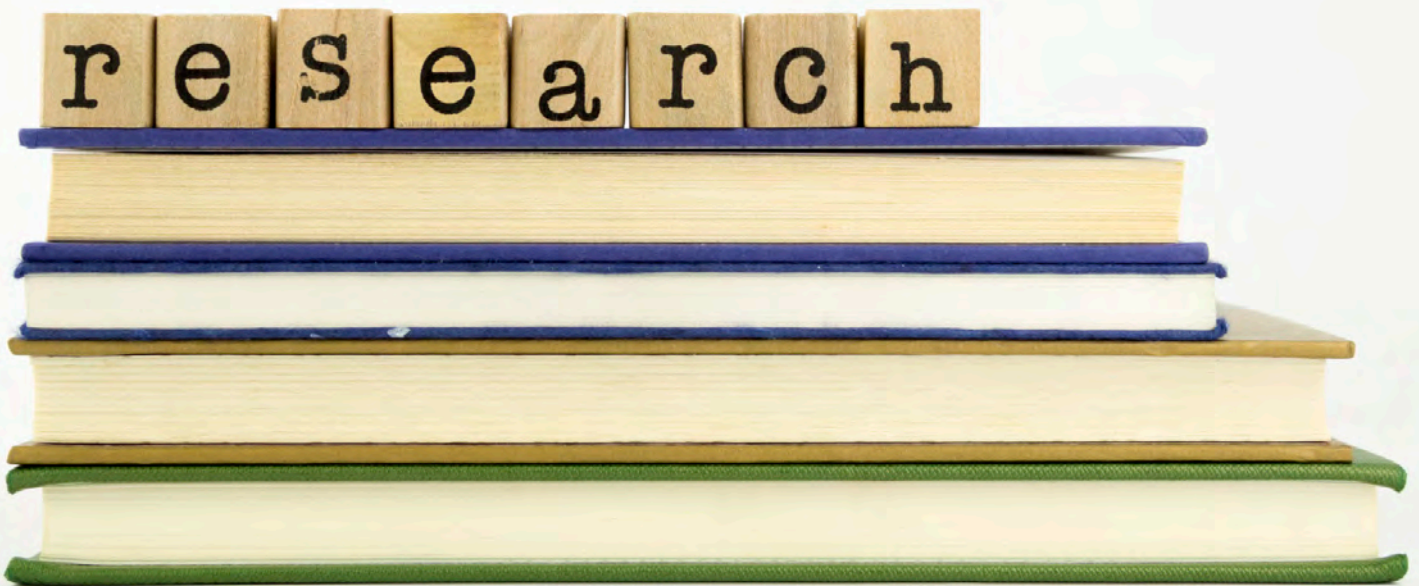


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## Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

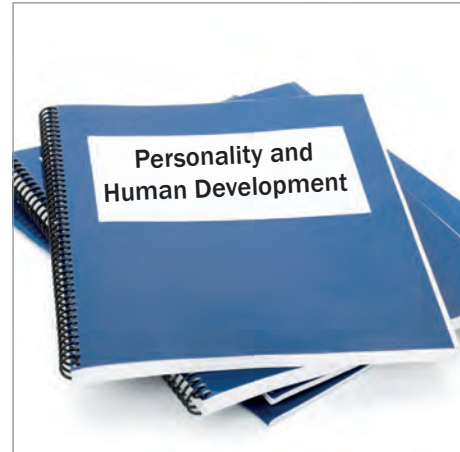
- 1A Identify and access sources of information on theories of personality and human development**
- 1B Read and interpret information, distilling key themes and messages for counselling work**
- 1C Document and organise information to support current and future practice**

## Research theories of personality and human development

The study of personality and human development includes various perspectives of a human life span – from conception to old age. There have been a variety of researchers that have developed theories of development. The diversity of theories makes understanding the life span development difficult, because no single theory is able to account for all aspects of life span development. This topic will discuss ways to conduct research by using critical thinking and analysis and how to use information to support counselling practice.

# 1A Identify and access sources of information on theories of personality and human development

Depending on the personal and psychological issues of the person receiving counselling, research may be required to locate the most appropriate and current method of support. Research sources may include journal articles, websites and published papers relating to theories or personality and human development. In order to locate the most appropriate and current information, research skills need to be developed.



