

Topic D: Why do we have phobias?

Theories about phobias		Research Method	The job of a clinical psychologist				
<p>Classical Conditioning =</p> <p>Phobias can be learnt by association</p>	<p>Social Learning Theory =</p> <p>Phobias can be learnt by observation and imitation</p>	<p>Questionnaires</p> <p>Questionnaire – a really good way of finding out what people think and feel about a particular subject.</p>	<p>Helps to deal with mental health issues such as depression, mood disorders, dealing with death and phobias.</p>				
<p>Classical conditioning – a way that animals and humans can learn to link two things together.</p> <p><u>How this works</u></p> <p>1. Before conditioning (the NS has no effect)</p> <p>The neutral stimulus (NS) has no effect on behaviour. eg, water Unconditioned stimuli (UCS) – has an effect on behaviour eg, falling over Unconditioned response (UCR) – what happens because of the UCS eg, fear/being scared</p> <p>NS (water) – no effect, UCS (falling over) = UCR – fear.</p> <p>2. During conditioning – (when the person learns to fear the NS through its association with the UCS)</p> <p>NS (water) + UCS (falling over) = UCR (fear)</p> <p>Note: the NS and UCS might have to be paired several times for the association to work.</p> <p>3. After conditioning – the association is made and the NS becomes the CS (Conditioned stimulus).</p> <p>CS (water) = CR (fear)</p>	<p><u>How social Learning Theory works</u></p> <p>We learn by observing others</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Attention – we pay attention to what that person is doing. Memory – we remember the behaviour we have seen. Reproduction – we act out the behaviour we have seen Motivation – we want to copy the behaviour we have seen <p>Vicarious reinforcement – we see our role models rewarded in some way for their behaviour so we are more likely to copy it to get similar rewards.</p> <p><u>How Social Learning can explain phobias</u></p> <p>If a toddler bites another child and gets their toys, other toddlers might copy the biting because they think they too can get extra toys this way.</p>		<p><u>Different kinds of question</u></p> <p>1. Closed questions: questions which have a fixed number of possible answers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you afraid of spiders? Yes / No How old are you? Which animal are you most afraid of: Mice / frogs / rats / dogs <p>Closed questions provide quantitative data = number data which can be added up and put in tables and or graphs etc...</p> <p>2. Open questions (or open ended questions): questions that ask for detail or description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you feel when you see a spider? Describe why you think you became afraid of water. <p>Open questions provide qualitative data = data in written / word form.</p> <p>3. Rank-style questions – questions which ask the participant to say how much more or less things are. There are several types.</p> <p>a. Listing in order</p> <p>Give each animal below a number from 1 (most scary) to 4 (least scary)</p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Cat</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Fish</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Worm</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Hamster</td> </tr> </table> <p>b. Likert-type scales – judging how much you agree or disagree</p> <p>Snakes move suddenly <i>Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree</i></p>	Cat	Fish	Worm	Hamster
Cat	Fish						
Worm	Hamster						
<p>So, we can learn to fear some things through classical conditioning.</p>	<p>Role models and learning</p> <p>Example</p> <p>Coombes – lets two rats drink from a spout – one rat given an injection to make it sick</p>	<p>Becoming a Clinical Psychologist</p>	<p>Skills</p>				
<p>Extinction – when the conditioned stimulus</p>							

