How did Freud think people defend themselves against anxiety?

- For Freud, anxiety was the product of tensions between the demands of the id and superego. The ego copes by using unconscious defense mechanisms, such as repression, which he viewed as the basic mechanism underlying and enabling all the others.

How do contemporary psychologists view Freud's psychoanalysis?

- Today's psychologists give Freud credit for drawing attention to the vast unconscious, to the importance of our sexuality, and to the conflict between biological impulses and social restraints.
- But Freud's concept of repression, and his view of the unconscious as a collection of repressed and unacceptable thoughts, wishes, feelings, and memories, have not survived scientific scrutiny. Freud offered after-the-fact explanations, which are hard to test scientifically.
- Research does not support many of Freud's specific ideas, such as the view that development is fixed in childhood. (We now know it is lifelong.)

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Free association is
   a. a method of exploring the unconscious.
   b. another name for hypnosis.
   c. the major function of the superego.
   d. an ego defense mechanism.
   e. a method of dream analysis.

2. According to Freud, which of the following is true of the ego?
   a. It focuses on how we ought to behave.
   b. It is the source of guilt.
   c. It is the part of personality present at birth.
   d. It strives to satisfy basic drives.
   e. It operates under the reality principle.

3. Which of the following represents Freud's Oedipus complex?
   a. Yosemite has begun to suffer from the same recurrent nightmares he had as a child.
   b. Madeline manifests repressed anxiety because of guilt she experienced when she disappointed her parents during toilet training.
   c. Five-year-old Anagha is taking on many of her mother's values through a process of identification.
   d. Four-year-old Carlos is expressing unconscious sexual desire for his mother and unconscious hatred for his father.
   e. Ellie has begun to overeat and smoke cigarettes as a college student, indicating a degree of oral fixation.

4. According to Freud, which of the following defense mechanisms underlie all of the others?
   a. Repression
   b. Projection
   c. Reaction formation
   d. Regression
   e. Displacement

Practice FRQs

1. Name what Freud believed to be the three parts of the mind and describe the role of each.

   Answer
   1 point: The conscious mind is what a person is aware of.
   1 point: The preconscious mind is a temporary holding place from which memories and feelings can be easily retrieved.
   1 point: The unconscious mind is the hidden holding place for unacceptable passions and thoughts.

Psychodynamic Theories and Modern Views of the Unconscious

Module Learning Objectives

56-1 Identify which of Freud's ideas were accepted or rejected by his followers.
56-2 Describe projective tests and how they are used, and discuss some criticisms of them.
56-3 Describe the modern view of the unconscious.

Psychodynamic theories of personality view our behavior as emerging from the interaction between the conscious and unconscious mind, including associated motives and conflicts. These theories are descended from Freud's historical psychoanalytic theory, but the modern-day approaches differ in important ways.

The Neo-Freudian and Psychodynamic Theorists

56-1 Which of Freud's ideas did his followers accept or reject?

Freud's writings were controversial, but they soon attracted followers, mostly young, ambitious physicians who formed an inner circle around their strong-minded leader. These pioneering psychoanalysts, when we often call neo-Freudians, accepted Freud's basic ideas: the personality structures of id, ego, and superego; the importance of the unconscious; the shaping of personality in childhood; and the dynamics of anxiety and the defense mechanisms. But they broke off from Freud in two important ways. First, they placed more emphasis on the conscious mind's role in interpreting experience and in coping with the environment. And second, they doubted that sex and aggression were all-consuming motivations. Instead, they tended to emphasize other motives and social interactions.

Alfred Adler and Karen Horney (HORN-eye), for example, agreed with Freud that childhood is important. But they believed that childhood sexual, not sexual, tensions are crucial for personality formation (Pergamn, 2003). Adler (who had proposed the still-popular idea of the inferiority complex) himself struggled to overcome childhood illnesses and accidents, and he believed that much of our behavior is driven by efforts to conquer childhood inferiority feelings that trigger our strivings for superiority and power. Horney said childhood anxiety triggers our desire for love and security. She also countered Freud's assumptions, asserting as they did in his conservative culture, that women have weak superegos and suffer "penis envy" and she attempted to balance the bias she detected in his masculine view of psychology.
Assessing Unconscious Processes

56-2 What are projective tests, how are they used, and what are some criticisms of them?

