

LECTURE 20

PSYC 200

MARCH 30TH

PART TWO OF "PERSONALITY" LECTURE

The Social Cognitive Perspective

- **Social cognitive theory of personality:** proposes that our beliefs and thoughts are formed through interactions with society
- **Personal control:** our sense of controlling the environment rather than feeling helpless
- **Rotter and locus of control:** the level of control we believe we have over the world around us influences our personality, refers to your perception to whether you have control of a situation or not
 - Internal locus of control: you believe that you control your own fate
 - External locus of control: you believe that your fate is controlled by outside forces
- **Outcome expectancies:** our assumptions about the consequences of our own behaviour greatly influence which type of locus of control you use
- **Learned helplessness:** happens when you are consistently unable to take control of a situation, it is a feeling of being hopeless/giving up
- **Albert Bandura:** father of modelling theory (we learn from watching others)
 - Reciprocal Determinism: a person's behaviour is both influenced by and influences a person's personal factors
 - Behaviour, Personal Factors and the Environment are 3 factors of Reciprocal Determinism
 - how you act influences your thoughts and feelings and the environment
 - how you feel influences your behaviour and the environment
 - how the environment will affect your behaviour and the way you feel
 - Self-efficacy (a.k.a self-confidence): describes a person's expectations about their own ability
- **The power of thinking positively (optimism):** important in shaping your personality, optimistic people cope better/more effectively with negative events and situations
- **Cross-cultural differences in personality**
 - Collectivist cultures: emphasizes people's interdependence (depending on people around them)
 - interdependent construal of self: collectivist individual sees themselves as being part of a larger network
 - Individualist cultures: a culture that emphasizes each person's individual rights and freedoms and deemphasizes the social roles that people play in relation to others
 - independent construal of self: you see yourself as being a self-directive/self-contained individual, you are responsible for yourself
- **Allocentrism:** you have a tendency to think and act in a collectivist manner
- **Ideocentrism:** you have a tendency to think and act in an individualist manner

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

- **Social Psychology:** studies how the thoughts, emotions, and behaviour of individuals influence and are influenced by interactions between people
 - Social Perceptions: how you understand/categorize the behaviour of other people, how we choose our friends/potential mates
 - you can come across a behaviour that you don't understand

Foundations of Social Psychology

- **Attribution:** when you claim that someone is acting a certain way and you have a reason as to why they are acting in that way, you are making an attribution
- **Attribution theory (Fritz Heider):** states that we try and understand behaviours by attributing the said behaviour to the following:
 - **Dispositional Attribution (Internal):** person is acting in certain way because of internal issues
 - example: what could explain why guys dress up to go to the gym? they are douchebags, this is an example of a dispositional attribution
 - **Situational Attribution (External):** person is acting in certain way because of external issues
 - example: tim is unhappy in class, teacher knows the reason why (cellphone confiscated), the teacher knows that tim is acting unhappy because he got his phone taken away, this is an example of a situational attribution
 - **Covariation principle:** when you don't have enough info to understand why someone is acting in a certain way, you will try to understand their behaviour by observing them in a variety of different situations, when you do this you are looking for 3 things:
 - **behaviour's distinctiveness:** "is the behaviour specific to that situation?"
 - **behaviour's consistency**
 - **behaviour's consensus**
- **The fundamental attributional error (FAE):** "person is acting this way because of their personality" but in reality it is due to a specific situation, you have made the attributional error, can happen when you don't have enough info and you make rapid assumptions
 - example: when you see a driver driving erratically, you assume that's just how they are normally, in reality it could be because of a specific situation (driver is driving fast and recklessly not because of his personality but because his wife is in labor and he is rushing to the hospital)
- **Bias in attribution**
 - **Preexisting schemata:** preexisting thoughts/beliefs that we have about other people. preconceived notions about other people and how these people should fit into our view of the world
 - **Attractiveness bias:** you base your assumptions about behaviour on an individual's appearance, we see attractive people as being more sociable, intelligent and sensitive
- **Constructing social reality**
 - **Self-serving bias:** failures are blamed on others and success is attributed to your "intelligence/knowledge"
 - example: you get a good grade on a test and you tell yourself you're super smart but if you fail a test you blame the teacher
 - **Pygmalion effect:** you're going to act/behave in accordance to society's expectations
 - **Behavioural expectation confirmation:** you can act in a way that influences others around you to act in the same way, influence others to act in accordance to *your* expectations
- **Social Cognition:** a branch of social psychology that looks how cognitive functions such as perception, attention and memory make social behaviours possible
- **Perception of social cues:** when you meet someone on the street, you can learn a lot just by looking at them
 - **Facial recognition:** important part of our social interactions

- Fusiform face area: brain area that helps with facial recognition, found on ventral surface of the temporal lobe, it is the right side that is most important in recognition
 - Prosopagnosia: inability to recognize faces of other people due to damage in the brain
- **Social categorization:** we categorize people based on certain demographics (age, gender, race), happens in a tenth of a second
- **Mentalizing:** if you want to empathize with someone, it is important to understand how they feel (you need to put yourself in their shoes), experiencing empathy means that you have feelings for others, that you want to help them
 - empathy involves something called **mentalizing**, in which your behaviour and that of other people reflects your psychological state, we can mentalize for 2 reasons:
 - we possess **mental flexibility**: you can put yourself in someone else's position and see the world from their perspective, frontal lobes are important for this
 - we possess **mirror neurons**, which fire when you see others doing the same action that you have attempted to do (either in the present or in the past)
- **Social influence (a.k.a social pressure):** refers to real or imagined psychological forces that people will exert over one another, every day we will encounter and exert forms of social influence, we do so because it is a way of controlling behaviour, the following are examples of social influence:
 - **Hedonic motive:** we behave in a certain way because there is pleasurable incentive or reward for acting that way
 - **Approval motive (acceptance in society):** the desire to be accepted by our peers motivates us to act in a certain way
 - wanting to be liked by others has helped us survive because it reduces our stress levels, which boosts our health and reduces the likelihood of illness
 - **Accuracy motive:** our desire to do right is a great motivator
 - **Contagious behaviour (imitation):** there are 2 extremes, we often imitate people we have a lot of respect for (the way they walk/talk) and we also imitate people we don't respect
 - chameleon effect: imitation is not always a conscious choice (can occur unconsciously)
 - example: when you walk in on your friends laughing, you will laugh too even though you don't know what they are laughing about
- **Conformity:** requires that we change our behaviour/thinking to conform to a group standard
 - **Normative social influence:** we all have a desire for the approval of others, and to be part of a group. this will cause us to conform to the norms of the attitudes/behaviours of the group we want to be a part of
 - **Informational influence:** we are often influenced by the information we receive from others
 - **Asch's conformity studies**
 - **Suggestibility:** the more susceptible we are of others' opinions, the more likely we are to conform
 - **The bystander effect:** refers to cases in which individuals do not offer any means of help to a victim when other people are present
 - **Reference group:** a group that a person takes as a standard in forming attitudes and behaviour

