LIFE GOAL THEORY, MOTIVATION & HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT

FEM 4101 - TOPIC 7
LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Able to explain life-goal theory.

2. Able to explain the application of life-goal theory to motivation and human achievement.
INTRODUCTION

Goal theory proposes that all human actions and behaviour are motivated by a goal.

Motivation theories and need theories are all theories brought forward in view of understanding what underlying goals determine which kind of behavior.

A theory that proposes that human beings are more motivated to act when there is a reward at the end of the performance of a task or a behaviour.
ALFRED ADLER’S INDIVIDUAL THEORY

- Adler stressed a **positive view of human nature**.
- He believed that **individuals can control their fate**.
- They can do this in part by trying to help others **(social interest)**.
- How they do this can be understood through analysing their lifestyle.
- Early interactions with family members, peers, and teachers help to determine the role of inferiority and superiority in their lives.
- Stressed the need to **understand individuals within their social context**.
- **All behaviour occurs in a social context**. Humans are born into an environment with which they must engage in reciprocal relations.
Social interest and a positive involvement in the community are hallmarks of a healthy personality.

Adler believed that social interest was innate but that it needed to be nurtured in a family where cooperation and trust were important values.

According to Adler, when we feel encouraged, we feel capable and appreciated and will generally act in a connected and cooperative way.

When we are discouraged, we may act in unhealthy ways by competing, withdrawing, or giving up.

It is in finding ways of expressing and accepting encouragement, respect, and social interest that help us feel fulfilled and optimistic - motivated and strive to achieve.
The primary motivation: self-perfection, social influence, success, superiority and equality with others; healthy people different from animals and machines: goals, values, free will, aware of what and why; view of the future shape behaviour.

The primary motivation: sexual pleasure and aggressiveness; people were similar to animals and machines: driven by natural forces/unconscious mind with no say in what they did; past experience caused present behaviour.
A person’s perceptions are based on his or her view of reality (Phenomenology).

• Adler believed that we “construct” our reality according to our own way of looking at the world.
• “I am convinced that a person’s behavior springs from this idea...because our senses do not see the world, we apprehend it.” (Adler, 1933/1964)

Human Behaviour is Goal Oriented (Teleological).

• People move toward self-selected goals. “The life of the human soul is not a ‘being’ but a ‘becoming.’” (Adler, 1963a).
• This idea requires a very different way of viewing humans than the idea that behaviour is “caused” by some internal or external forces or rewards and punishments.

Understanding the causes of behaviour is not as important as understanding the goal to which a person is directed.

• Since human have evolved as social creatures, the most common goal is to belong and to feel significant.
• Striving for superiority to overcome basic inferiority is a normal part of life.
• Mosak (2000) reports that Adler and others have referred to this central human striving in a number of ways: completion, perfection, superiority, self-realisation, self-actualisation, competence, and mastery.
ADLERIAN MAJOR CONCEPTS AND EXPLANATION OF BEHAVIOR

1. Life styles
2. Family constellation and atmosphere
3. Social interest
4. Superiority
5. Superiority complex
6. Inferiority
7. Inferiority complex
8. Birth order
9. Early recollection
10. Basic mistakes
11. Assets
1. LIFE STYLES

- A way of seeking to fulfill particular goals that individuals set in their lives.
  - Individuals use their own patterns of beliefs, cognitive styles, and behaviours as a way of expressing their style of life.
  - Refers to the central core of a person's life, who this person is - past, present, and future.

2. FAMILY CONSTELLATION AND ATMOSPHERE

- The number and birth order, as well as the personality characteristics of members of a family. Important in determining lifestyle.
  - The family and reciprocal relationships with siblings and parents determine how a person finds a place in the family and what he learns about finding a place in the world.

3. SOCIAL INTEREST

- Refers to an individual’s attitude toward and awareness of being a part of the human community.
  - Mental health is measured by the degree to which we successfully share with others and are concerned with their welfare.
  - Happiness and success are largely related to social connectedness.