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<p>is repeated many times without the unconditioned stimulus = the conditioned stimulus is lost.</p>	<p>after drinking the water. The other rat observed this and did not use the water spout again.</p>	<p>To work out the results of a Likert scale you give each of the options a number.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good listening • Understand diversity • Learn to ask open questions
<p>One trial learning – classical conditioning often takes many trials but sometimes fears can be learnt through just one trial. For example, someone might become afraid of driving just through one bad experience – such as being involved in a crash.</p>	<p>Social Learning and phobias in animals <u>Example:</u> Mineka – lab monkeys born in the wild = afraid of snakes but those born in captivity were not. In an experiment the captive born monkeys watched the reactions of the wild born monkeys to snakes and learnt to fear snakes.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Qualifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree in psychology (recognized by British Psychological Society) • Relevant work experience • Doctorate in clinical psychology • Job as a trainee clinical psychologist with the NHS.
<p style="text-align: center;">Evolution and Phobias</p>	<p>Social Learning and phobias in humans <u>Example:</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluating questionnaires</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Clinical Psychology and Phobias</p>
<p>We might fear some things because our ancestors learnt to fear them as part of their survival such as a fear of height, deep water, snakes etc... They might have witnessed someone get bitten by a snake and learnt to fear it. This fear has been passed down in our genes. Therefore we can say that we have evolved a fear of some things.</p>	<p>Leib – found children are more likely to have a social phobia if their parents had one = they have copied it.</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can ask everyone the same set of questions – • You can tell everyone what to do = this means your research is standardized. • In completing the questionnaire people are giving you informed consent = ethical. • A questionnaire is a very good way of finding out what people think and feel about real life events. • If they give an honest answer then you are getting real life data about what people think. <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response bias = people might give answers they think the researcher wants. • Social desirability bias = people might not answer the questions honestly but answer them in a way which makes them look good. <i>To avoid this the researcher should hide the aims of the questionnaire – but of course, this is a problem = ethics of informed consent and deception.</i> 	<p>There a number of ways a clinical psychologist could treat someone’s phobia.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Systematic desensitization Gradual exposure to the thing they fear. Use of fear thermometer and relaxation techniques. 2. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) Changing a person’s negative thoughts about something into less negative thoughts – so they think differently about what they fear. 3. Exposure based therapies Similar to systematic desensitization. Establishes a fear hierarchy and the psychologist works through the hierarchy with the client at each session. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • + Limits stress in clients • + Gradual process • Client becomes more confident • - Time consuming (and costly) 4. Hypnotherapy Getting a client in a relaxed state and then the psychologist suggests how the client can manage or get over their phobia.

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Phobias and Preparedness		The ethics of Animal Experiments	How to treat phobias
<p>Preparedness – evolution has prepared us to fear the things which are most threatening to us.</p>			<p>1. Flooding. Extreme therapy – the client confronts their fear directly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very stressful to begin with but the body will eventually begin to calm down and the client will begin to feel less anxious. <p>Problem = not very ethical = very stressful.</p>
The nature – nurture debate		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Should on cause pain and fear when absolutely necessary and on the minimum number possible. Should not keep social animals such as dogs, rats and monkeys isolated for any length of time – only for the time it takes to carry out the test. Should use as few animals as possible. Should choose a species that will be the least distressed by the research. 	<p>2. Systematic desensitization. Similar to flooding but less stressful.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Patient and psychologist create a hierarchy of fear (fear thermometer) Psychologist uses relaxation techniques with client. Begins with lowest fear rating and is shown that object. Once ready client moves onto the next on the list. By slowly moving up the hierarchy the client eventually confronts the thing they fear most and can get over their phobia.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Parents may pass some phobias to their children through their genes – preparedness – evolved to fear certain things. Bennet Levy Martteau’s study found we fear animals with certain traits such as speediness, sliminess and ugliness. Slater and shield found that identical twins were more similar in their phobias than non-identical twins. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Parents may pass on their phobias to their children because their children copy them. Mineka – monkeys learn through social learning. Watson and Raynor’s study on Little Albert showed that a phobia could be learnt. 		<p>Example of a hierarchy of fear for a snake phobia</p> <p>Touching snake Being in the same room as a snake Looking at a video of a snake Looking at a picture of a snake</p>
<p>Overall: both nature and nurture seem to be important and they may even act together.</p>		Practical issues of using animals in experiments.	
		<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a way of seeing what would happen in humans – so you would have to do the research on animals similar to humans such as monkeys. Animals are simpler than humans so their behaviour is easier to explain. It is easier to control variables when doing lab test on animals than humans – and cheaper. It is easier to deprive animals than humans as it would be more unethical to do so with humans. Researchers can find out a lot about how animals behave. 	
		<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Humans are different to other animals so it is difficult to generalize the results from animal experiments to humans. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Ethics and treatments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All clients have the right to withdraw from the treatment (apart from flooding – as doing so might make their phobia worse) Patients must give informed consent – they must be told in detail about the therapy and what will happen.