## Identify and access appropriate information

Deciding on the appropriate approach to a person's counselling needs may not always be clear. Needs may be complex or undefined and research may be required to clarify what approach (or approaches) best suit the needs of the person. It is possible that there is no single or absolute correct approach to the situation. In order to locate the information needed to find the best solution, skills in critical thinking must be used.

## Critical thinking

Critical thinking is a process for reasoning. It involves weighing up different sides of an argument, using logic to determine the merit of the argument and then drawing a conclusion. The conclusion should be based on facts rather than guesswork or speculation. Using critical thinking skills in research can provide a range of solutions appropriate to the situation.

In order to demonstrate critical thinking, you need to develop skills in:

- ▶ interpreting and understanding the importance of the information
- ▶ breaking down information
- ▶ creating a logical argument
- ▶ evaluating the credibility and worth of the position or argument.

## Access sources of information

Information regarding theories of personality and human development can be accessed from a range of sources. It is important to understand the difference between sources of information and the way in which they can be assessed.

Here are some sources where information may be accessed.

### Books

- ▶ Books usually provide in-depth information covering a subject. Books are not as current as journals because they are not published as frequently. They usually contain a bibliography, which contains other information that may be useful. Books may be accessed through a physical library or an online library. Online libraries may have e-books available for download. Depending on which library is accessed, there may be a cost involved for accessing the PDF version of the book.

### Journals

- ▶ Journals are published regularly and will contain the latest research. Other names for journals are magazines or periodicals. Usually journals are industry- or topic-specific and can be accessed by searching a database. For example, a research paper discussing Piaget's theories may be found in journals such as *World Applied Sciences Journal* 12 (8): 1260-1265, 2011 or in the *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 36, 407-430.

### Websites

- ▶ Websites may contain recent information regarding emerging trends or recent research results. There are no standards required for publishing information on the web, so the information needs to be evaluated carefully for reliability. An example of a website holding information about Piaget is the Jean Piaget Society: Society for the Study of Knowledge and Development at: [www.piaget.org/](http://www.piaget.org/).

### Industry networks

- ▶ Networks can provide valuable information regarding current and emerging theories of personality and human development. Accessing the network's resources may involve a membership fee. An example of a network is the Australian Psychological Society at: [www.psychology.org.au/studentHQ/APSupport/networking](http://www.psychology.org.au/studentHQ/APSupport/networking).
- ▶ Network sites may have information regarding:
  - new research
  - opportunities to update theoretical knowledge
  - members that can provide mentoring
  - peers and colleagues with industry experience.

# 1B Read and interpret information, distilling key themes and messages for counselling work

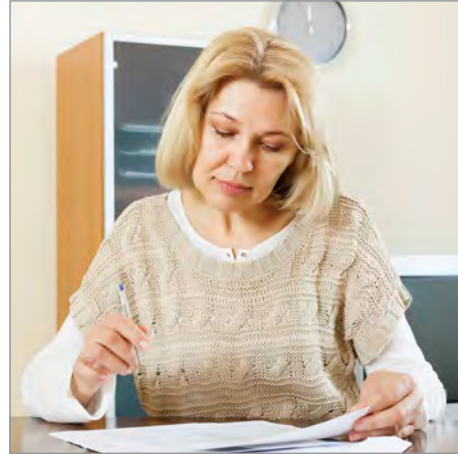
In order to use the information that has been accessed, it is critical to understand and interpret it correctly. Not all research is reliable and sound and it can be challenging to understand and interpret the information. Interpreting information means deciding and analysing the intended meaning of the information.

## Interpret information

Analysing or interpreting information involves using critical thinking skills to break down and recombine information in different ways.

Interpreting information may include:

- ▶ skimming the information
- ▶ identifying themes in the information
- ▶ recognising any information that is biased or omitted
- ▶ determining the accuracy and relevance of the information
- ▶ checking to see if the information source is reliable.



## Skim

Skimming takes place when only the general or main information is read. When skimming information, reading the first sentence of each paragraph will give an idea of the paragraph content. Skimming can help locate relevant information quickly and help identify themes that are in the information. Skimming can help identify whether the information is relevant and meaningful.

## Identify themes

Identifying themes within information is an important skill to help analyse research information. A theme may be described as a statement or a simple explanation of what the information is about. It may also be a major aspect of the information that is expressed more simply. In order to identify a theme or message, the information may be distilled by simplifying the information and condensing it to the key meaning.

