for example, two thirds of individuals reported that, before they started dating their current partner, they knew at least one (if not more) of that person's friends or family members. Social proximity leading to attraction makes sense because the more social ties two people have in common, the more likely they are to meet and become acquainted.

Applications and Future Trends

Finally, proximity has applicability in almost any natural setting. For example, because of the findings on proximity and attraction, some architects are designing housing complexes and workplaces in patterns that will increase proximity. For example, cubicle walls in an office can be short enough that people can see over them to talk to each other. A water cooler can be placed in a central location to encourage social gatherings. The link between proximity and attraction is robust and can be applied to many different kinds of settings. It even seems likely that this phenomenon explains why young boys are so likely to have a crush on the girl next door.

Wind Goodfriend

See also Boredom in Relationships; Familiarity Principle of Attraction; Internet, Attraction on; Long-Distance Relationships; Mate Selection; Physical Environment and Relationships

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Psychodynamic Theories of Relationships

In many ways, contemporary psychodynamic theories can be thought of as theories of relationships. Although Sigmund Freud's original theory was primarily concerned with the "internal world" of the mind, psychodynamic theories have evolved to encompass a more complex understanding of the interplay between interpersonal and intrapsychic experiences. Psychodynamic theories ask how relationships shape people's internal world, specifically how interpersonal experiences come to be internalized as aspects of personality. Conversely, psychodynamic theories also ask how the internal world affects relationships—specifically, how these internalized relationships color people's understanding of their interpersonal experiences.

Although there is broad agreement about the centrality of these questions, there is enormous diversity regarding the answers to these questions among the many schools of psychodynamic thought. This entry does not attempt to represent the breadth of these ideas, but rather describes three central principles about which most psychodynamic theorists could agree. First, psychodynamic theorists understand the formation of personality as beginning in the context of the earliest relationships (i.e., between caregiver and child). Second, these early relationships are thought to become internalized as representations of "the self in relationship to others," which guide subsequent interpersonal experiences, and these representations are continually elaborated by subsequent interpersonal interactions. Third, changes in thoughts and feelings are often achieved in the context of relationships. Each of these central principles is elaborated in this entry.

Understanding Relationships in a Developmental Context

Psychodynamic theories are based on a developmental perspective; childhood relationships with caregivers are thought to play a central role in shaping later relationships. Although Freud originally understood the child's relational needs to be secondary to the mother's capacity to gratify drives, subsequent theorists have elaborated the role of attachment needs as an equally significant force in development. One of the most prominent psychoanalysts to contribute to this understanding of early relationships was John Bowlby, who described babies as innately predisposed to become attached to their caregivers. The child's motivation toward establishing an attachment bond with the caregiver is an evolutionarily advanced system of survival; attachment behavior functions to maintain proximity to the caregiver to ensure protection and to have his or her needs met. If the caregiver is able to provide protection and reliable care for the child, then that child will internalize a sense of felt security. Through repeated interactions with caregivers, the child develops what Bowlby called *internal working models,* also commonly referred to as *object representations,* which are mental representations of oneself in emotional relationships with important others.

However, not all children are able to internalize representations of secure relationships, which results from an interaction among many factors, including the child's temperament, early experiences that disrupt a feeling of safety for the child, and the stage of development in which the disruption occurs. Sidney Blatt, for example, has articulated the relationship between the internalization of early experiences and the point in development at which the experience was internalized. If a child is neglected prior to internalizing a representation of the parent as separate from him or herself, the child may develop a representation of self characterized by a need to be merged with another person in order to combat intolerable feelings of separation and satisfy a need to be cared for, loved, and protected. If, at a later stage in development, the child has internalized a representation of the parent, he or she will be able to experience separateness from the parent without feeling empty. However, if the child experiences the parent as having a hostile disappointment in the child's actions, the child may internalize a representation of self characterized by feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and exceedingly high expectations that leave the child filled with self-hatred for failing to do better.

It is important to note that the child's internalized experience of early caregivers is not thought to be equivalent to actual caregiver behavior, but rather that a caregiver's actions are one of several significant contributors to the trajectory of psychological development. A common misperception of psychodynamic theories is that they fail to recognize the importance of biological contributions to development—although the development of self-regulation is understood to be mediated through the relationship with the caregiver, it is certainly recognized that there are biological and temperamental underpinnings that either facilitate or complicate the caregiver's ability to create a feeling of security for the child.

Implications of Object Representations for Relationships

Many aspects of one's sense of self, such as thoughts and feelings, can be understood in a relational context (i.e., the feeling of guilt implies the presence of another person who has been failed), although this operates largely outside of awareness. As a result of developmental experiences, internalized object representations become dynamic templates for understanding the self in relation to others. In interpersonal exchanges, these object representations are evoked, often outside of conscious awareness, and they color one's perception of the exchange. For example, a person often belittled by a parent might perceive others as belittling even when that was not the other person's intention. It is important to note that the influence of internalized representations is thought to be tied to actual data from interactions with others, as opposed to a purely internally generated phenomenon (in the example, others may have displayed some characteristics similar to the parents, although not the belittling behavior). However, these attributions may or may not be supported by the actual interaction and are better understood as originating in internalized object representations. There is a growing body of empirical evidence in clinical,

social, and personality psychology, such as research on transference by Susan Andersen, that support these assumptions.