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Studies into Phobias		
Jones (1924): curing a boy's phobia	Bennett-Levy and Marteau (1984): fear of animals	Heinrichs et al (2005): cultural differences in fears
<p>Aim: To see if a phobia in a little boy be deconditioned.</p> <p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case study – Peter (2 years and 10 months) – observation. Found he had a fear of a rat and this generalized to a fear of other furry things eg, a rabbit Tested Peter's fear of how he reacted to different situations when a rabbit was present (17 situations) eg., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rabbit in cage anywhere in the room Rabbit touched when free in the room Lets rabbit nibble fingers Had other children (who did not fear the rabbit) act as role models – would play with the rabbit to show Peter it was not frightening. = Social Learning. Peter was also rewarded with food when he was introduced to a new situation (eg, hutch being moved closer to him. = Classical conditioning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before conditioning = food – happy / rabbit – afraid. During conditioning = food + rabbit – happy After conditioning = rabbit - happy <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It took 45 sessions for Peter to let the rabbit nibble his fingers. <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both classical conditioning and social learning helped to decondition Peter of his fear of rats / rabbits. He could also cope with new animals. 	<p>Aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To see whether we are more afraid of, or avoid animals that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move quickly Move suddenly Look very different from people <p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two questionnaires (used same 29 animals in each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questionnaire 1 (answered by 30 men and 34 women) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> asked about fear of animals and how close you would get to them. Used fear scale 1-3 and nearness scale 1-5 = quantitative datas. Questionnaire 2 (answered by 24 men and 25 women) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asked how people felt about each animal – scale 1 – 3 (1=not, 2= quite, 3= very) for each of the following: Ugliness, sliminess, how speedy they moved, how suddenly they moved. <p>Participants also interviewed after completing the questionnaire.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most feared were rat, cockroach, jellyfish, spider, slug Least feared were rabbit, ladybird, cat, lamb, robin, tortoise People more afraid of ugly, slimy, speedy or sudden moving animals <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Features of ugliness, sliminess, speediness and sudden movements all make animals more frightening. Many animals which cause phobias in humans have these traits. 	<p>Aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To see if being brought up in different cultures affects social anxiety and fear of blushing. <p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 909 university psychology students (volunteers) 8 different countries 8 different universities All given a short description of a social situation and asked how they would respond. All completed a social anxiety and blushing questionnaire. <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest social anxiety found in Japan, Korea, Spain Least social anxiety in Germany, The Netherlands and Australia <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was the collectivist cultures (cultures where there are strong group bonds) that showed the most social anxiety. It was the individualistic cultures (cultures which encourage competition and independence) that showed the least social anxiety. It was a sense of strong social norms in collectivist cultures which was the reason. Nature – nurture debate. This study shows how influential our culture (nurture) is to our behaviour and it could explain some social phobias.
Evaluation of Jones (1924): curing a boy's phobia	Evaluation of Bennett-Levy and Marteau (1984): fear of animals	Evaluation of
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ His progress was carefully monitored at each stage so changes in Peter's behaviour can be seen clearly. ✓ The research (using different ways to help decondition Peter) helped other psychologists develop treatments such as systematic desensitization. 	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Men and women were used – as their phobias are often different the findings from this study can be applied to both genders. ✓ The participants did not need to see the animals – so it was ethical – did not cause participants too much stress. ✓ The findings are useful – can help explain why we can have a phobia of animals without having actually seen them. 	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Uses several different countries – so the results can be generalized.
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Because two different techniques were used it is impossible to know which was the most effective. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ In the interviews participants suggested other things that make animals scary but this was not included in the findings – just the information from the questionnaire. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Only university students studying psychology were used. They may have shown response bias as they knew what the study was about.

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