Some researchers give themes a descriptive name, such as:

- ▶ basic theme
- ▶ central theme
- ▶ factual theme
- ▶ core theme.

## Theories of genetic inheritance and nature versus nurture

There are two other important theories that impact the study of personality and human development. Genetic inheritance refers to the belief that genetic makeup has a large role in determining human behaviour. Nature versus nurture refers to the ongoing controversy about whether human behaviour and personality is caused by genetic influences (nature) or by the environment or experiences (nurture) of the person.

Here is some more information about both theories.

### Genetic inheritance

- ▶ The belief that genes have an influence on behaviour has been well established. Genes may not determine the behaviour of a person, but they do play a role in what they do and how they do it.
- ▶ Genetic inheritance includes the concept of classical or Mendelian genetics based on Gregor Mendel's research in the 1800s and focused on hereditary traits or factors. Some mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, have been shown to have a genetic basis, which then is evident in illness-related behaviours. More recently behavioural genetic studies have included studies which involve families, twins and children who have been adopted.

### Nature versus nurture

- ▶ The nature versus nurture theory debates the influence genes (nature) have on a person's personality as opposed to environmental (nurture). The origins of this theory stem from Frances Galton who was influenced by the work of Charles Darwin.
- ▶ Do inherited traits or life experiences have the greatest effect on personality and life span development? Nature and genetics have proved to be important factors in the development of some mental health issues. Genetics may play a role in the predisposition to some addictions, but environmental (nurture) factors may influence the probability of the addiction occurring. Environmental factors may include a partner, parents, friends or life events.
- ▶ More recently it is widely accepted that both nature and nurture cannot necessarily be separated and do not in fact act independently.

## Theories of personality and human development

The theories of personality and human development broadly fit into four categories: psychodynamic, behavioural, cognitive and ethological. It is important to become familiar with all theories as they provide different perspectives of personality and human development. The theories of Freud, Erikson, Skinner, Piaget and Bowlby all link to counselling practice.





Erikson's stages of psychosocial development are explained below.

### Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development

- 1 Infancy (birth–18 months)**  
Basic conflict: Trust vs Mistrust

The most fundamental stage where the development of trust is based on the dependability and quality of care from the caregiver. A lack of care will lead to mistrust.
- 2 Early childhood (2–3 years)**  
Basic conflict: Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt

This stage focuses on the child developing a greater sense of control and independence where success leads to feelings of independence and failure leads to feelings of shame and doubt.
- 3 Preschool (3–5 years)**  
Basic conflict: Initiative vs Guilt

This stage is when children begin to assert power and control over their environment. Success in this stage leads to a sense of purpose. If a child asserts too much power, it results in disapproval and a sense of guilt.
- 4 School age (6–11 years)**  
Basic conflict: Industry vs Inferiority

A sense of pride in accomplishments is developed in this stage. Children who are encouraged by parents develop a feeling of competence and belief in their skills, whereas children who are not commended will doubt their abilities to be successful.
- 5 Adolescence (12–18 years)**  
Basic conflict: Identity vs Confusion

This stage is when children explore a sense of independence and develop a sense of self. During this stage Erikson believed those who receive encouragement and reinforcement will develop a strong sense of self and independence. Whereas, children who do not receive encouragement and reinforcement will feel insecure and confused about themselves and their future.
- 6 Young adulthood (19–40 years)**  
Basic conflict: Intimacy vs Isolation

This is the stage of exploring personal relationships. During this stage Erikson believed that it was vital for people to develop close and committed relationships with other people. He believed that a strong sense of identity was important for developing intimate relationships.
- 7 Middle adulthood (40–65 years)**  
Basic conflict: Generativity vs Stagnation

This is the stage of continuing to build the adult life and focusing on career and family. Those who are successful during this stage will feel they are contributing to the world by being active. Erikson believed that those who did not have the skills to continue to contribute would feel unproductive and uninvolved.
- 8 Maturity (65 years–death)**  
Basic conflict: Integrity vs Despair

This phase occurs at old age and is focused on reflection of life. Erikson believed that those who are unsuccessful at this stage will feel that their life has been wasted and will experience regrets and feelings of despair. Those who feel proud of their accomplishments will feel a sense of integrity. Successfully completing this step will lead to a general feeling of satisfaction.

## Behavioural theory

B.F. Skinner studied behavioural change, which focused on how behaviours in people can be changed by using positive and negative reinforcement. The behavioural perspective is based on people being affected by their environment resulting in actions or responses. For example, a person may have been bitten by a dog (environment). After the event, every time the person sees a dog, it may cause a response such as anxiety or fear.

