

# History of Psychodynamic & Neo-Freudians

by Sophia Tutorial



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, we'll discuss one of the most famous figures in psychology, as well as his theories and continued influence on the field of study.

The specific areas of focus include:

1. Work of Sigmund Freud
  - a. Psychodynamic Theory
  - b. Psychoanalysis
2. Neo-Freudians

## 1. Work of Sigmund Freud

You've probably heard the term "Freudian slip," which refers to saying something that you didn't mean to say, but that you might have been thinking about.

That term is derived from the name Sigmund Freud, who was an Austrian doctor. In 1873, he began working in a hospital treating patients for what at the time was called "hysteria," a type of nebulous disease that doctors neither knew much about nor had a cure for.

From there, Freud started his own form of therapy. In 1885, he set up a private practice, where he treated people for nervous disorders and brain disorders.

In a sense, Freud's theory was created backwards because he started with the clinical or treatment aspect, and then began developing the theory based on what he was seeing in his patients.

### 1a. Psychodynamic Theory

The theory Freud developed is called **psychodynamic theory**, and it states that internal motives and unconscious forces can affect our behaviors and mental processes in daily life.

Freud described our mental life as a sort of iceberg with all of the things we're aware of at the top, above the water.

However, the amount of things we perceive is actually very small when compared to the part of the iceberg that's under the water, or outside of our awareness. This underlying part of our mental life is unconscious.

According to psychodynamic theory, these unconscious thoughts, impulses, or desires, can actually influence our behaviors outside of them.

Additionally, a lot of the different urges that are outside of our knowledge might be repressed. As a result, they can lead to dysfunctional behaviors much like the those that Freud was seeing and treating.

🔗 **EXAMPLE** Freud is often cited as saying that there are certain sexual urges that are outside of our normal understanding, or our normal consciousness, which can influence our behaviors in strange ways.

Another term that you might hear in regard to Freud is the Oedipus or the Electra complex, which explains how certain repressed sexual desires influence behavior. These concepts will be discussed more in a later lesson.



#### TERM TO KNOW

### Psychodynamic Theory

A psychological theory of behavior that examines the role of the unconscious and internal conflicts

#### 1b. Psychoanalysis

You've probably seen the famous picture of Freud talking to a person who is laying down on a couch. This image is actually a reference to the treatment, or therapy, that was developed as a result of psychodynamic theory.

This therapy is called **psychoanalysis**, and its goal is to uncover the unconscious forces that are influencing and affecting us in adverse ways.

Psychoanalysis does this using a variety of different methods:

- *Dream Analysis.* Freud was very involved with dream analysis, trying to discover how dreams are a language of our unconscious mind. According to Freud, dreams try to tell us, in our sleep, what is happening in our minds underneath the surface.
- *Rorschach Test.* This is another method of psychoanalysis which you may have seen in popular culture. This test involves looking at an inkblot, and trying to describe what you see. What you see is supposed to provide some insight into what's going on in your unconscious mind.



#### TERM TO KNOW

### Psychoanalysis

Freudian psychodynamic therapy that attempts to uncover unconscious conflict.

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## 2. Neo-Freudians

While Freud did much of the original research that went into psychodynamic theory, a lot of the later research

that was done can be attributed to **neo-Freudians**, who are the new Freudian or psychoanalytical figures.

There are three major neo-Freudian figures, all of whom will be discussed in greater detail later on in this course:

- **Karen Horney:** An American scientist who did a lot of research on the specific needs of individuals, and how those needs influence their behaviors and coping strategies.
- **Alfred Adler:** Discussed how power was a huge influence on people, and how the need for or will to power, caused them to behave in certain ways. Adler is also famous for coming up with what we call the inferiority (or Napoleon) complex.
- **Carl Jung:** Was very popular in various types of literature and pop culture because of his ideas. He furthered the idea of dream analysis, and also presented the idea of archetypes, which are the classical ideas that people have in their minds about certain things (e.g., the shadow, the feminine, the masculine). Jung also popularized the idea of the collective unconsciousness, which is the unconsciousness that all of us share.



#### TERM TO KNOW

#### Neo-Freudian

Someone in the field of psychology who accepts Freud's theory for the most part, but adds their own unique ideas and benefits



#### SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about the **work of Sigmund Freud**, specifically **psychodynamic theory**, or the idea that the unconscious plays a role in human behavior, and **psychoanalysis**, a form of therapy derived from psychodynamic theory.

You now understand that while Freud is responsible for much of the original research on these concepts, a lot of the newer research has come from **neo-Freudians** in the field of psychology. Three of the most notable neo-Freudians are **Karen Horney**, **Albert Adler**, and **Carl Jung**. You will be learning more about each of them as this course continues.

Good luck!

Source: Adapted from Sophia tutorial by Erick Taggart.



#### TERMS TO KNOW

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**Psychoanalysis**

Freudian psychodynamic therapy that attempts to uncover unconscious conflict.

**Psychodynamic Theory**

A psychological theory of behavior that examines the role of the unconscious and internal conflicts.