Projective tests aim to provide the "psychological X-ray" by asking test takers to describe an ambiguous stimulus or tell a story about it. Henry Murray introduced one such test, the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), in which a person views an ambiguous picture and then makes up a story about it (FIGURE 56.1). The clinician may pose that any hopes, desires, and fears that people see in the ambiguous image are projections of their own inner feelings or conflicts. The most widely used projective tests left some plots on the name of Swiss psychiatrist Hermann Rorschach [ROAR-shock]. He based his famous Rorschach inkblot test, in which people describe what they see in a series of inksplotches (FIGURE 56.2) on a childhood game. He and his friends would drip ink on paper, fold it, and then say what they saw in the resulting blot (Soder, 2005). Do you see predatory animals or weapons? Perhaps you have aggressive tendencies. But is this a reasonable assumption?

Clinicians' criticisms differ. Some clinicians cherish the Rorschach, even offering Rorschach-based assessments of criminals' violence potential to judges. Others view it as a helpful diagnostic tool, a source of suggestive leads, or an icebreaker and a revealing interview technique. The Society for Personality Assessment (2005) commends "its responsible use" (which would not include inflicting past childhood sexual abuse). And—in response to past criticisms of test scoring and interpretation (Sechrest et al., 1980)—a research-based, computer-aided tool has been designed to improve agreement among raters and enhance the test's validity (Erdberg, 1999; Emet, 2003).

But the evidence is insufficient to its rivalers, who insist the Rorschach is no emotional MRI. They argue that only a few of the many Rorschach-derived scores, such as ones for hostility and anxiety, have demonstrated validity—predicting what they are supposed to predict (Wood, 2006). Moreover, they say, these tests do not yield consistent results—they are not reliable. Inksplot assessments diagnose many normal adults as psychiatric (Wood et al., 2005, 2006, 2010). Alternative projective assessment techniques fare little better. "Even seasoned professionals can be fooled by their intuitions and their faith in tools that lack strong evidence of effectiveness," warned Scott Lilienfeld, James Wood, and Howard Garb (2001). "When a substantial body of research demonstrates that old intuitions are wrong, it is time to adopt new ways of thinking."

The projective test is a personality test, such as the Rorschach, that provides ambiguous stimuli designed to trigger projection of one's inner dynamics.

Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) a projective test in which people express their inner feelings and interests through the stories they make up about ambiguous scenes.

Rorschach inkblot test the most widely used projective test, a set of 10 inksplotches, designed by Hermann Rorschach, seeks to identify people's inner feelings by analyzing their interpretations of the blots.
The Modern Unconscious Mind

How has modern research developed our understanding of the unconscious?

Freud was right about a big idea that underlies today’s psychodynamic thinking: We indeed have limited access to all that goes on in our minds (Eidelwy, 1985, 1988, 2006; Norenzayan, 2010). Our two-track mind has a vast out-of-sight realm.

Nevertheless, many of today’s research psychologists now think of the unconscious not as seething passions and repressive censoring but as cooler information processing that occurs without our awareness. To these researchers, the unconscious also involves:

- the schemas that automatically control our perceptions and interpretations (Module 17);
- the priming by stimuli to which we have not consciously attended (Modules 16 and 32);
- the right hemisphere brain activity that enables the split-brain patient’s left hand to carry out an instruction the patient cannot verbalize (Module 13);
- the implicit memories that operate without conscious recall, even among those with amnesia (Module 33);
- the emotions that activate instantly, before conscious analysis (Module 41);
- the self-concept and stereotypes that automatically and unconsciously influence how we process information about ourselves and others (Module 77).

More than we realize, we fly on autopilot. Our lives are guided by off-screen, out-of-sight, unconscious information processing. The unconscious mind is huge. This understanding of unconscious information processing is more like the pre-Freudian view of an underground, unattended stream of thought from which spontaneous behavior and creative ideas surface (Bargh & Morsella, 2008).

Research has also supported Freud’s idea of our unconscious defense mechanisms. For example, Roy Baumeister and his colleagues (1998) found that people tend to see their foibles and attitudes in others, a phenomenon that Freud called projection and that today researchers call the false consensus effect, the tendency to overestimate the extent to which others share our beliefs and behaviors. People who cheat on their taxes or break speed limits tend to think many others do likewise. People who are happy, kind, and truly worthy to see others as the same (Wood et al., 2010).

