

Introduction to Behavioral Psychology & Learning Theory

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Psychology subfields

- *Educational* –researching learning, thinking, remembering, instructing, and related topics in educational settings; developing and applying learning programs for students
- *School* – identifying individual aptitudes and skills among learners in a school setting; developing and administering tests pertinent to school related abilities
- *Psychometrics* – testing and measuring psychological characteristics and making sense of resulting measures; developing tests and measurement devices

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Psychology subfields

- *Community psychology* – focuses on the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of mental disorders through the use of organized community programs.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Psychology subfields  
*Community Psychology continued...*

- Extends mental health's sphere of operations to more natural settings than hospitals and clinics such as churches, schools, inner-city storefronts, in order to access dysfunction sooner and reach more people.
- Emphasizes mental health consultation and training of nonprofessionals which can expand services exponentially.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Psychology subfields  
*Community Psychology emphasizes **prevention***

- *Primary prevention* – prevent the occurrence of new cases of a disorder through education and training (e.g. Headstart, alcohol & drug education, AIDS awareness)
- *Secondary prevention* – focuses on early identification and prompt treatment of a disorder already in existence to stop mild disorders from becoming more serious (e.g. programs to treat children with conduct disorder to prevent them from becoming delinquent adolescents or adults with Antisocial Personality Disorder).

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Psychology subfields  
*Community Psychology emphasizes **prevention***

- *Tertiary prevention* -- reducing the residual effects of a chronic disability or minimizing further negative consequences of an established serious disorder (e.g. 12-step programs for alcoholics & addicts, vocational rehab programs for individuals with schizophrenia)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### What is behavior?

- **Any** action, reaction, response, activity or performance; anything a person says or does
- Can be both *overt behavior* or *covert behavior*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### What is behavior?

- *Overt behavior* – all behaviors that can be easily seen, observed, and recorded by someone
- Overt behaviors are observable and measurable.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### What is behavior?

- *Covert behavior* – private internal activities that cannot be readily observed by others, including thoughts, attitudes, feelings
- Covert behaviors are not observable, but are still measurable through self-reports or inferred through physiological measures (e.g. heart rate, EEG, etc.)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### What is behavior modification?

- Applying principles of psychology and learning to change the quality, duration, frequency, or intensity of behaviors
- Can be used to address both *behavioral deficits* (too little behavior of a particular type) and *behavioral excesses* (too much behavior of a particular type)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Characteristics of behavior modification

- Emphasizes defining problems in terms of behaviors that can be measured in some way.
- Determines the extent to which a problem is being helped by looking for changes in a measure of that behavior.
- Treatment in behavior modification involves altering one's environment (people, objects, and events) to help an individual function more fully in society.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Characteristics of behavior modification

- The methods and rationale of behavior modification can be described precisely.
- Because of such preciseness, behavior modification can be replicated by others and applied by individuals in everyday life who are not psychologists such as parents, teachers and coaches.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Characteristics of behavior modification

- The techniques stem from basic and applied research in the psychology of learning in general, and the principles of operant and respondent (Pavlovian) conditioning in particular.
- Emphasizes scientific demonstration that a particular intervention was responsible for a particular change.
- Places a high value on accountability for everyone involved in behavior modification programs.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Characteristics of behavioral applications

- Behavioral approaches to therapy, education or behavior modification have the following in common:
- Focus on current behavior
- Emphasis on precision in describing and assessing behavior and in development of goals
- Behavioral programs are designed based on empirical evidence from previous experimental research

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Characteristics of behavioral applications

- There is also specificity in describing interventions, programs and procedures
- There is a commitment to constant progress monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the procedures.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Behaviors targeted for change must be described specifically so they can be measured

Vague	Behaviorally specific
She has low self-esteem.	She says, "I'm not as smart as my sister."
He exhibits hostility.	He throws dishes at his wife.
He doesn't love me.	He doesn't send me flowers on Valentine's Day.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Behaviors targeted for change must be described specifically so they can be measured

Vague	Behaviorally specific
She is intelligent.	She completes the <i>New York Times</i> crossword puzzle.
He is really depressed.	He stays in bed 18 hours per days and says, "Life is not worth living."
He is not reliable.	He arrives late to work.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Behaviors targeted for change must be described specifically so they can be measured

Vague	Behaviorally specific
She is a cheapskate.	She buys gifts for friends at the dollar store even though she has a high-paying job.
I try to give my mother lots of support.	I call my mother three times per week to ask if she needs anything.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Areas of application of behavior modification

- Parenting
- Education
- Severe psychological & developmental problems (schizophrenia, autism, mental retardation)
- Clinical behavior therapy for treatment of a variety of psychiatric issues (phobias, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, etc.)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Areas of application of behavior modification

- Self-management (stopping bad habits, developing good habits, etc.)
- Medical & health care (direct treatment, establishing treatment compliance, promotion of healthy living, stress management, management of care-givers)
- Gerontology (e.g. management of problems related to dementia or Alzheimer's)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Areas of application of behavior modification

- Behavioral community psychology (applications to socially significant problems in unstructured community settings where the behavior of individuals is not considered deviant in the traditional sense)
- Organizational behavior management (e.g. working with corporations to improve productivity, motivation, etc.)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Areas of application of behavior modification

- Sport psychology (improving athletic skills, strategies for motivating practice and endurance training, changing the behavior of coaches, preparing for competition)
- Behavioral assessment (identifying problem behaviors and determining what are the antecedents and consequences of such behaviors)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Definition of Learning

- A *persisting change in human performance (behavior) or performance potential brought about by experience.*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Learning involves an interaction of the following:

1. *disposition* – an individual's inclination to do or not to do something
2. *capability* – the skills or knowledge required to do something
3. *actual performance* – the behavior of the individual after the instruction or conditioning is observably different.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Learning can involve different aspects of performance:**

- 1. *motor learning* – muscular and physical
- 2. *affective learning* – emotions
- 3. *cognitive* – information and ideas

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

***Learning theory***

- A set of constructs linking the observed changes in performance (behavior) with what intervention is believed to have brought about those changes.
- *Constructs* refers to concepts theorists invent to identify psychological variables. For example, *memory* is a construct, *motivation* is a construct, etc.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

***A learning theory must contain three basic components:***

1. The results: what are the changes in performance that the theory will explain?
2. The means: what are the processes that brought about these changes?
3. The inputs: what triggers the process to occur or what experiences form the basis for this learning?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---