Hostility

A persistent feeling of anger or resentment combined with a strong desire to express it or retaliate.

Hostility is a strong impulse inspired by feelings of anger or resentment. Though hostile impulses are normal, and everyone has them from time to time (for example, when frustrated, offended, or deprived of something), a hostile person feels those impulses regularly. She or he is always ready to take offense or feel frustrated in some way. This is often described as “having a chip on one’s shoulder.” Hostility can play a part in anxiety attacks, depression, compulsions, and paranoia. On a larger scale, hostility leads to violent crime, invasions, wars, and other acts of aggression.

Further Reading

Howes, Ethel Dench Puffer

See Puffer, Ethel Dench

Clark Leonard Hull

1884-1952
American psychologist who was a primary representative of the neobehaviorist school.

Clark L. Hull was born in a country farm house near Akron, New York, on May 24, 1884. He attended high school for a year in West Saginaw, Michigan, and the academy of Alma College. His education was interrupted by bouts of typhoid fever and poliomyelitis, giving him pause to consider possible vocational choices; he decided upon psychology. He then matriculated at the University of Michigan, took his bachelor’s degree, and went on to the University of Wisconsin, receiving his doctorate in 1918. Staying on at Wisconsin to teach, Hull was at first torn between two schools of psychological thought which prevailed at the time: early behaviorism and Gestalt psychology. He was not long in deciding in favor of the former.

After an experimental project on the influence of tobacco smoking on mental and motor efficiency, Hull was offered the opportunity to teach a course in psychological tests and measurements. Gladly accepting it, he changed the name to “aptitude testing” and worked hard at developing it as a sound basis for vocational guidance. The material which he collected in this course was gathered into a book, Aptitude Testing (1928). Next, with the help of a grant from the National Research Council, he built a machine that automatically prepared the correlations he needed in his test-construction work.

In 1929 Hull became a research professor of psychology at the Institute of Psychology at Yale University, later incorporated into the Institute of Human Relations. He came to certain definite conclusions about psycholo-
gy, and in 1930 he stated that psychology is a true natural science, that its primary laws are expressible quantitatively by means of ordinary equations, and that quantitative laws even for the behavior of groups as a whole could be derived from the same primary equations.

The next 10 years were filled with projects dealing not only with aptitude testing but with learning experiments, behavior theory, and hypnosis. As a representative of behaviorism, Hull fell into that school’s neobehaviorist period of the 1930s and early 1940s. His basic motivational concept was the “drive.” His quantitative system, based on stimulus-response reinforcement theory and using the concepts “drive reduction” and “intervening variables,” was highly esteemed by psychologists during the 1940s for its objectivity.

Hull was probably the first psychologist to approach hypnosis with the quantitative methodology customarily used in experimental psychology. This combination of experimental methods and the phenomena provided by hypnosis yielded many appropriate topics for experimental problems by his students. Hypnosis and Suggestibility, the first extensive systematic investigation of hypnosis with experimental methods, was published in 1933, incorporating the earlier, and better, part of the hypnosis program that Hull had carried out at the University of Wisconsin.


Further Reading
Beach, Frank A. Biographical memoirs. The National Academy of Sciences, vol. 33. 1959

Humanistic psychology

A theoretical and therapeutic approach that emphasizes people’s uniqueness and their power to control their own destinies.

Humanistic psychology evolved in the 1960s as a reaction to psychodynamic psychology and behaviorism. Humanists objected to the pessimistic view of human nature advocated by psychodynamic psychologists who saw the selfish pursuit of pleasure as the root of all human behavior. They also felt that the behaviorists’ beliefs that all human behavior is the product of environmental influences reduced people to the status of machines and did not adequately explain the human experience. Humanists faulted both psychodynamic psychologists and behaviorists for viewing human behavior as governed by factors beyond personal control. In contrast, humanists emphasize people’s innate potential, and the ability of people to determine their own destinies. The ultimate goal for the humanistic psychologist, therefore, is to help people realize their full potential and live up to their abilities.

Theories and therapeutic applications

Two particular theoretical approaches have come to characterize humanistic psychology. The “person-centered” approach to therapy advocated by Carl Rogers is based on his belief that trusting one’s experiences and believing in one’s self are the most important elements of self-fulfillment. In person-centered therapy, abnormal behavior is considered to be the result of a person’s failure to trust experience, resulting in a distorted or inaccurate view of the self. There is an incongruity between the person’s current view of himself and his “ideal” self. Person-centered therapists attempt to help people gain self-understanding and self-acceptance by conveying empathy, warmth, and the unconditional belief that no matter what the client says or does, the client is still a worthwhile person.

The second influential theory of humanistic psychology was developed by Abraham Maslow. Maslow believed that people are innately good and naturally driven to develop their potential or to achieve “self-actualization.” He believed, however, that people were driven by a hierarchy of needs that must be filled in a particular sequence in order for self-actualization to occur. First, physiological and safety needs must be met. Then people need to feel a sense of belonging. Once this is achieved, people work on their self-esteem needs and then finally self-actualization. Maslow believed that psychological problems result from a difficulty in fulfilling the self-esteem needs, which therefore block self-actualization. Therapy, then, is aimed at correcting people’s inaccurate views of themselves, improving their self-esteem, and enabling them to continue on the path toward self-actualization.

Research

Humanistic psychologists have tended to focus on client care rather than research, although some empirical