Here are aspects of positive and negative reinforcement.

Positive reinforcement	Negative reinforcement
▶ Demonstrated by giving the person something they like or want	▶ Demonstrated by taking away something the person does not like or want
▶ Designed to reinforce good behaviour	▶ Designed to decrease the undesired behaviour
▶ A person displays good behaviour and is given extra time to do an activity they love	▶ A person displays good behaviour and does not have to put away materials after the activity is finished

## Cognitive theory

Jean Piaget was the first psychologist to study the theory of cognitive development. The origins of Piaget's theory stemmed from his research into developmental and genetic epistemology. Cognitive theory is based on changing thought processes in order to change behaviours. It incorporates a process of learning new ways of thinking and gaining more effective ways of coping with problems. Piaget's cognitive theory is made up of three components: schemas, adaptation and stages of development, which are explained below.

### Schemas

Schemas are commonly described as building blocks of knowledge or a way of organising knowledge.

Through a person's life span, the schemas get more numerous and complex. A schema can be described as a set of linked representations that are stored in our mind until we need to understand or respond to a situation.

### Adaptation

The adaptation component has processes that enable the transition from one stage to another. These processes are equilibrium, assimilation and accommodation.



## Stages of development

Piaget believed that childhood development was biologically-based and changes as the child matures. He also believed that cognition develops in all children in a sequence of the following stages:

- ▶ Sensorimotor
- ▶ Preoperational
- ▶ Concrete operational
- ▶ Formal operational

## Piaget's stages of development

Piaget believed that all children, regardless of culture, pass through the stages in the same order and that no stage can be missed out. He also believed that some people may never attain the later stages.

Here are the key concepts of Piaget's stages of development.

### Sensorimotor (From birth to age 2)

- ▶ Infants and toddlers gain knowledge through sensory experiences and manipulating objects. Piaget believed this is when children learned that the objects were still there even when they couldn't see them.

### Preoperational (From age 2 to age 7)

- ▶ Children start playing make-believe but struggle with logic.

### Concrete operational (From age 7 to age 11)

- ▶ Children are able to think logically but may struggle with concepts. Piaget believed that children in this stage begin to understand their thoughts are unique to them and not everyone will share their opinions and feelings.

### Formal operational (From adolescence to adulthood)

- ▶ At this point Piaget believed that there is an increase in logic and reasoning. In this stage, people are able to see solutions to problems and think scientifically.

