

Chapter 5 - The Psychosocial Person

THE SELF IN RELATIONSHIPS

- **Relational Theory**
 - o Basic human tendency (or drive) is for relationships with others, and our personalities are structured through ongoing interactions with others in the social environment.
 - o Strong value of recognizing and supporting diversity in human experience, avoiding the pathologizing of differences, and enlarging traditional conceptions of gender and identity.
 - All patterns of behavior are learned in the give-and-take of relational life.
 - o Mutual relationship; ability to demonstrate empathy
- **Attachment Theory**
 - o All children seek proximity to their parents, and they develop attachment styles suited to the types of parenting they encounter.
 - **Secure** - infants act somewhat distressed when parent figures leave, but greet them eagerly and warmly upon return.
 - **Anxious-Ambivalent** - distraught when parent figures leave and continue to be distressed upon parent's return, even when comforted and held.
 - **Avoidant** - infant relatively undisturbed when both parent figures leave and return.
- Impact of Early Nurturing on Development
 - o **Neural Plasticity**
 - The capacity of the nervous system to be modified by experience.
- **Feminist Theories of Relationships**
 - o Refers to a wide-ranging system of ideas about human experience developed from a woman-centered perspective.
 - o **Psychoanalytic Feminists**
 - Women's ways of acting are rooted deeply in women's unique way of thinking; differences are biological but influenced by cultural and psychosocial conditions.
 - o **Gender Feminists**
 - Tend to be concerned with values of separateness (for men) and connected-ness (for women) and how these lead to a different morality for women.
- **Social Identity Theory**
 - o Stage theory of socialization that articulates the process by which we come to identify with some social groups and develop a sense of difference from others.
 - Important to acknowledge in an increasingly diverse country.
 - o Can be an affirming process that provides us with a lifelong sense of belonging and support.
 - o Develops in 5 stages:

- **Naiveté** – no social consciousness; accept socialization without question; curious about differences but feel neither comfortable/uncomfortable about race.
- **Acceptance** – learns about rules that encourage certain behaviors/inhibit others; internalize these dominant cultural beliefs and make them a part of your everyday lives; regard other cultures as strange.
- **Resistance** – interactions with other social groups challenge our assumptions; reevaluate assumptions and investigate own role in perpetuating harmful differences; begin to move toward new definition of social identity.
- **Redefinition** – process of creating a new social identity that preserves our pride in our origins while perceiving differences with others as positive; may move away from our social group and interact with others who share same level of awareness.
- **Internalization** – final stage of identity development; comfortable with self and able to act unconsciously without external controls; sometimes ongoing challenge rather than end stage.

THE CONCEPT OF STRESS

- **Stress**
 - o Any event in which environmental or internal demands tax our adaptive resources.
 - o Can be biological, psychological, and even social.
- **Categories of Psychological Stress**
 - o **Harm** – damaging event already occurred.
 - o **Threat** – perceived potential for harm has not yet happened; apprehensive about possibility for negative event.
 - o **Challenge** – event we appraise as an opportunity rather than an occasion for alarm; likely to act defensively to protect ourselves.
- **Daily Hassles**
 - o Common occurrences that are taxing
 - Ex: standing in line waiting, misplacing or losing things, dealing with troublesome co-workers, worrying about money, and many more.
 - o Accumulation of daily hassles takes a greater toll on our coping capacities than do relatively rare life events.
- **Role Strain**
 - o Problems experienced in the performance of specific roles, such as romantic partner, caregiver, or worker.
- **Stress and Crisis**
 - o **Crisis** = major upset in or psychological equilibrium due to some harm, threat, or challenge with which we cannot cope.

- Poses as an obstacle to achieving a personal goal, but we cannot overcome the obstacle through our usual methods of problem solving.
 - Usually results when face a serious stressor with which we have had no prior experience.
- o **Three Stages of Crisis**
 - Our level of tension increases sharply.
 - We try and fail to cope with the stress, which further increases our tension and contributes to our sense of being overwhelmed. We are particularly receptive to receiving help from others at this time.
 - The crisis episode ends, either negatively (unhealthy coping) or positively (successful management of the crisis).
- **Traumatic Stress** = refer to events that involve actual or threatened severe injury or death, of oneself or significant others.
 - o **Three Types:**
 - Natural - flood, tomado, earthquake
 - Technological disasters - nuclear
 - War - concentration camps
 - Individual - raped, assaulted, tortured
- **Vulnerability to Stress**
 - o **Biopsychosocial Risk and Resilience Framework**
 - **Resilience** = ability to function adaptively despite stressful life circumstances.
 - **Risks** = understood as hazards occurring at the individual/environmental level that increase the likelihood of impairment.

COPING AND ADAPTATION

- **Coping**
 - o Thoughts, feelings, and actions that constitute these efforts to master the demands of stress.
- **Adaptation**
 - o Method of coping which involves adjustments in our biological responses, perceptions, or lifestyle.
- **Biological Coping**
 - o **Homeostasis**
 - Steady state of functioning
 - o **General Adaptation Syndrome**
 - The body's response to a stressor that occurs in three stages:
 - **Alarm** - body first aware of threat
 - **Resistance** - body attempts to restore homeostasis