

The Definition of Personality and Other Important Issues

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What is Personality?

- Comes from Greek **PERSONA**
- Small part of Psychology
- Still at formulation stage of theory
 - Differences depend on theoretical orientation

CLASS, CREATE A DEFINITION OF PERSONALITY

Definition of Personality

- Personality:
 - the organized totality of the qualities, traits, and behaviors that characterize a person's individuality, which together with his or her physical attributes, the person is recognized as unique
- Personality Traits
 - relatively enduring styles of thinking, feeling, and acting

One Dichotomy

- Public Personality
 - the public, social stimulus, of organized behavioral characteristics of a person that are visible to other people and make an impression on them
- Private Personality
 - the private central core of a person that includes motives, attitudes, interests, beliefs, fantasies, cognitive styles and other mental processes

Personality Disorder

- DSM
 - personality traits
 - enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and oneself that are exhibited in a wide range of social and personal contexts
 - Personality disorder
 - an enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the expectations of the individual's culture and is manifested in at least two of the following areas: cognition, affectivity, interpersonal functioning, or impulse control

Personality Disorder

- This enduring pattern is inflexible and pervasive
- Stable and traced back to adolescence
- Not the result of another disorder, drugs, or medical condition

Personality Science

- An integrated and interdisciplinary study of the development and causes of individual differences and intraindividual coherence in behavior, affect, and cognition

Personality Assessment

- Goal:
 - Identification of global, stable tendencies, or enduring traits
- Two Lines of Thinking:
 - Personality assessment is the assessment of persons
 - Personality assessment assesses qualities that the person has

Evidence Based Assessment

- Empirically Validated Assessment (EVA)
 - Uses psychometrically strong measures to evaluate the outcome of treatments provided by psychologists
- EVA helps the many purposes of assessment

Evidence Based Assessment

- Purposes of Assessment
 - describe current functioning
 - confirm, refute, or modify impressions formed by clinicians through less structured interactions with clients
 - identify therapeutic needs and highlight issues likely to emerge in treatment
 - aid in the differential diagnosis of emotional, behavioral, and cognitive disorders

Evidence Based Assessment

- monitor treatment over time to ascertain success of interventions or to identify new issues that need to be addressed
- managing risk, including minimizing potential legal liabilities and identifying bad treatment reactions
- provide skilled empathic assessment feedback
- Using these purposes, all assessors should be able to provide a rationale for their services and the costs of such services

Evidence Based Assessment

- Assessments that have evidence that is supportive for one of these purposes are not necessarily supportive for the other
- Psychologists do not always practice EVA
- Assessment is underused and undervalued in clinical practice
- Assessment itself is changing

Questionable Practices

- Mandated testing of clients on a fixed schedule regardless of whether the assessment is clinically warranted
- Guidelines that insist all clients receive assessment
- Habitual testing using large testing batteries

When to Assess

- Pretreatment evaluation
 - When the goal is to describe current functioning or help with clinical impressions identify treatment needs, et.
- Therapeutic impact will be greatest when:

Validity of Psychological Assessment

- The correlations between tests and behaviors of interest typically range from .15 to .30
- Relationship between reliability and validity
- Psychological tests have varying degrees of validity
 - No different than medical tests

Validity of Psychological Assessment

- There appears to be no superior or inferior method of assessment
 - Projective tests have the same psychometric properties as objective tests
- Psychological tests generate large effect sizes

So, what should you know?

- Take home messages:
 - Work on integrating assessment into diagnosis and intervention
 - Learn a number of different methods of behavioral assessment
 - Use scientifically sound measures
 - Assess context
 - Obtain multiple forms and sources of info
 - Use caution when drawing inferences about a variable's stability and cross-situational generalizability
 - Work to find the appropriate test for the situation

Psych. Testing vs. Psych. Assessment

- Psych Testing
 - Straightforward process wherein a particular scale is administered to obtain a specific score
- Psych Assessment
 - Concerned with the clinician who takes a variety of test scores, generally obtained from a variety of methods, considers the data in the context of history, referral info, and observed behavior to answer the referral question.

Formal Assessment

- Generally, Psychological Assessment
- Other sources of clinical info
 - Interviews and observations
 - Self- and informant-ratings
- Formal Assessment circumvents problems with interviews
 - Can measure what we want to look at
 - Provide quantifiable information

Formal Assessment

- Standardized
- Normed
- Can use psychometric info to select tests

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