

Neo-Freudians: Horney and Adler

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson is going to look at theories from two important neo-Freudians. Our discussion breaks down as follows:

1. Karen Horney
2. Alfred Adler

1. Karen Horney

Freud's theories on psychoanalytic theory are not considered to be as scientific as previously held, nor are they as widely accepted today. That being said, a lot of his ideas were very influential. These ideas caused a series of psychologists, both during his time and afterwards, to expand on his ideas of psychodynamic theory. These psychologists are called neo-Freudians.

Psychodynamic theory emphasizes the importance of the unconscious and its effect on our personalities and temperaments. Karen Horney was a German psychologist in the early 1900s who eventually moved to America and completed her studies. She disagreed with Freud, particularly on the male-centeredness of his theories.

➦ **EXAMPLE** Freud said that during the phallic stage, girls develop penis envy, which leads to feelings of inferiority within all girls. Horney believed Freud developed this idea only as the result of his male point of view.

Horney's other large contribution to the field of psychodynamic theory is her development of a theory of neurosis. Neuroses are any mental disorders that are related to anxiety. Freud said that neurosis developed as a result of conflict with unconscious forces and forbidden desires within our unconscious.

Horney stated that this was not necessarily true, and that neurosis develops as a result of **basic anxiety**. Basic anxiety comprises general feelings of isolation and helplessness within the world. Basic anxiety is the result of the different childhood relationships that we have. She also suggested that we can develop different kinds of neurotic needs.

She created a list of 10 of these needs, which are divided into three basic categories:

Categories of Needs	Example of Manifestation
Needs that move a person towards others	A person might overly depend on others, or want the approval of others more than they should
Needs that move a person away from others	Withdrawing or being cold or aloof towards others
Needs that move a person against others	Being hostile or attempting to dominate other kinds of people



TERM TO KNOW

Basic Anxiety

General feelings of isolation and helplessness from the world

2. Alfred Adler

Alfred Adler was an Austrian psychologist in the early 1900s, who was a student of Freud's. Adler disagreed with some of Freud's ideas and theories. This was particularly true on Freud's emphasis on the biological and instinctual urges that people have.

Adler said that humans are more social creatures, and they develop personalities as a result of interactions with others as well as on the individual development that Freud talked about. He developed the social theories of psychodynamic theory and of personality.

One of the main points he talked about is an important unconscious force that affects our social interactions. That force is **striving for superiority**. This is the desire to want to overcome our individual limitations and inadequacies, or feelings of inferiority. He stated that people want to feel like they are better than they might necessarily be in relation to others.

According to Adler, people try to compensate or try to overcome these feelings of inferiority in different kinds of ways. This results in the creation of our personalities and is part of a normal process.

It is possible to overcompensate for feelings of inferiority. This can lead to the creation of an inferiority complex, which is an unnaturally self-centered feeling. An inferiority complex can result in anger and aggression towards others because a person is unnecessarily dwelling on their own inadequacies. This is also often called a Napoleon complex.



TERM TO KNOW

Striving for Superiority

Wanting to overcome our own limitations and inadequacies, or feelings of inferiority



SUMMARY

Neo-Freudians are psychologists influenced by the ideas of Freud, who expanded on his theories.

Karen Horney is a Neo-Freudian that developed theories about neuroses. She said that neuroses developed as a result of basic anxiety, and formulated a list of neurotic needs a person can develop.

These are broken into three categories: needs that move a person towards others, needs that move a person away from others, and needs that move a person against others.

Alfred Adler believed that personalities develop as a result of interactions with others. He believed that personality develops as a result of an unconscious striving for superiority to overcome feelings of inferiority.

Good luck!

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia Author Erick Taggart.



TERMS TO KNOW

Basic Anxiety

General feelings of isolation and helplessness from the world.

Striving for Superiority

Wanting to overcome our own limitations and inadequacies, or feelings of inferiority.