4. SUPERIORITY

- The drive to become superior allows individuals to become skilled, competent, and creative.
  - Superiority refers to the best.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. SUPERIORITY COMPLEX</th>
<th>6. INFERIORITY</th>
<th>7. INFERIORITY COMPLEX</th>
<th>8. BIRTH ORDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A means of masking feelings of inferiority by displaying boastful, self-centered, or arrogant superiority in order to overcome feelings of inferiority.</td>
<td>Feelings of inadequacy and incompetence that develop during infancy and serve as the basis to strive for superiority in order to overcome feelings of inferiority.</td>
<td>A strong and pervasive belief that one is not as good as other people.</td>
<td>Adler’s five psychological positions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Simply a defense mechanism in most people who really feel inferior to others.</td>
<td>• It is usually an exaggerated sense of feelings of inadequacy and insecurity that may result in being defensive or anxious.</td>
<td>• Oldest child - receives more attention, spoiled, centre of attention.</td>
<td>• Oldest child - receives more attention, spoiled, centre of attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eg: someone felt inferior because he or she was too short and then went through life walking on tip toes to seem taller.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Second of only two - behaves as if in a race, often opposite to first child.</td>
<td>• Second of only two - behaves as if in a race, often opposite to first child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Middle - often feels squeezed out.</td>
<td>• Middle - often feels squeezed out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Youngest - the baby.</td>
<td>• Youngest - the baby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Only - does not learn to share or cooperate with other children, learns to deal with adults.</td>
<td>• Only - does not learn to share or cooperate with other children, learns to deal with adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. EARLY RECOLLECTION</td>
<td>10. BASIC MISTAKES</td>
<td>11. ASSETS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Memories of actual incidents that clients recall from their childhood.</td>
<td>• Self-defeating aspects of individuals' lifestyle that may affect their later behaviour are called basic mistakes.</td>
<td>• Assessing the strengths of individuals' lifestyle is an important part of lifestyle assessment, as is assessment or early recollections and basic mistakes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adlerians use this information to make inferences about current behaviour of children or adults.</td>
<td>• Such mistakes often include avoidance of others, seeking power, a desperate need for security, or faulty values.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Overgeneralisations:</strong> “There is no fairness in the world”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>False or Impossible Goals:</strong> “I must please everyone if I am to feel loved”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Misperceptions of Life and Life’s Demands:</strong> “Life is so very difficult for me”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Denial of One’s Basic Worth:</strong> “I’m basically stupid, so why would anyone want anything to do with me”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Faulty Values:</strong> “I must get to the top, regardless of who gets hurt in the process”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TECHNIQUES FOR CHANGE

A lifestyle analysis helps the Adlerian therapist to gain insights into client’s problems by determining the client’s basic mistakes and assets.

These insights are based on assessing family constellation, dreams, and social interest.

To help the client change, Adlerians may use a number of active techniques that focus to a great extent on changing beliefs and reorienting the client's view of situations and relationships.
There are 5 basic obligations and opportunities which are used to help determine therapeutic goals.
2. INTERPRETATION

Adlerians express insights to their clients that relate to clients’ goals. Interpretations often focus on the family constellation and social interest. Focus on the ‘Whys’ of behaviour.

3. IMMEDIACY

Communicating the experience of the therapist to the client about what is happening in the moment. Dealing with what is here and now.

4. ENCOURAGEMENT

An important therapeutic technique that is used to build a relationship and to foster client change. Supporting clients in changing beliefs and behaviours is a part of encouragement.

4. ACTING AS IF

- In this technique, clients are asked to act “as if" a behaviour will be effective.
- Clients are encouraged to try a new role (generally thought impossible) - the way they might try on new clothing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. CATCHING ONESELF</th>
<th>6. AHA RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this technique, patients learn to notice that they are performing behaviours which they wish to change. Having the client catch himself or herself when engaging in irrational behaviour. When they catch themselves, they may have an &quot;Aha&quot; response.</td>
<td>Developing a sudden insight into a solution to a problem, as one becomes aware to one's beliefs and behaviours.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7. AVOIDING THE TAR BABY</th>
<th>8. THE QUESTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By not falling into a trap that the client sets by using faulty assumptions, the therapist encourages new behaviour and &quot;avoids the tar baby&quot; (avoid getting stuck in the client's perception of the problem). Acting contrary to what the client expects.</td>
<td>Asking &quot;what would be different if you were well?&quot; was a mean Adler used to determine if a person's problem was physiological or psychological.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. PARADOXICAL ATTENTION

- A therapeutic strategy in which clients are instructed to engage and exaggerate behaviours that they seek to change.
- By prescribing the symptom, therapists make clients more aware of their situation and help them seek to change.
- Asking the client to amplify/clarify target behaviour to show the client how ridiculous it is.
- For example, a client who is afraid of mice may be asked to exaggerate his fear of mice, or a client who hoards paper may be asked to exaggerate that behaviour so that living becomes difficult.
- In this way individuals can become more aware of and more resistant from their symptoms.

11. SPITTING IN THE CLIENT’S SOUP

Making comments to the client to make behaviours less attractive or desirable.

12. HOMEWORK

Specific behaviours or activities that clients are asked to do after a therapy session

13. PUSH BUTTON TECHNIQUE

Designed to show clients how they can create whatever feelings they want by thinking about them, the push-button technique asks clients to remember a pleasant incident that they have experienced, become aware of feelings connected to it, and then switch to an unpleasant image and those feelings. Thus clients learn that they have the power to change their own feelings.
HENRY STEIN’S 7 CRITICAL IDEAS ABOUT ALDERIAN THEORY AND ITS APPLICATION

1. UNITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

• Thinking, feeling, emotion, and behaviour can only be understood as subordinated to the individual's style of life, or consistent pattern of dealing with life.
• The individual is not internally divided or the battleground of conflicting forces. Each aspect of the personality points in the same direction.

2. GOAL ORIENTATION

• There is one central personality dynamic derived from the growth and forward movement of life itself – It is a future-oriented striving toward a goal of significance, superiority, or success.
• Influenced by childhood experience.

