Personality:
Vive la Difference!
What is Personality?

- A set of characteristics *(behaviors, thoughts, and feelings)* that are:
  - Consistent across time
  - Consistent across situations
  - Distinguishes individuals from each other

Key Words:
- Distinction and
- Consistency
Personality: Traits or Situations?

- **Trait view**
  - We think and behave consistently across situations.

- **Situationist view**
  - Our thoughts and behaviors change with the situation.

- **Interactionist view**
  - Both traits and situations affect thoughts and behavior.
Analyzing Personality

- **Situationists**
  - Criticize the concept of consistency in behavior argue that behavior is controlled by situations.
    - Sometimes a person may let a cashier know they’ve been given too much change, but then
    - Cheat on their income tax
  - In defense of the idea of consistency, some researchers note that there are some problems with the methods used and the assumptions made in this research.
Analyzing Personality

Situationist, Seymour Epstien

- Proposed that both sides of the consistency vs. situational issue are correct:
  - **Situations** control behavior in a given instance, and broad consistencies do exist.
  - **Consistencies** become visible when we add behaviors together, an approach termed aggregation.
Trait Theories

- Different numbers of factors
- Nearly all have extraversion and neuroticism
- Useful for conceptualizing personality
- Not very effective in predicting behavior
The Big Five: Superfactors of Personality

- **Extraversion**
  - Withdrawn
  - Outgoing

- **Neuroticism**
  - Stable
  - Unstable

- **Agreeableness**
  - Low
  - High

- **Conscientiousness**
  - Undependable
  - Dependable

- **Openness to experience**
  - Closed
  - Open
Measuring Personality: Trait Inventories

- Questionnaires (paper or computer)
  - MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory) Helps diagnose psychology disorders
  - CPI (California Personality Inventory) Designed for a “normal” population
  - The Big 5 Personality Assessment

- Produce a personality profile
- Easy to score and statistically analyze
Measuring Personality: Projective Tests

- Include Rorschach and TAT
- Concerns about validity and reliability

What do you see?
"It's just a simple Rorschach ink-blot test, Mr. Bromwell. So just calm down and tell me what each one suggests to you."
Freud: Consciousness

- Conscious mind
  - Normal awareness

- Preconscious mind
  - Easily brought to consciousness

- Unconscious mind
  - Hidden thoughts and desires
Freud: Personality Development

- We must pass through psychosexual stages successfully
  - Each stage focuses on how we receive pleasure
- Failure to pass through a stage leads to fixation
  - In times of stress, we regress to that stage
Freud: Stages

- Oral stage (birth to 1½ years)
- Anal stage (1½ to 3 years)
- Phallic stage (3 to 6 years)
  - Castration anxiety
  - Oedipus complex
- Latency period (6 to puberty)
- Genital stage (puberty onward)
Freud: Structural Model

- The id
  - Present at birth
  - Home to sexual and aggressive drive
  - Governed by the pleasure principle
  - Think Homer Simpson
Freud: Structural Model

- The superego
  - Develops in childhood
  - Home to morality and conscience
  - Governed by the ego ideal
  - Think Ned Flanders
Freud: Structural Model

- The ego
  - Develops in childhood (before superego)
  - Acts as a referee between id and superego
  - Governed by the reality principle
Freud: Defense Mechanisms

- Unconscious attempts to silence the id
  - Denial
  - Displacement
  - Intellectualization
  - Projection
  - Rationalization
  - Reaction formation
  - Repression
  - Sublimation
Critiques of Freud

- Not scientific
  - Hard to test
- Too broad
  - Hard to falsify claims
- Based on limited sample
  - Female patients
  - Upper class
  - 19th-century Vienna
The Brain and Personality

Certain biological tendencies may affect personality.

- **Extraverts** are less arousable than introverts.
- **Neuroticism** may be related to the sensitivity of emotional parts of the brain.
- Underarousal of nervous system may be related to risk taking or criminal behavior.
Efforts to connect personality to biological factors can be traced to Hippocrates’ theory of "humors" and later to Gall’s phrenology.
A Genetic Link

- Recent evidence suggests that non-shared experiences exert a major influence on the personality of siblings — and accounts for the varied personality differences among them.
Temperament

- Innate tendencies to behave in certain ways
  - Impulsivity
  - Sociability
  - Emotionality
  - Activity

- Correlation between temperament at infancy and adulthood

- An example: sensation seeking
  - Tendency to engage in risky behavior
  - Related to levels of blood chemicals
Humanistic Theories

- Humanistic approaches evolved in opposition to the behavioral and psychodynamic perspectives.

- They propose that human beings are basically good and are directed toward development and growth.
Humanistic Theories

- Humanists believe people try to improve.
  - Desire to become self-actualized
  - Response to Freud’s theory of conflict
  - Think Stuart Smalley

*Stuart Smalley*
On the basis of his work with disturbed people, **Carl Rogers** concluded that efforts to achieve personal fulfillment were being stifled.

- He proposed that people's self-concepts had become distorted by conditions of worth imposed from the outside.
- In his theory, healthy individuals have a real self-concept that is consistent with their ideal self-concept.
Sometimes is never quite enough
If you're flawless, then you'll win my love
Don't forget to win first place
Don't forget to keep that smile on your face
Be a good boy
Try a little harder
You've got to measure up
And make me prouder
How long before you screw it up
How many times do I have to tell you to hurry up
With everything I do for you
The least you can do is keep quiet
Be a good girl
You've gotta try a little harder
That simply wasn't good enough
To make us proud

I'll live for you
I'll make you what I never was
If you're the best, then maybe so am I
Compared to him compared to her
I'm doing this for your own damn good
You'll make up for what I blew
What's the problem ...... why are you crying
Be a good boy
Push a little farther now
That wasn't fast enough
To make us happy
We'll love you just the way you are if you're perfect

--- Alanis Morissette
Cognitive Theory

- You are what you expect.
  - Locus of control
  - Reciprocal Determinism
  - Self-efficacy
Cognitive Theory

- Individuals differ in the degree to which they see themselves or chance ("fate") as responsible for their successes and failures.
- Measures of generalized expectancy, known as locus of control, are related to a variety of outcomes, including academic and health behaviors.
Cognitive Theory

- **Self-efficacy**
  - Is a person's judgment about his or her ability to succeed in a given situation.
  - Unlike a trait, self-efficacy is specific to the situation and can change over time.
Cognitive Theory

- Reciprocal Determinism
  - According to Albert Bandura, individuals not only are affected by the environment but also can influence it.
  - Cognitive factors also can influence the person's behavior and his or her environment.
### Personality and Birth Order

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>First born or only child</th>
<th>Middle-born</th>
<th>Later-born</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Conscientious</td>
<td>• Independent</td>
<td>• Agreeable</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Extraverted</td>
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<td>• Open to experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Neurotic</td>
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Personality and Gender

Female
- More empathic
- More neurotic
- Greater social connectedness

Male
- Greater individuality
- More aggressive
- More assertive

Nature or nurture?
Personality and Culture

- Difficult to compare personality across cultures

- Collectivism
  - Focus on the group
  - Chinese, African, Latin American, Arab cultures

- Individualism
  - Focus on needs of the individual
  - United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia