

COGNITIVE MODELS OF ABNORMAL BEHAVIOR

Cognitive psychology is a reflection of a shift in acceptance of mental processes as being appropriate for empirical research is reflected in the development of new tools and methods to study cognitive processes which in turn has added considerably to the understanding of behavior and emotional disorders.

Cognitive therapy is a rejection the psycho-dynamic model which was still a powerful force in psychiatry in the 1960's and 1970's.

Aaron Beck: Cognitive Therapy

Albert Ellis: Rantional Emotive Behavioral Therapy

Faulty Thinking

Beck (1976): “The thesis that the special [conscious] meaning of an event determines the emotional response forms the core of the cognitive model of emotions and emotional disorders. The meaning is encased in a cognition---a thought or an image.” He further notes, “The nature of a person’s emotional response---or emotional disturbance---depends on whether he perceives events as adding to, subtracting from, endangering, or impinging upon his domain” (p. 56).

Beck and Freeman (1990) state that “the cognitive therapy view hold that the products of this process [core problems with **faulting thinking**] are largely in the realm of awareness...and that with special training, even more may be accessible to consciousness”

Much of Cognitive Therapy involves teaching clients how to look at and challenge their faulty thinking.

Ellis A-B-C- Theory

A is an event, a fact, or the individual’s behavior or attitude

C. Is the person’s emotional and behavior reaction

B. Is the person’s beliefs about A which causes C.

Types of Faulting Thinking

Arbitrary inferences

Selective abstraction

Overgeneralization

Magnification and exaggeration

Personalization

Polarized thinking

Johnson's Criticisms of Beck and Ellis

1. Their models are based on inaccurate or simplistic conceptualization concerning the nature of schemata (ideas or notions) especially of the self
2. They failure to take into account the difference between the subjective and objective sense of self
3. There is a lack of consideration for the significant influence on thought, affect, and behavior of pre-verbal and other nonverbal learning
5. The promote an unfounded position concerning the accessibility, for pheonomenological examination, of one's thinking minimizing the influence of the cognitive unconscious on a person's thinking and behavior.
6. Emotion is much more important in accounting for behavior (and thinking) than Beck and Ellis propose.
 - 6a. A conscious awareness of the object eliciting a fear reaction does not even have to exist to experience such a reaction. It may have been forgotten or no explicit memory of the events was ever formed.
7. Affect (i.e., emotion) can be experienced spontaneously in reaction to an object or to a thought. Emotions also function as "markers" that remind us of past consequences and guide our decision making without conscious awareness of the influence.