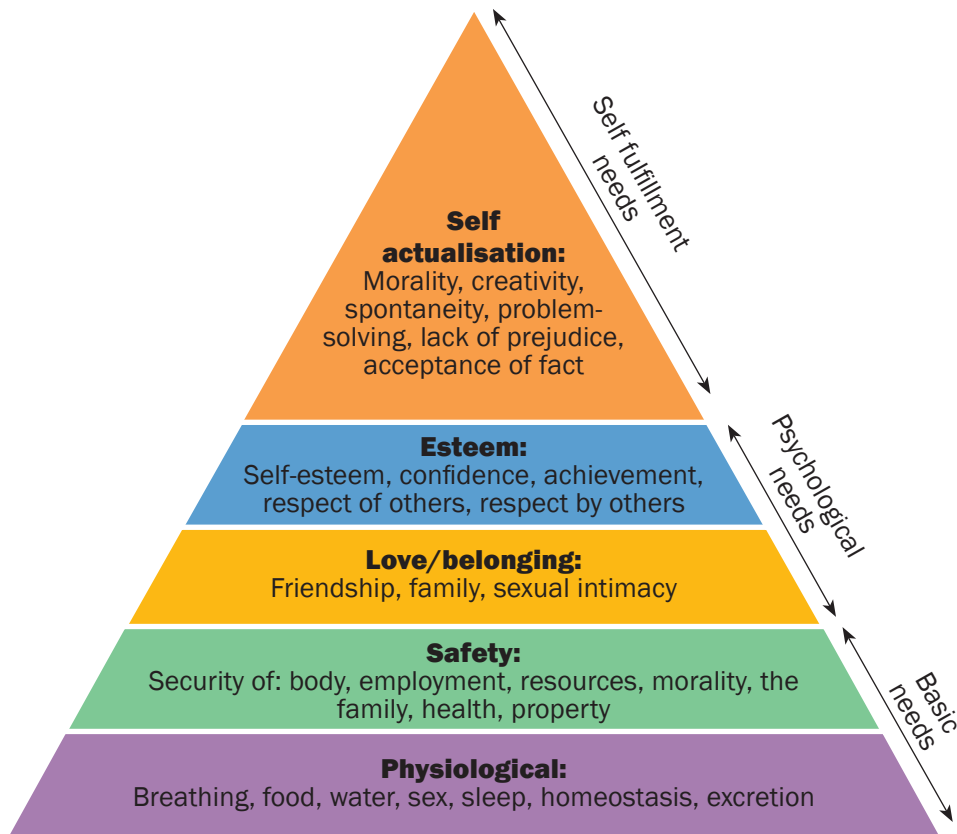
## Humanistic theory

Abraham Maslow studied the motivational systems of people as he believed that people are motivated to achieve certain needs.

The origins of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory was influenced by Max Wertheimer and Gestalt psychology, which focuses on the totality of the mind and behaviour.

Maslow developed a hierarchy of needs that includes five motivational needs. The five-level model is divided into basic needs (physiological, safety, love and esteem) and growth needs (self-actualisation). Maslow believed that the lower basic needs motivated people when they were unmet. He also believed that the lower levels must be met before progressing to a higher level as illustrated here on the hierarchy.

Recent research has been critical of this model, arguing that many people who live in poverty and have not fully attained their basic needs are capable of meeting higher-level needs, such as love and belongingness.



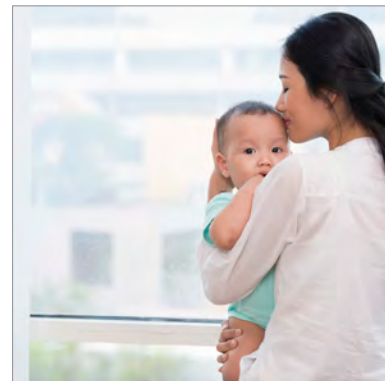
## Ethological theory

John Bowlby was a psychoanalyst who believed that mental health and behavioural issues stemmed from early childhood.

The origins of this theory were based upon his own experiences and observations of children who were separated from their parents and experienced intense distress.

He developed the attachment theory that looked at the bonds and attachments between the caregiver and the child. According to Bowlby, infants have the need to seek closeness with their caregiver when they are under stress or threatened. In his view, if attachments were negative and insecure, it would impact the person's life span development and the ability to deal with stressors throughout the person's life.

Bowlby also believed that a child's attachment with their caregiver contributed to the child's future social and emotional behaviour and may act as a prototype for future relationships; for example, early attachment may predict the ability to trust and to form emotional and physical relationships.



## Behavioural theory

The behavioural theory is based on Skinner's view that behaviour is learnt and can be changed by using positive and negative reinforcement. When applying this therapy, techniques that may be used are relaxation methods, reinforcement and coaching. This approach may be applied to family counselling, phobic disorders and behavioural disorders in children. This approach can be applied to many cultures as there is a focus on the person setting goals and learning self-management strategies. However, this theory focuses on behaviours – not feelings – making this approach limited in its application.

## Cognitive theory

Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) is effective treatment for anxiety disorders. CBT can help a person to change unhelpful thoughts that may contribute to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) behaviours such as aggression, addiction, anxiety, apathy or hyper vigilance. The counsellor may look at the thought processes of a person and develop strategies to change the thought patterns, which in turn will change the person's feelings and behaviour. CBT has a wide range of applications, including depression, anxiety, marital problems, substance abuse and panic attacks. CBT can be applied to people with specific problems.



## Humanistic theory

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a useful tool for understanding and handling human behaviour situations. For example, if a person has a safety issue (Level 2 Safety), such as domestic violence or child abuse, it would be difficult to motivate them to reach self-esteem needs (Level 5 Esteem), such as achievement until Level 2 Safety is addressed.

Maslow also believed that people have the ability to heal and grow within themselves. This theory supports positive physiology, which integrates strengths-based approaches to counselling. This approach may be successful when counselling people with depression or anxiety. Instead of focusing on what is wrong, the counsellor focuses on what is right.

## Ethological theory

Bowlby believed that a child's attachment or lack of attachment to the primary caregiver may affect the child's adult relationships and behaviours. He also believed that disruption of attachment between a child and caregiver could impact their cognitive, social and emotional development and have long-term consequences such as increased aggression, depression and affectionless psychopathy. The theory of attachment could provide a foundation for understanding a person's behaviour in a counselling situation.



**Example****Evaluate potential applications of personality and life span development theories in the counselling process**

Andrew has a history of obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and has developed a variety of rituals that he follows before he leaves the house. He feels ashamed of his behaviour and hides it when he can. Andrew seeks help from a service in order to understand his behaviour and receive assistance to change his behaviour. His counsellor David evaluates the approaches that he can take to assist Andrew. David decides to use the cognitive behavioural theory as the basis for his counselling, as he is comfortable using it and it will work best for Andrew.

In conversation with David, Andrew realises that the rituals he uses are safety seeking and reassurance seeking in order to help his deal with anxiety. Over the next few weeks, Andrew starts to minimise his rituals and, with David's support, starts to control his anxiety.



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## Practice task 4

1. List one way that genetics may play a role in the behaviour of a person.  
.....
2. Provide one example of an environmental factor that may come up in the nature versus nurture debate.  
.....
3. Provide one category that the theories of personality and human development broadly fit into.  
.....
4. Provide one aspect of Freud's anal stage of development.  
.....
5. Provide one aspect of Erikson's maturity stage of human development.  
.....
6. Provide one aspect of Piaget's formal operational stage of development.  
.....
7. List one basic need outlined in Maslow's hierarchy of needs.  
.....
8. Provide one aspect of behaviour that Bowlby believed would be impacted by a child's attachment to their caregiver.  
.....

# 2B Analyse individual behaviour using theoretical concepts of personality and life span development

The different theoretical concepts of personality and life span development have varied perspectives and focuses. Some theories are more appropriate for specific behaviours while others may have a broader application. The analytical phase focuses on identifying factors that shape behaviour, influence behaviour and use critical thinking skills to identify the best theoretical approach to influence desired behaviour. It is important not only to understand the theories themselves, but to also understand the practical application of the theory.



## Behavioural analysis

Applying a personality and life span development theory in a practical manner can be difficult. In real life, a behaviour or issue is presented and the counsellor has to find the appropriate theory that will be the most helpful to implement behavioural change.

Behavioural analysis uses the key features of a person's behaviour and applies principles and theories to these behaviours. People behave differently and, as a counsellor, it is necessary to look at the behaviour of each individual to determine the reasons behind their behaviour.

Different counselling situations will require different analytical approaches. Here are some examples.

Human development	Erik Erikson
	<p>This theory may be used to analyse the behaviour of a specific age group. For example, it may be appropriate for analysing the behaviour of an adolescent who feels confused about themselves and their future. According to this theory, lack of encouragement and reinforcement will contribute to a lack of a sense of self and independence, and a conflict of identity versus confusion.</p> <p>Erikson believed that if the conflict in the prior stage was not resolved, then the present conflict could not be resolved. In this case, it would indicate that the conflict of industry versus inferiority resulting in a sense of pride in accomplishments was not resolved.</p> <p>This may indicate a starting point for the counselling process.</p>

## 2C Assist clients to understand their personal history and draw on theoretical approaches to address issues

Who we are today is a compilation of our experiences from birth until now. Some experiences affect people more significantly than others. Past experiences can influence the grief process; how relationships are formed and maintained; how children are parented; and a person's predisposition to substance abuse. A counsellor needs to take into account the link between the person's issues and their personal history. Assisting the person to understand their history can provide them with a deeper understanding of their current problems and challenges.



### Understand personal history to address issues

The personal history of a person holds valuable information regarding how their personalities were developed, why they respond to experiences in a certain way, why patterns appear in relationships and why stages of personality and life span development are unique to them.

Here are some ways that personality and development theories can help a person understand how their personal history has shaped their current issues and challenges.

#### Repression

##### Human development: Freud

Freud suggested that people used defence mechanisms to keep unpleasant thoughts, memories and feelings in their unconscious. This defence mechanism may be used to repress a traumatic event or incident.

Assisting a person to understand the impact of a repressed event can help them understand the current impact on their behaviours and feelings.

This aspect of Freud's theory may be relevant for a person with dissociative identity disorder whereby abuse is repressed and submerged beneath conscious perception.



