how the individual thinks & behaves- to confront the negative irrational thoughts and how they impact on the individual.
Uses Ellis' A-B-C model and adds
D= Disputing (questioning) the persons irrational beliefs and E= Effect of changing the interpretation of an event.