

# PSYCHOLOGY *for* NURSES

**Psychology for Nurses** is a comprehensive book written for those taking diploma and degree programmes in nursing. It is also for the registered nurses (RN) who would like to enrich their nursing practice. Psychology as a subject must provide adequate insight for those who are embarking into the nursing profession, a healthcare profession which requires adjustment to the behaviour of the patients and those around them; understanding the patients' anxiety, fear or pain; and self-acceptance by the nursing care givers in order to function independently within the areas of their responsibility.

This book is unique in that the author who is a psychologist and a mental health nurse practitioner has introduced new concepts that are relevant to the nursing practice. Among these concepts are psychology of nursing care; psychological interventions, like the therapeutic smile; and the therapeutic use of self or presence. The basic concepts of psychology are also presented in this book since, as the author views it, it is very important that all nurses know and understand the origin and the development of psychology as a science.

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# Chapter 12



# Chapter 12

## The Psychology of Social Behavior

# EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this chapter, you are expected to:

1. define social psychology, concepts and theories related to group behavior;
2. explain the attribution theory and some researches supportive of the theory;
3. describe attitudes and how attitudes change;
4. discuss how others can influence our behavior; and
5. demonstrate how social processes and social relations develop.



# Introduction

- Nurses are social beings. They have always been affected by people around them like the sisters or the head nurses, the matrons or the supervisors and the chief matrons or the chief nurses.
- They work base on the influences of their managers as well as fellow nurses.

- The question is - how much space are they willing to share with these people?

# Social Thinking

- Social cognition involves the mental processes associated with how people perceive and react to others. Cognitive dissonance is the conflict that arises when a person holds two or more attitudes that are inconsistent.

# Attributing Behavior to Persons or to Situations

- Heider's theory claims that people usually attribute others' behavior either to their internal dispositions or to their external situations



- Harold Kelley proposed three factors that influence whether we make internal (personal) attributions or external (situational) attributions.

# Attitudes and Behavioral Actions

- Attitudes are beliefs and opinions that can predispose individuals to behave in certain ways .

- Social psychologists have defined three components of attitudes:
  1. Cognitive component includes the beliefs and ideas held about the object,
  2. Affective component is the emotional feeling or feelings stimulated by the attitude, and
  3. Behavioral component which is our predisposition to act in certain ways that are relevant to our attitude.

# Changing Attitudes

- Persuasion occurs when others attempt to change our attitudes. The process of persuasion includes four basic elements: source, receiver, message and channel. The source or communicator is the individual who delivers a persuasive message.

# Social Influence

- Social pressure from others can influence our behavior. Conformity, compliance and obedience are situations which evidence social pressure.
- Conformity occurs when individuals adopt the attitudes or behavior of others because of real or imagined pressure.
- Social norms are shared standards of behavior. People conform because they are often reinforced for conforming.

- Compliance occurs when you go along with a request made of you from a person who does not have specific authority over you.
- Compliance techniques include: foot-in-the-door technique, door-in-the-face technique and low-balling.
- After agreeing to the first small request, the person has a harder time turning down the second larger request.

- Obedience is a form of compliance that occurs when people follow direct commands, usually from someone in a position of authority.



# Role of Perception

- Person's perception relates to how we form impression of others.
- A person scheme or social scheme is an organized cluster of information, ideas or impressions about a person.
- These schemes are not always accurate, however, and can be influenced by physical appearance, first impressions and stereotypes.

- Studies have shown that people have a bias toward viewing attractive men and women as intelligent, competent, talented, pleasant, interesting, kind and sensitive.

- First impressions can be powerful and can influence many of the later impressions we form about people.
- The primacy effect is the tendency for early information or first impressions to be considered more important than later information about a person when forming impressions.

- Stereotypes are broad overgeneralizations and widely held beliefs about the way a group of people think and act.
- Stereotypes can be positive and negative .
- The most common stereotypes in our society is based on sex and ethnic including occupational groups.

- Prejudice is a negative attitude toward a group of people that is made without sufficient evidence and is not easily changed.
- Prejudice includes preconceived hostile and irrational feelings.
- Discrimination involves action against a person or group of people based on race, ethnicity, class, sex, etc. Discrimination is usually based on prejudice.

- The scapegoat theory of stereotypes proposed that people who are frustrated and unhappy about something will choose a relatively powerless group to take the blame for a situation that is not their fault.

# Group Processes

- Role is a set of behavioral expectations for people of particular social positions.
- A role is made up of a group of norms, which are society's definitions of the way we should behave.
- Norms govern every aspect of our behavior in society depending on which particular society we live in (Papalia and Olds, 1995).
- Norms have the capacity both for enhancing and restricting behavior.



- Norman Triplett (1898) opined that the presence of others boosts performance (cited in Myers, 1995, p. 627).
- This stronger performance in the presence of others is called social facilitation.
- The energizing effects of an enthusiastic audience likely contributes to the home advantage enjoyed by various sports teams.

- When people come together in groups, they often have to make decisions.

# Social Relations

- *Interpersonal Attraction* refers to our close relationships with others and those factors which contribute to a relationship being formed.

# 1. Friendship

- Studies of friendship have found three factors that are important in determining who will become friends:
  1. Similarity,
  2. Proximity or Propinquity, and
  3. Attractiveness.

## 2. Love

- The same factors connected with friendship are also related to love relationships.
- Dating and married couples tend to be similar in age, race, social class, religion, education, intelligence, attitudes and interests.
- We tend to fall in love with people who live nearby.

- We tend to fall in love with people whose attractiveness matches our own according to matching hypothesis.
- Love includes physiological arousal, self-disclosure, all-encompassing interest in another individual, fantasizing about the other, and a relatively rapid swing of emotions.
- Love includes passion, closeness, fascination, exclusiveness, sexual desire and intense caring. Researchers have distinguished two main types of love.

# 3. Aggression

- It is defined as intentionally inflicting physical or psychological harm on others.
- About one third of studies show that males are more aggressive than females and the differences are larger with children than adults and with physical rather than verbal aggression.



# 4. Altruism.

- Altruism or prosocial behavior is the selfless concern for the welfare of others that leads to helping behavior.
- One of the most widely studied aspects of altruism is bystander intervention, whether individuals will intervene and come to the aid of a person in distress.
- This by-stander effect states that people are less likely to help someone in an emergency situation when others are present.

# KEY POINTS

- Attribution theory states that we tend to explain our and others' behavior by attributing it to internal (personal) and external (situational) factors.
- Attitudes are beliefs and opinions that can predispose individuals to behave in certain ways.
- Social pressure influences our behavior.
- Conformity occurs when individuals adopt the attitude or behavior of others because of real or imagined pressure.

- Compliance occurs when we go along with a request made of us from a person who does not have specific authority over us.
- Obedience is a form of compliance that occurs when people follow direct commands, usually from someone in a position of authority.
- Person perception relates to how we form an impression of others.

- Interpersonal attraction refers to our close relationships with others and those factors which contribute to a relationship being formed.
- Aggression is defined as intentionally inflicting physical or psychological harm on others.
- Males tend to be more aggressive than females.
- Altruism is the selfless concern for the welfare of others that leads to helping behavior.