Evidence also confirms the unconscious mechanisms that defend self-esteem, such as reaction formation, defense mechanisms, Baumeister concluded, are motivated less by the seething impulses that Freud presumed than by our need to protect our self-image. Finally, recent history has supported Freud’s idea that we unconsciously defend ourselves against anxiety. Jeff Greenberg, Sheldon Solomon, and Tom Pyszczynski (1997) proposed that one source of anxiety is "the terror resulting from our awareness of vulnerability and death." Nearly 300 experiments testing their terror-management theory show that thinking about one’s mortality—for example, writing a short essay on dying and its associated emotions—provokes various terror-management defenses (Burks et al., 2010). For example, death anxiety increases contempt for others and esteem for oneself (Koole et al., 2008).

Faced with a threatening world, people act not only to enhance their self-esteem but also to adhere more strongly to worldviews that answer questions about life’s meaning. The prospect of death promotes religious sentiments, and deep religious convictions enable people to be less defensive—less likely to rise in defense of their worldviews—when reminded of death (Jones & Fischer, 2006; Norenzayan & Hansen, 2006). Moreover, when contemplating death, people decrease to close relationships (Mikulincer et al., 2003). The
Multiple-Choice Questions

1. What did Carl Jung call the shared, inherited reservoir of memory traces from our species’ history?
   a. Neurosis
   b. Archetypes
   c. Collective unconscious
   d. Inferiority complex
   e. Terror management

2. Scott Lilienfeld, James Wood, and Howard Garb (2001) wrote, “When a substantial body of research demonstrates that old intuitions are wrong, it is time to adopt new ways of thinking.” What were they talking about?
   a. MRI test
   b. Rorschach inkblot test
   c. Freud’s work on the id and ego
   d. Psychodynamic theories
   e. Modern views of the unconscious

Practice FRQs

1. Name and accurately describe two projective tests.

   Answer
   1 point: Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)
   1 point: The Rorschach inkblot test

2. Explain and give an example of the false consensus effect.

   (2 points)

Module 57

Humanistic Theories

Module Learning Objectives

57-1 Describe how humanistic psychologists viewed personality, and explain their goal in studying personality.

57-2 Explain how humanistic psychologists assessed a person’s sense of self.

57-3 Describe how humanistic theories have influenced psychology, and discuss the criticisms they have faced.

How did humanistic psychologists view personality, and what was their goal in studying personality?

By the 1960s, some personality psychologists had become discontented with the sometimes bleak focus on drives and conflicts in psychodynamic theory and the mechanistic psychology of B. F. Skinner’s behaviorism (see Modules 27 and 28). In contrast to Freud’s study of the base motives of “sick” people, these humanistic theorists focused on the ways people strive for self-determination and self-realization. In contrast to behaviorism’s scientific objectivity, they studied people through their own self-reported experiences and feelings.

Two pioneering theorists—Abraham Maslow (1908–1970) and Carl Rogers (1902–1987)—offered a “third-force” perspective that emphasized human potential. Like psychoanalytic theory, the humanistic theories have been an important part of psychology’s history.

Abraham Maslow’s Self-Actualizing Person

Maslow proposed that we are motivated by a hierarchy of needs (Module 37). If our physiological needs are met, we become concerned with personal safety and, if we achieve a sense of security, we then seek to love, to be loved, and to love ourselves; with our love needs satisfied, we seek self-esteem. Having achieved self-esteem, we ultimately seek self-actualization (the process of fulfilling our potential) and self-transcendence (meaning, purpose, and communion beyond the self).

Maslow (1970) developed his ideas by studying healthy, creative people rather than troubled clinical cases. He based his description of self-actualization on a study of those, such as Abraham Lincoln, who seemed notable for their rich and productive lives. Maslow reported that such people shared certain characteristics: They were self-aware and self-accepting, open and spontaneous, loving and caring, and not paralyzed by others’ opinions. Secure in their sense of who they were, their interests were problem-centered rather than self-centered. They focused their energies on a particular task, one they often regarded as their mission in life.