

Emotion and Psychology

Raymond Nelson, MA, NCC

Emotion

- Psychological discussions about emotion began as a search for reasons or explanations for psychological problems
- Hysteria
- Explanations must explain normal and non-normal phenomena
 - Sanity
 - Insanity
 - Self-destructive problems

Freud

- What types of psychological mechanisms regulate behavior and choices?
- Motivation and emotion are inseparable
- Id
- Superego
- Ego

EMOTION

- **Emotion** - A subjective response, accompanied by a physiological change, which is interpreted in a particular way by the individual and often leads to a change in behavior
- **Display rules** – the rules that govern the display of emotion, which vary according to age, culture, and gender, thus creating wide differences in emotional expression

THEORIES OF EMOTION

- Physiological Theories
- Evolutionary Theory
- Cognitive Theories

PHYSIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF EMOTION

- **James-Lange Theory** – people experience physiological changes and then interpret them as emotional states
 - People do not experience an emotion until after their bodies become aroused and begin to respond with physiological changes
 - Example: People don't run because they are afraid, they feel afraid after they start running
 - **Facial Feedback Hypothesis** – suggests that sensations from the face provide signals to the brain that act as feedback to help a person determine an emotional response
 - Example: Putting on a happy face, may make a person happier

PHYSIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF EMOTION (cont'd)

- Cannon-Bard Theory
 - Undifferentiated Arousal – the physiological reactions underlying the “fight-or-flight” response are the same as those for all emotions
 - Emotional feelings accompany physiological changes rather than produce or result from such changes
- Cortex of the brain is involved in integrating information involved in the experience of emotion

EVOLUTIONARY THEORY OF EMOTION

- Emotional responses arise from the brain's neural circuits, and subjective feelings follow them.
- Fear responses occur automatically without thought and have adaptive advantages that caused these behavioral sequences to become part of human biology
- Evolution has prepared humans to respond in certain basic emotional ways to some stimuli
 - The human brain has evolved to be very sensitive to fear-inducing situations and to respond rapidly to avoid any danger.

EVOLUTIONARY THEORY OF EMOTION

- LeDoux (1995) –
 - Physiological changes occur in the amygdala and other brain structures first
 - Subjective interpretation is mediated by a different, slower pathway in the brain
 - The situation can affect an emotion by stimulating memories and interpretation
- Cosmides and Tooby (2000)
 - The brain contains a series of specialized programs for basic emotions
 - Cognition follows the reactions of the brain and the body
 - A given situation brings forth the appropriate programs

COGNITIVE THEORIES OF EMOTION

- Focus on mental interpretation as well as physiology
- Schachter and Singer (1962) – physiological arousal requires a cognitive interpretation before it is experience as an emotion
 - Cognitive labels determine the experience of emotion
 - Situation is a key determinant of emotion
- Lazarus (1991) – physiological reaction is less important than cognition
 - **Appraisal** – a person's evaluation of the significance of a situation or an event in terms of the person's well-being
 - Cognition affects emotion through appraisal of the situation
 - Situation must be appraised before a person experiences emotion

CAN WE CONTROL EMOTION?

- Controlling the physiology part of emotion is very difficult.
- Changing the way one thinks about a situation should produce alterations in the emotion one feels
- Emotional reactions can be controlled. Failure to control emotions may be due to unwillingness rather than the inability to do so

Emotion and Polygraph Testing

- Emotional theory cannot account for
 - Effectiveness of DLC questions
 - Test effectiveness with psychopaths
- Polygraph test effectiveness with psychopaths
- Polygraph instruments cannot distinguish different emotions (fear, anger, disgust)
- Polygraph theory is not limited to emotion

End.

MOTIVATION

- Any condition, usually an internal one, that initiates, activates, or maintains an organism's goal-oriented behavior
- Theories of Motivation
 - Evolutionary Theories
 - Drive Theory
 - Arousal Theory
 - Cognitive Theories
 - Humanistic Theory
