Developmental Psychopathology

History

• The Emergence of Social Conscience
  • Child mortality, belief children were possessed, children owned by parents → Children often treated harshly

  • Locke (17thC) and Itard (19thC) → Children should be treated with kindness and compassion

History (cont.)

• Psychiatric Disorder & Mental Retardation
  • Late 19thC: MR (“imbeciles”) distinct from those with psychiatric disorders (“lunatics”)

  • Normal cognitive but disturbing behavior → “moral insanity”

  • Advances in medicine → the organic disease model

History (cont.)

• Early Biological Attributions

  • Ascendancy of modern medicine

  • Early attributions biased: Cause of the problem within the individual

  • Disease model led to Eugenics Movement and Segregation

History (cont.)

• Psychology 20\textsuperscript{th} century

  • Psychoanalytic theory linked mental disorders to childhood experiences--mental disorders no longer inevitable

  • Behaviorism → conditioning and elimination of children’s fears
History (cont.)

- Evolving Forms of Treatment
  - Through 1940’s: Institutionalization for intellectual & mental disorders
  - 1945-1965: Institutions decrease; foster/group homes increase
  - 50’s & 60’s: Behavior therapy applications
  - 70’s: Social context
  - All perspectives remain: Medical, Behavioral, Cognitive, Psychoanalytic, Systemic

TODAY

- View child & adolescent problems
- How might development go awry?
  - Delay
  - Regress
  - Asynchrony
  - Precocity (generally not a problem)
  - Deviant
  - Adapational Failure: Disability

Disorder v. Disability

- Disorder is underlying condition
  - Remediation by fixing it

- Disability is mismatch between demands of environment and capacity of individual, “adaptational failure”
  - Remediation by fixing capacity or
  - Altering environment

Consider

- Dyslexia = genetic neurological condition
- Sally has dyslexia
  - Does she have a disorder?
  - Does she have a disability?
Developmental Psychopathology
• Approach to describing disorders of childhood and adolescence stressing the importance of developmental processes and tasks
• Trajectory or pathway in context of development

Developmental Pathways
• Sequence and timing of behaviors, and the relationship between them over time
  • Equifinality: different early experiences → similar outcome
  • Multifinality: similar early experiences → different outcomes

Multiply determined
• Many contributors to psychopathologies in each child
• Among children who show the disorder, contributors will vary
• Children express features of their disturbances in different ways
• Pathways leading to particular disorders are numerous and interactive

Development
• Active dynamic process: change & transformation
  – Sameroff: Transactions change over time to shape behavior in reciprocal and dynamic ways
• Organized, hierarchical
• Continuous AND discontinuous
• Sensitive periods
  – Windows of time during which child especially susceptible to environmental influences
  – Not the same as critical
Typical & Atypical Development

• Both multiply determined
• Continuities and discontinuities
  Quantitative & qualitative changes
• Child and environment interdependent; interact dynamically
• Bidirectional effects

Models of Child Psychopathology

• Theories—or Models—allow us to predict behavior based on samples of knowledge

• ETIOLOGY of childhood disorders best understood as biological, psychological, and environmental processes interacting to produce outcomes over time

Biological Models

• Medical model based on
• Neurobiological: brain, nervous system
• Neural Plasticity and Experience
  – Brain shows capacity to change (plasticity)
  – Use-dependent anatomical differentiation throughout the course of development
  – Transaction occurring between ongoing brain development and environmental experiences

Biology

  – Maturation of the brain is an organized, hierarchical process with brain structures changing and growing through the life span

  – As the brain is shaped by early experiences, consequences of traumatic experience may be difficult to change
Biology

• Genetic Contributions:
  – Genes do not determine behavior
  
  – Genes do contribute to behavior
  
  – All traits result from an interaction of environmental and genetic factors

Biology

• Neurobiological Contributions
  – Different areas of the brain regulate different functions and behaviors
  
  – Endocrine system regulates certain processes in the body through the production of hormones; especially implicated in health- and stress-related disorders

Structures of the brain. Adapted from Garrett, Brain and Behavior

Biology

• Neurobiological contributions (cont.)
  – Hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis has been implicated in several disorders, especially anxiety and mood disorders
  
  – Neurotransmitters make biochemical connections between different parts of the brain; those most commonly implicated in psychopathology include serotonin, benzodiazepine-GABA, norepinephrine, and dopamine
Behavioral Models

• **Classical conditioning:** Paired associations between previously neutral stimuli and negative unconditioned stimuli
  - *Text: respondent conditioning*

• **Operant conditioning:** Actions associated with consequences
  - Reinforce: Increase Behavior
    - Positive = Application of something
    - Negative = Removal of something
  - Punish: Decrease Behavior

Behavioral

• Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) explains behavior as a function of its antecedents and consequences

• Social Learning considers the influence of cognitive mediators, affect, and contextual variables in the etiology and maintenance of behaviors

• Social Cognition relates to how children think about themselves and others

Cognitive Models

• Piaget
  - Schema: Mental models of understanding
  - Assimilate: Bring experience into schemata
  - Accommodate: Change schema
  - Equilibration: Balance

• Social Cognition
  - Scripts for interactions
  - Process information about social world
  - Predictions about self and events
Psychodynamic Models

- Basic drives and motivations
- Psychoanalytic approaches
- Freud’s structure
  - Id: Pleasure seeking
  - Ego: Reality considerations
  - Superego: Greater ideals and morals
- Defense mechanisms: Defending the self from conflicting and intense emotions

Psychodynamic

- Stage theories of development
  - Freud: Psychosexual
  - Erickson: Psychosocial
- Stage principles
  - Order, sequence is critical, not ages per se
  - Sensitive periods
  - Master one stage before can master next
    - Master = successfully resolve
  - Qualitative changes between stages

Psychodynamic

- Psychoanalytic and Object Relations

Attachment
- Bowlby, Ainsworth et al
- Evolving child-caregiver relationship
- Helps child to
  - Regulate behavior and emotions
  - Especially in conditions of threat or stress
Family Systems Model

- System is dynamic and interrelated
- Subsystems: Parent-child, Siblings, Marital
- Boundaries within and between
- Overly rigid vs. unclear → Emeshment
- If child becomes part of marital system
  - Parent-child Coalition
  - Triangulation
  - Detouring
- Functional approach to psychopathology

Family, Social, and Cultural Influences

- Ecological model -- Bronfenbrenner
  Describe the child’s environment as a series of nested and interconnected structures

Risk & Resilience: Risk

- Variables that *increase the chance* negative outcome will occur
- Typically acute, stressful situations, but also chronic adversity
- Vulnerability
- Potentiating
  - Another factor → risk even greater

Risk

Known risk factors include
- Community violence & disasters
- Divorce/family break-up
- Chronic poverty
- Homelessness
- Parental psychopathology
- Perinatal stress

Probablistic NOT deterministic
Resilience

- Avoiding negative outcomes \textit{despite being at risk for them}
- Connected to resources & health-promotion
- Strengths of child, family, school, community
- Not a fixed attribute, but a process
- Children are not resilient, they experience resilience

How does Resilience work?

- Michael Rutter: Mechanisms
  - Reduce risk impact
  - Reduce negative cycles or “chain reactions”
  - Promote self esteem
  - Open opportunities

- Anne Matsen: “Ordinary Magic”
  - Everyday positive relationships

Risk/Resilience not absolute

- Characteristics not à priori one or other
- Level of match to context
- Capacities and demands of environment
- Tiger and Shark