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2 Body-Mind Relationship

Chapter Outline

- Behavior
- Mind-Body Relationship
- Self-sufficiency
- Altered State of Consciousness
- Hypnosis
- Meditation
- Empathy
- Psychoactive Drugs

Learning Objectives

- Students will be familiarized with mind-body relationship.
- Orients students to altered states of consciousness.

Behavior that is elicited by a stimulus is known as response. Behavior has cognitive, affective, and conative components. The process or result of the unification of these components into a whole is called integrated response.

INTEGRATED RESPONSES

Psychology studies the relationship between mind and body. Mind and body affect each other. The mind operates at the levels of thinking, emotion, and action. Mind and body cannot act independently on parallel lines. This is an integrated response, inseparable from each other.

When angry thoughts cross your brain, they stimulate both the halves of the autonomic nervous system—the sympathetic, which energizes you and the parasympathetic which calms you down. You may consider the former as a car's accelerator and the latter as its brake. You would be having a bumping ride, if you apply brake while accelerating. This is what would happen to your heart when you are

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constantly being resentful. The conflicting messages trigger jerky, ragged heart rhythms.

To arrest potential for physical damage, researchers in the field of heart-brain communication have found that you need to shift into a positive state of mind. As emotions, such as empathy and mercy, overpower negative feelings and thoughts, the symptoms of heart disease disappear. When you are treated unjustly by others, resent is the natural response. If those resentful feelings are not resolved, a grudge will form. Victims may want to hold a grudge, because it gives them a regained sense of control and superiority. However, when nursing a grudge, you are continuing as a victim and inviting anger to become a companion in your everyday life—and a toxin to your body.

Emotions depend on a complex combination of bodily responses and mental processes. Body provides energy to fight, flee, cope, hug, sing, or dance. Mind contributes to the understanding to offer an explanation for one's own actions or the actions of others. Just as the body produces epinephrine to fight out danger, the mind helps to decide whether the raised fist is a sign of rage, playfulness, or a threat.

Our emotions including moods, such as depression and complex feelings, such as hatred and love—are greatly affected by our interpretation, memories, and expectations. These emotions lead to think more positively about ourselves and the world around us feel better.

Action of Mind upon Body

1. All physical and motor activities begin by the motivation in the mind.
2. Negative emotions like fear, anger, and jealousy produce illness. They make us depressed. Emotional conflicts lie at the root of peptic ulcers, coronary heart diseases, blood pressure, and neurosis.
3. Deep thinking and concentration can cause physical fatigue.
4. Soldiers put in superhuman effort and win the war when their morale is high.

Action of Body upon Mind

1. Rise in blood pressure leads to mental excitement.
2. Fatigue retards intellectual activity.
3. Sudden emotion causes mental imbalance.
4. Constipation makes people irritable.
5. Dyspepsia (indigestion) makes people gloomy.

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6. Hyperthyroidism leads to excitement and hypothyroidism causes lethargy.
7. Bad throat and septic tonsils can reduce concentration.

An understanding of the above facts is useful for the nurse to learn the etiology of diseases.

THE BEHAVING ORGANISM

The human being is capable of behavior and, therefore, is a living organism. The individual is in active relation with the environment and his environment influences and changes him. His behavior consists of his dealings with the environment. All behavior is a function of the individual and his environment, both of which undergo changes because of their interaction with one another.

Characteristics of Behaving Organism

a. **Unity:** The living organism behaves as one unit.
b. **Self-sufficiency:** Unlike machines, the living organism is autonomous. It is self-maintaining, self-changing, self-regulating, and self-reproducing. It moves from within as per its own laws.
c. Every living organism is unique. No two human beings are exactly alike.
d. A living organism changes and grows not only from within but also because of what happens from outside. An organism does not grow in an isolated vacuum.

LEVELS OF FUNCTIONING OR LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

1. Conscious,
2. Unconscious, and
3. Preconscious.

For details, see personality dynamics described in Freud's psychosexual theory of personality development (Chapter 17).

Altered State of Consciousness (ASC)

Besides conscious, unconscious, and preconscious, there are altered states of consciousness or ASC, which influence our lives. They include sleep, dreaming, drugs, hypnosis, and meditation.

Hypnosis is an ASC during which a person becomes very relaxed and open to suggestion. Hypnosis can be used to reduce pain, improve attention, become more relaxed and change harmful habits.

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Meditation is an ASC brought about by focusing one's thoughts on a particular sound or idea. It can be used for relaxation or religious purposes. Meditation has been found to promote health by reducing the harmful effects of stress in life.

Six Steps in Meditation

1. Sit quietly in a comfortable position.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Deeply relax all your muscles beginning with your feet and progressing to your face. Keep them deeply relaxed.
4. Breathe through your nose and as you breathe out, say the word "one" silently to yourself.
5. Do not worry about whether you are successful or not in becoming relaxed. If distracting thoughts come to your mind, and you can expect them, ignore them; keep repeating the word "one".
6. Practice this once or twice a day.

Psychoactive drugs: Drugs, which alter consciousness are called psychoactive drugs and they act directly upon the brain. They can be stimulants, depressants, or hallucinogens. Stimulants include caffeine, nicotine, cocaine, and amphetamines. Alcohol, barbiturates, and marijuana are depressants. Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), *hashish, ganja,* and *bhang* are hallucinogens. Drug dependence or substance abuse is a major health problem. Drug is a journey to the unknown. It is difficult to stop but not impossible.

Nurse and Levels of Consciousness

The interrelationship of the body, mind, and everything happening to the person is extremely important in nursing care. A patient who had a surgery may have a very slow recovery, if he has serious problems at home or in his relationship with others. It is necessary to study a person's entire physical and psychological situation to provide him the most helpful nursing care.

The nurse must be aware of the power of the unconscious in her as well as her patient's behavior. She may feel uneasy when she is in the operation theater or in pediatrics ward. Patients may have unexplained fear of hospitalization or laboratory procedures.

Sleep is an essential need of all people. Often, hospital routines interrupt sleep of patients. Sometimes, this may be unavoidable, but whenever possible, more flexible routines should be used. Sometimes, health personnel including nurses have to keep awake and sleep at unusual hours or short periods. Loss of sleep should be made up at

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the earliest by sleep and good rest. Use of drugs to avoid sleep must be strictly avoided.

Health personnel and patients may wish to meditate for relaxation and religious reasons. A quiet place must be earmarked for this purpose in the hospital.

Key Points

- Behavior is a function of individual and their environment.
- Freud speaks of three levels of consciousness.
- Sleep, dreaming, drugs, hypnosis, and meditation are altered state of consciousness.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Long Essay

1. What is the physiological basis of behavior? What are the levels of functioning? How are the responses integrated?

Short Answer

1. What are integrated responses? What are the levels of thinking?

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Who proposed the three levels of consciousness?
   a. Freud b. Rogers
   c. Bandhura d. Hook
2. Alcohol is a_____.
   a. Stimulant b. Opiate
   c. Depressant d. Hallucinogen
3. Thoughts that are not in our current awareness but can be recalled is_____.
   a. Subconscious b. Preconscious
   c. Ultraconscious d. Nonconscious
4. Which of the following is not considered an altered state of consciousness?
   a. Dreaming b. Divided attention
   c. Hypnosis d. Meditation

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5. The_____nervous system energies our body and the _____nervous system calms our body.
   a. Sympathetic, parasympathetic
   b. Parasympathetic, sympathetic
   c. Somatic, sympathetic
   d. Somatic, parasympathetic

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- Essay questions, short answers and multiple choice questions have also been included.

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