## Depression

### Cognitive therapy: Jean Piaget

Depression can stem from a range of issues; life events; family history; personality; medical illness; and a history of drug and alcohol use are factors that can contribute to depression.

Piaget's cognitive behaviour theory focuses on changing thought and behaviour patterns by identifying them and shifting from unhelpful thoughts and patterns to a positive problem-solving approach. Assisting a person to understand their historical ways of thinking, can help the person understand that thought patterns can be changed.

This aspect of Piaget's theory may be relevant for a person demonstrating negative self-labelling, such as, 'I feel like a failure. I am flawed. If people knew the real me, they wouldn't like me.'

## Low self-esteem

### Hierarchy of needs: Abraham Maslow

Low self-esteem may stem from a wide range of experiences, events and environments. Maslow suggested that a sense of self-esteem was linked to the person's sense of love and belonging which needed to be in place before esteem needs could be met.

Assisting a person to understand the innate nature of self-esteem and how it can be diminished or enhanced based on historical events in the environment, in parenting and in relationships, can help identify and highlight factors that had negative impacts.

This aspect of Maslow's theory may be relevant for a person presenting eating disorders or body dysmorphic disorder stemming from esteem issues associated with the person's sense of love and belonging.

## Grief

### Attachment theory: John Bowlby

Model of bereavement: Sigmund Freud

Freud's view on grief suggests that, in grief, a person is seeking an attachment that has been lost and that in the grieving process the person is letting go of multiple attachments that have formed during a relationship.

Bowlby suggested that attachments developed in early life offer security and when these are lost it creates distress, anxiety, crying and anger.

Assisting a grieving person to understand their personal history of attachments and emotional relationships may help them progress through the grieving process.

The aspects of attachment theories may be relevant to a person who is undergoing prolonged grief with separation or distress, or is displaying intense yearning for the deceased.

## Trauma

### Behavioural therapy: B.F. Skinner

Trauma is an occurrence that has caused a person to feel threatened emotionally, psychologically or physically. The effects of trauma can be long-lasting and cause a person to live with the effects for many years. Skinner's behavioural theory was used to analyse the behaviour of a person who displays anxiety or fear that is still connected to a past event.

Assisting a person to understand how this historical event impacts their current behaviour will help to identify appropriate counselling strategies.

Aspects of Skinner's theory may be relevant to a person who displays distress that impairs their relationships, work and/or other functioning.

## Substance abuse

### Nature versus nurture

Nature versus nurture is a highly debated notion that focuses on the question of whether nature or nurture plays the biggest role in human development. Both aspects are historical in nature and in their own way influence the behaviours.

Assisting a person to participate in this debate may help them to understand the impact of both aspects on their behaviour.

This notion may be helpful for a young person who wonders if their substance abuse can be attributed to a predisposition (nature) or has developed because of environmental factors (nurture).

## Bipolar disorder

### Genetic inheritance

Genetic inheritance is the belief that genes have an influence on behaviour. For example, if a family has a history of bipolar disorder it may appear in more than one individual in a family.

This notion may be helpful to assist a person to understand the historical nature of their genetic disorder and to plan ways to reduce and manage the risk of their behaviour becoming more complex. It may also help them to understand that they are not to blame for having this illness.

## Example

### Assist clients to understand their personal history drawing on theoretical approaches

Teri came to Phillipa for counselling after she had a depressive episode that resulted in her admittance to hospital. When speaking with Teri about her past, Phillipa identified patterns of current behaviour that linked to past behaviours and thought patterns. Phillipa helped Teri to see and understand her current pattern of behaviour and how it was linked to emotions, feelings and experiences of her unsettled childhood and unsatisfying teenage relationships. Throughout her teenage years Teri used pills as a coping mechanism. Phillipa helped Teri to untangle what she was feeling in her teens and helped her to recognise how those feelings linked to her current patterns of emotions which led to the depressive episode. With Teri, Phillipa developed a strategy to assist her to identify historical thought patterns and recognise historical behavioural patterns and consequently change the patterns minimising the occurrence of depressive episode.



## Practice task 6

1. Refer to Piaget's cognitive theory and provide one aspect of a person's history that can impact their current behaviour.

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2. Refer to Bowlby's attachment theory and provide one aspect of a person's history that can impact their current behaviour.

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3. If a person you are counselling uses a defence mechanism to avoid issues, provide one aspect of Freud's theory you could draw on to understand the person's behaviour.

