Chapter 13: Personality

Key Terms

Writing Definitions

1. Personality is an individual's characteristic pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting. (p. 553)

2. Free association is the Freudian technique in which the person is encouraged to say whatever comes to mind as a means of exploring the unconscious. (p. 554)

3. Psychoanalysis is Freud's theory of personality that attributes thoughts and actions to unconscious motives and conflicts; also, the techniques used in treating psychological disorders by seeking to expose and interpret the tensions within a patient's unconscious. (p. 554)

4. In Freud's theory, the unconscious is the reservoir of mostly unacceptable thoughts, wishes, feelings, and memories. According to contemporary psychologists, it is a level of information processing of which we are unaware. (p. 554)

5. In Freud's theory, the id is the unconscious system of personality, consisting of basic sexual and aggressive drives, that supplies psychic energy to personality. It operates on the pleasure principle. (p. 555)

6. In psychoanalytic theory, the ego is the conscious division of personality that attempts to mediate among the demands of the id, the superego, and reality. It operates on the reality principle. (p. 555)

7. In Freud's theory, the superego is the division of personality that contains the conscience and develops by incorporating the perceived moral standards of society. (p. 555)

8. Freud's psychosexual stages are developmental periods children pass through during which the id's pleasure-seeking energies are focused on different erogenous zones. (p. 556)

9. According to Freud, boys in the phallic stage develop a collection of feelings, known as the Oedipus complex, that center on sexual attraction to the mother and resentment of the father. Some psychologists believe girls have a parallel Electra complex. (p. 556)

10. In Freud's theory, identification is the process by which the child's superego develops and incorporates the parents' values. Freud saw identification as crucial, not only to resolution of the Oedipus complex, but also to the development of gender identity. (p. 556)

11. In Freud's theory, fixation occurs when development becomes arrested, due to unresolved conflicts, in an earlier psychosexual stage. (p. 556)

12. In Freud's theory, defense mechanisms are the ego's methods of unconsciously protecting itself against anxiety by distorting reality. (p. 557)

13. The basis of all defense mechanisms, repression is the unconscious exclusion of anxiety-arousing thoughts, feelings, and memories from the conscious mind. Repression is an example of motivated forgetting: One "forgets" what one really does not wish to remember. (p. 557)

14. Regression is the defense mechanism in which a person faced with anxiety reverts to a more infantile psychosexual stage. (p. 557)

15. Reaction formation is the defense mechanism in which the ego converts unacceptable impulses into their opposites. (p. 557)

16. In psychoanalytic theory, projection is the unconscious attribution of one's own unacceptable feelings, attitudes, or desires to others. (p. 557)

Memory aid: To project is to thrust outward. Projection is an example of thrusting one's own feelings outward to another person.

17. Rationalization is the defense mechanism in which one devises self-justifying but incorrect reasons for one's behavior. (p. 557)

18. Displacement is the defense mechanism in which a sexual or aggressive impulse is shifted to a more acceptable or less threatening object other than the one that originally aroused the impulse. (p. 558)

19. Denial is the defense mechanism in which people refuse to believe or even perceive a painful reality. (p. 558)

20. The collective unconscious is Jung's concept of an inherited unconscious shared by all people and deriving from our species' history. (p. 559)

21. Projective tests, such as the TAT and Rorschach, present ambiguous stimuli onto which people supposedly project their own inner feelings. (p. 559)

22. The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) is a projective test that consists of ambiguous pictures about which people are asked to make up stories, which are thought to reflect their inner feelings and interests. (pp. 559–560)

23. The Rorschach inkblot test, the most widely used projective test, consists of 10 inkblots that people are asked to interpret; it seeks to identify people's inner feelings by analyzing their interpretations of the blots. (p. 560)

24. In Maslow's theory, self-actualization describes the process of fulfilling one's potential and becoming spontaneous, loving, creative, and self-accepting. Self-actualization becomes active only after the more basic physical and psychological needs have been met. (p. 565)
25. According to Rogers, unconditional positive regard is an attitude of total acceptance toward another person. (p. 565)

26. Self-concept refers to one’s personal awareness of “who I am.” In the humanistic perspective, the self-concept is a central feature of personality; life happiness is significantly affected by whether the self-concept is positive or negative. (p. 566)

27. Traits are people’s characteristic patterns of behavior. (p. 568)

28. Personality inventories, associated with the trait perspective, are questionnaires used to assess personality traits. (p. 570)

29. Consisting of 10 clinical scales, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) is the most widely researched and clinically used personality inventory. (p. 570)

30. An empirically derived test is one developed by testing many items to see which best distinguish between groups of interest. (p. 570)

31. According to the social-cognitive perspective, behavior is the result of interactions between people (and their thinking) and their social context. (p. 576)

32. According to the social-cognitive perspective, personality is shaped through reciprocal determinism, or the interacting influences of behavior, internal cognition, and environment. (p. 577)

33. Personal control refers to the extent to which people perceive control over their environment. (p. 578)

34. External locus of control is the perception that your fate is determined by forces not under personal control. (p. 578)

35. Internal locus of control is the perception that, to a great extent, you control your own destiny. (p. 578)

36. Learned helplessness is the passive resignation and perceived lack of control that a person or animal develops from repeated exposure to inescapable aversive events. (p. 579)

37. Focusing on positive emotions, character virtues such as creativity and compassion, and healthy families and neighborhoods, positive psychology is the scientific study of optimal human functioning. (p. 581)

38. In contemporary psychology, the self is the organizer of our thoughts, feelings, and actions. (p. 584)

39. The spotlight effect is the tendency of people to overestimate the extent to which other people are noticing and evaluating them. (p. 585)

40. Self-esteem refers to an individual’s sense of self-worth. (p. 585)

41. Self-serving bias is the tendency to perceive oneself favorably. (p. 586)