

Hello, class. So for the next few lessons, we're going to be taking a look at one of the three major contemporary approaches to psychology, which we've summed up in the top part here-- the biopsychosocial approach to psychology. Now, unlike a lot of the historical perspectives on psychology, these new perspectives are more of a blend of different theoretical approaches. So they don't try to take one avenue to understanding psychology. Rather, they try to blend two or more.

So the first one we'll take a look at is the biological perspective. Taking a look at that word biological, you see the word biology in there, which is the sort of approach that it's trying to take. A biological perspective psychologist tries to understand behavior as a result of the internal physical, chemical, and biological processes that occur inside of them. So they try to relate things like thinking, feeling, and perceiving to different physical occurrences, things like what's going on inside of the brain, what chemicals are being sent, or what kind of genetic code tends to allow for those sorts of things to happen.

The biological perspective sort of blends different types of classical approaches, like behaviorism, where they try to look at the mechanical processes of what's happening with behavior, as well structuralism and trying to reduce things down into their component parts. It's also very deterministic, saying that there are certain physical things that cause mental occurrences to happen or cause you behave in certain ways. And in this way, it's kind of opposed to humanism, which tends to say the human is the agent or the actor that causes things to happen.

So let's take a look at some of these sub-genres in this biological perspective. First subcategory, the biological perspective, is the evolutionary approach to psychology. Now, evolutionary approach says that human mental processes and behaviors are the results of gradual changes over the entire history of the human species. So it looks at two specific sorts of forces that interact with humans to cause them to behave in the way they do.

The first one is the genetic, which is to say that human beings are a product of their own genes. And a lot of behavior and mental states occur as a result of that. For example, a lot of studies are done with twins to see how they act similarly in certain ways because of their genetic background.

The other force that interacts with people under the evolutionary school of thought is natural selection. Going back to some of the approaches on evolution and Darwinism, natural selection says that there are certain developments in different brain structures that occurred over time as a result of selections and what improved humanity in different cases. This natural selection approach to psychology allowed the integration of animal studies and the study of animal behaviors, since a lot of those behaviors, under natural selection, can be seen as being, similarly, the result of mutations over time. That led to the study of things like rats in mazes, which you might see classically in psychology, as well as the study of monkeys who are very similar to humans in a lot of

their behaviors.

The biopsychological view of psychology says that a lot of behavior and mental processes like thinking, feeling, and perceiving are the result of these internal workings of the physical aspects of our brain and our nervous system-- so a lot of abnormal behavior as a result of abnormal structures that are occurring inside of our bodies. For example, small changes in our frontal lobes, our hippocampus, and our temporal lobes have been seen to be very common in over half of patients that have schizophrenia. So schizophrenia can be understood as having a biological basis. Now, biopsychology is part of a larger, overarching field, which is neuroscience, which includes other different professions like biologists and biochemists who are attempting to uncover other physical processes that have results on our behavior, as well as our physical bodies and the way that different diseases occur in other parts of our bodies as well.