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## Summary

1. The theories of personality and human development broadly fit into four categories: psychodynamic, behavioural, cognitive and ethological. It is important to become familiar with all theories, as they provide different perspectives of personality and human development.
2. Genetic inheritance refers to the belief that genetic makeup has a large role in determining human behaviour.
3. Nature versus nature refers to the ongoing controversy about whether human behaviour and personality is caused by genetic influences (nature) or by the environment or experiences (nurture) of the person.
4. Some theories are more appropriate for specific behaviours while others may have a broader application. It is important to understand the theories themselves, and also understand the practical application of the theory.
5. Past experiences can influence the grief process, how relationships are formed and maintained, how children are parented and a person's predisposition to substance abuse. A counsellor needs to take into account the link between the person's issues and their personal history.



## Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

**3A Identify and use opportunities to update and expand own knowledge of theory**

**3B Incorporate and integrate knowledge into own practice**

## Update and maintain knowledge of theoretical trends

Keeping updated with theoretical trends and practices of personality and development is critical to ensure that best practice counselling is demonstrated in a service. Updating and maintaining knowledge contributes to ongoing improvement and can be used to inform counselling practices. It is important that when new trends and knowledge are identified that they are contextualised into policy and implemented into current practice.

# 3A Identify and use opportunities to update and expand own knowledge of theory

The goal of research is to inform action and provide knowledge that can be translated into counselling practice. It is important that opportunities are identified and knowledge is kept current and relevant. Research also provides opportunities for evaluation and the review of current practice. It can be a challenge to keep up-to-date with emerging theories and revised practices.



## Identify opportunities to expand knowledge

Lifelong learning is the concept that learning and development takes place over a lifetime. Lifelong learning requires identifying opportunities to learn. In counselling practice, the concepts of continual learning and embracing change to current practice will contribute to ensuring that practice methods are updated and current.

Identifying opportunities to expand knowledge may involve:

- ▶ searching for relevant conferences
- ▶ accessing networks that can provide industry contacts
- ▶ gathering information regarding learning pathways
- ▶ sourcing professional development workshops
- ▶ utilising a supervisor or mentor for feedback and evaluation
- ▶ gaining membership in a relevant association to access industry standard information.

## Use opportunities to expand knowledge

Once opportunities are identified, it is important to use the opportunities to develop your professional skills and widen your knowledge base.

Opportunities may include:

- ▶ seeking coaching and feedback from your supervisor regarding current skills and skills development
- ▶ using an industry membership to access workshops and courses
- ▶ attending conferences to gain information regarding emerging trends in counselling practice
- ▶ forming a peer support group with work colleagues for support and resource sharing
- ▶ maintaining network connections to share and exchange knowledge.



## Integrate knowledge into practice

Once the information has been discussed, barriers to the integration must be removed or minimised. This may be done by developing a method for addressing the barrier.

Here are some examples.

Barrier	Method of addressing barrier
▶ Lack of motivation	▶ Present good feedback from other industry experts that have incorporated the knowledge into practice.
▶ Reluctance to change methods that are in place	▶ Encourage colleagues to read underpinning benefits of knowledge. ▶ Encourage colleagues to see the long-term benefits of integrating the knowledge into practice.
▶ Do not understand why the change is necessary	▶ Explain the positive impact of the change to people receiving counselling support.
▶ Do not have the skills to competently carry out the change	▶ Organise workshops and training to enable colleagues to develop required skills.
▶ Policies and procedures need to be adjusted and changed	▶ Discuss changes to policy with appropriate colleagues and work together to make any changes as required. ▶ Discuss how changes to policy and procedures will benefit all people who will be affected by the changes.

### Example

#### Incorporate and integrate knowledge into own practice

Whitney is a school counsellor and has conducted research into new approaches dealing with substance abuse among young school children. She discovers research that suggests the early onset of substance abuse will likely impact the children's ability to adjust in the adolescent years. The study focused on the use of prevention programs that would target children at an early age who displayed certain characteristics that could indicate the development of substance abuse.

This research interests Whitney because of the proactive nature of the study. She discusses this with her supervisor to see if it is feasible to integrate this approach into their current counselling processes. Together they discuss how the new method would be monitored for effectiveness and suitability and how it would fit with the current policies and procedures.

To ensure all colleagues are able to use this approach, Whitney conducts more research to find workshops or conferences the staff can attend to gain skills in competently identifying characteristics that could indicate the development of substance abuse.