3. SELF-DETERMINATION AND UNIQUENESS

• A person's fictional goal may be influenced by hereditary and cultural factors, but it ultimately springs from the creative power of the individual, and is consequently unique.
• Usually, individuals are not fully aware of their goal. Through the analysis of birth order, repeated coping patterns, and earliest memories, the psychotherapist infers the goal as a working hypothesis.
SOCIAL CONTEXT

- The human being is also a part of larger wholes or systems - the family, the community, all of humanity, our planet, and the cosmos.
- In these contexts, we meet the three important life tasks: occupation, love and sex, and our relationship with other people - all social challenges.
- Our way of responding to our first social system, the family constellation, may become the prototype of our world view and attitude toward life.

THE FEELING OF COMMUNITY

- Each human being has the capacity for learning to live in harmony with society. This is an innate potential for social connectedness which has to be consciously developed.
- The feeling of genuine security is rooted in a deep sense of belonging and embeddedness within the stream of social evolution.

MENTAL HEALTH

- A feeling of human connectedness and a willingness to develop oneself fully and contribute to the welfare of others are the main criteria of mental health.
- When these qualities are underdeveloped, feelings of inferiority may haunt an individual, or an attitude of superiority may antagonise others.
- Consequently, the unconscious fictional goal will be self-centred and emotionally or materially exploitive of other people.
- When the feeling of connectedness and the willingness to contribute are stronger, a feeling of equality emerges, and the individual's goal will be self-transcending and beneficial to others.
TREATMENT

- Clients are encouraged to overcome their feelings of insecurity, develop deeper feelings of connectedness, and to redirect their striving for significance into more socially beneficial directions.

- Through a respectful Socratic dialogue, they are challenged to correct mistaken assumptions, attitudes, behaviours, and feelings about themselves and the world. Social contribution.

- Constant encouragement stimulates clients to attempt what was believed impossible.

- The growth of confidence, pride, and gratification leads to a greater desire and ability to cooperate. The objective of therapy is to replace exaggerated self-protection, self-enhancement, and self-indulgence with courageous social contribution.
GOAL SETTING THEORY: LOCKE (1968)

- Locke argued that our primary motivation to behave in a situation is defined in terms of our desire to achieve a particular goal.
- The goal represents what we intend to do at a given time in the future.
- Setting specific and challenging performance goals can motivate and guide our behaviour, spurring us to perform in more effective ways.
- Research has shown that having goals lead to better performance than not having goals.
- Goals that difficult to attain have a greater motivators than goals that are easy to attain.
- However, having difficult goals may spurs greater motivation towards attaining that goals at the expense of other behaviour - failed to consider others.
Basic idea of the model is that a goal serves as a motivator. Persons can compare their present performance with that required to achieve the goal. If person believe that they will fall short of a goal, they will feel dissatisfied and work harder to attain the goal as long as they believe the goal can be achieved.
GOAL SETTING THEORY: LOCKE

**S**pecific
What, Where
A specific goal is distinct & defines as much of the goal as possible and contains no ambiguous language

**M**easurable
From and To
A measurement gives feedback and let's one know when the goal is complete.

**A**ssignable
Who?
Goals must be assignable to individuals or groups

**R**ealistic
Feasible?
Realistic goals are challenging yet attainable within the given timeframe

**T**ime-Based
When?
Timeframe must be aggressive yet realistic
**Specific** – Say exactly what you will do. Be clear about what it is you are wanting to achieve.

**Measurable** – It’s easy to tell when you have done it. Have a measure that will indicate you have achieved your goal.

**Achievable** – Possible to reach in the near future—ones you believe you have the capacity to achieve.

**Relevant** – A goal must be meaningful and significant for you. What is the reason why you are striving for the goal?

**Time-bound** – Set a date for when you will do it by. Start points, End points, fixed durations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SPECIFIC</strong></th>
<th>A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal.</th>
<th>Who will eat together? What do we want to accomplish? (healthier eating, social time, both or something else?) Where will we eat? Who will plan and prepare the meal?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEASURABLE</strong></td>
<td>Keeping track of progress gives incentives to keep going.</td>
<td>How many times will we eat together? How will we track our meals together? (Mark on a calendar, make a list, etc?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ATTAINABLE</strong></td>
<td>Goals are realistic and attainable. While an attainable goal may stretch a group to achieve it, the goal is not extreme.</td>
<td>How often it is reasonable for you to have family meals depends on your unique situation and past practice. If you are newer to eating together, a goal of once a week would be a place to start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELEVANT</strong></td>
<td>When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true.</td>
<td>If you are searching for a way to improve the health, academic performance or bonds in your family, mealtimes are one way to make it happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TIME-BOUND</strong></td>
<td>A time-bound goal is intended to establish a sense of urgency and prevent goals from being overtaken by the day-to-day crises that invariably arise.</td>
<td>Setting a day or time of the week for your meals together makes it more likely that they will happen because you can write it on a calendar, set aside time, etc. Saying you will eat together on Saturday morning, Sunday noon, or Wednesday night is more powerful than saying you plan to eat together.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUMMARY

• Goal theory is a theory that proposes that all human actions and behaviour are motivated by a goal.

• Behavioural change can help in achieving goal in a person life.
Thank You