In psychodynamic terms, attributions about others' behaviors that are derived primarily from internal representations are referred to as *transference*. Although transference is often thought to be a linear "transfer" of feelings about one person (i.e., an early parental figure) to another (i.e., a current relationship, especially the therapist), psychodynamic theorists describe a more complex process. Transference arises when some aspect of the interpersonal exchange unconsciously evokes representations of prior relationship experiences, leading the individual's perception of the current interaction to be influenced by the prior relationship. For example, when a man with a history of abandonment by caregivers is told by his girlfriend that she will be out of town for 2 days, the external reality of a brief loss of contact with her may unconsciously elicit an internal representation of a lonely, abandoned self who was hurt by a cruel, abandoning other. In this context, the man's subsequent thoughts and feelings of upset and loss can be best understood as an interaction between his internal processes related to abandonment and the external reality of her actual leaving.

One question often raised has to do with the similarities between a psychodynamic understanding of object representations and a cognitive understanding of schemas. To be sure, there are a number of parallels between these two concepts. The difference, however, is that in psychodynamic models there is greater attention to the emotional aspects of these representations. Further, object representations are seen as having implicit or unconscious as well as explicit or conscious aspects. The implicit parts can be either simply outside of awareness or kept out of awareness for defensive purposes. For example, someone who has internalized an experience of him or herself as "cruel" may defensively keep this representation out of awareness by overcompensating, such as by acting overly nice and accommodating to others (which in psychodynamic terms would be called a *reaction formation*). This is not to say that the cruel representation is the "real" internal self-state and the nice representation is a façade; each would be regarded as an aspect of the individual's multifaceted object representations. Rather, psychodynamic models posit that individuals may use one set of object representations to defend against other intolerable representations.

Although these object representations are thought to endure over time, this by no means implies that they are static and unchanging. In fact, representations are continually elaborated by subsequent interpersonal interactions. New experiences lead the individual to develop more differentiated representations that must be integrated into one's internal model of relationships. Thus, the interaction between internal processes and external reality not only influences understanding of current relationships, but also leads to more elaborated and differentiated internal representations that may modify the experience of subsequent relationships.

Change in the Context of Relationships

Psychodynamic theorists have placed particular emphasis on growth that occurs in relationships, noting that changes in thoughts and feelings are often achieved in the context of interactions with others. Although change in how one thinks and feels can occur through a number of processes, such as internal reflection, behavioral change, and individual life experiences, many types of relationship experiences may alter representations. Representations may adapt to the changing nature of relationships across time. For example, redefining relationships with parents as one develops into adulthood may correspond with change in representations of those relationships.

Change in representations may also occur through an especially strong emotional experience that disconfirms earlier implicit models. For example, significant interpersonal relationships with a spouse or child may lead to reconsideration of strongly held patterns of thoughts and feelings. Further, change may occur through repeated experience in other important relationships (i.e., respected peers, secure romantic partners, or a long-term therapeutic relationship) that disconfirm earlier acquired models. In other words, powerful change often occurs when one expects others to behave in particular ways but they don't.

Psychodynamic theorists place significant emphasis on the relationship with a therapist as facilitating change in representations. With a therapist, the patient can develop, resolve, and make efforts to redefine relationships with others and have powerful emotional reactions that disconfirm implicit representations. Two aspects of the therapeutic relationship are often stressed: (1) the importance of the emergence of transference, and (2) the mutative aspects of being in a real relationship with a caring and empathic other. The psychodynamic therapist facilitates emergence of transference by generally maintaining what is called *technical neutrality,* which entails remaining equidistant from all sides of a patient's conflict. To take the earlier example of an individual who is invested in a representation of self that is "nice" and unconsciously keeps a representation of self as "cruel" outside of awareness, the therapist would take a stance of technical neutrality by not judging either the nice or cruel aspects of the patient as good or bad. If the therapist were to reinforce the patient's "niceness," it would signal to the patient that "cruelness" is as dangerous and undesirable as unconsciously feared, and therefore would encourage the patient to keep that part hidden.

In fact, the goal of psychodynamic therapy is to help people bring all aspects of their internal representations into the relationship with the therapist so they can be integrated (rather than defensively split off) and the patient can experience him or herself in relationships with others as a coherent whole. The therapist helps the patient to integrate these disparate representations by using the emergent transference as a vehicle for helping the patient to understand relational patterns outside of awareness. For example, the therapist may note subtle ways in which the patient is acting cruel under the guise of being nice. Further, the therapist provides an experience for the patient that disconfirms earlier acquired models of relationships, such as the experience that his or her cruelty was not as toxic to relationships as had been feared and therefore need not be hidden. Last, by taking a nonjudgmental stance toward all aspects of the patient's internal experience, regardless of how bad or undesirable the patient may feel parts of it to be, the patient experiences the therapist as a secure base from which to explore his or her mind.

Conclusion

Although psychodynamic theories have much to offer in understanding the relationship between interpersonal and intrapsychic functioning, sadly the prominence of psychodynamic thought has been in decline; a recent *New York Times* article noted that the teaching of psychoanalysis is waning in psychology departments. Although there are several reasons for this, one reason is that many of the golden nuggets of psychodynamic thinking have become integrated into mainstream psychology—such as the importance of early childhood relationships, implicit processes, defensive functioning, and underlying dynamics—and are therefore no longer recognized as psychodynamic concepts. However, these concepts are central to the psychodynamic conceptualization of relationships, and to the extent that other theories of relationships integrate these concepts, they can be thought of as having psychodynamic roots.

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See also Attachment Theory; Insight-Oriented Couple Therapy; Parent–Child Relationships; Psychotherapists, Relationship With; Transference

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