

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY AS A HEALTH PROFESSION

What is Psychology?

Psychology is the scientific study of human behavior and mental processes. It seeks to explain *why* an individual behaves as s/he does. Psychology also studies animal behavior for the light it throws on understanding human behavior. Man tops the hierarchy of animal kingdom and shares some characteristics of other animals. Man, though called a rational animal, is not that *homo sapiens*; because ratio of rationality and animality differ in degree in human beings. In some humans animality predominates to such an extent that they behave like beasts.

The first psychological laboratory set up by Wilhelm Wundt in Leipzig, Germany in 1879 marked the development of a *scientific* approach of understanding behavior. J.B Watson's emphatic pronouncement in 1913 that behavior, not mind, is the legitimate subject matter of psychology was the second departure of psychology from philosophy. Psychology became the experimental analysis of

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behavior. By this development psychology established links with other sciences like biology, physiology and biochemistry. Currently, in addition to experimental method, *cognitive psychology* - the study of basic psychological process such as feeling, thought, perception, learning, memory, emotion, reasoning and judgement - has become the dominant area of interest. There has been a resurgence of interest in qualitative method of enquiry which look closely at naturally occurring processes. Developmental and social aspects of behavior are also vital features of Psychology.

Treatment of Mental Patients Necessitates Teamwork:

Human behavior is exceedingly complex, much more so is abnormal behavior. Therefore, treatment of abnormal behavior is, perforce, a teamwork of psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, psychiatric social worker and psychiatric nurse.

Clinical Psychology defined and distinguished from other mental health professions

Treatment of mental patients necessitates *teamwork* because human behaviour is too complex to be dealt

with by a single professional. The psychiatric team comprises psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, psychiatric social worker and psychiatric nurse. They have a primary responsibility toward human welfare - enabling people to lead a meaningful, effective and happy life.

Clinical psychology is a health profession that applies the scientific knowledge and principles of psychology in a professional role to the alleviation of human suffering and to the improvement of the quality of life. It integrates science, theory, and practice. Clinical psychology focuses on the intellectual, emotional, biological, psychological, social, and behavioural aspects of human functioning across the live span, in varying cultures, and at all socioeconomic levels.

Training in clinical psychology involves specialized knowledge of psychological functioning and psychological methods, which provides particular expertise in carrying out psychological assessments e.g. psychometric tests, formulating problems psychologically,

psychological treatments, and psychological methods of research and evaluation.

Specialties in clinical psychology are: community psychology, health psychology & behavioral medicine, neuropsychology, forensic psychology and pediatric & clinical child psychology.

Psychiatry is a medical speciality. Psychiatrists make extensive use of a variety of psychotropic drugs in treating mental illnesses. Furthermore, their medical training makes them potentially better able to recognize medical problems that may be contributing to the patient's psychological problems.

Psychiatric social work deals with the social forces and external agents that are contributing to the patient's problems. They take the case history, interview relatives, friends and employers, and make arrangements for vocational placement. Relative to the training of clinical psychologists and psychiatrists, social work training is rather brief. Social workers are intensely involved with the everyday life and stresses of their clients. They visit the places where their patients spend the bulk of their lives.

Psychiatric nurses are specially trained to deal with psychologically disturbed individuals who are rather oversensitive. They spend a lot of time in close contact with patients, can, therefore, provide information about patients' hospital adjustment and can also play a crucial and sensitive role in fostering an appropriate therapeutic environment. They implement therapeutic recommendations working in close collaboration with psychiatrists and clinical psychologists.

Activities of a clinical psychologist: A clinical psychologist is to understand people and through this understanding help them handle better the complicated business of living.

A clinical psychologist performs the following functions:

Assessment has been the most crucial part of the clinical psychologist's role; he must first understand the nature and severity of the problem for which help is being sought. By means of data from interviews (central element of assessment process), observations and various standard test techniques e.g. neurological examination – EEG, anatomical brain scans, MRI; neuropsychological examination, psychological tests e.g. intelligence and personality – the clinical psychologist develops his inference about the probable etiology of the (undesirable) behavior he is investigating, the complicating variables in the client's life and his assets for handling life situations and the probable optimal mode of treatment; other sources of are one family, friends, school, work etc.

Psychotherapy occupies most of the efforts and time of the clinical psychologist. Cognitive behavioral approach which teaches the client new and more satisfying ways of thinking, feeling and behaving is the mostly employed form of intervention. Group therapy, family therapy and couple therapy are also done by a clinician.

Although psychotherapy is not unique for psychology there have been contributions to the field of psychotherapy which have the distinctive mark of psychological heritage. Psychotherapy has been explored, moreover, by psychologists as scientists as well as psychologists as clinicians. What seems to be emerging is a real technology of behavior change which

offers promising opportunities for the application of well established psychological principles to the treatment of maladaptive behavior/mental illness.

Research: Basic training of a clinician includes a strong research emphasis, culminating in the research dissertation as one of the requirements for the doctoral degree.

The range of research projects carried out by clinicians is enormous – causes of mental illnesses, development and validation of assessment instruments, evaluation of therapy techniques etc. The obvious relations of psychological and physiological variables pose the challenge to study these interactions.

Teaching Experienced clinicians devote a considerable amount of time to training the clinical psychologists in training. Courses of training are advanced psychopathology, psychological testing, interviewing, intervention, personality theories, experimental psychopathology and so on.

Clinical supervision involves one-to-one 'practicum' teaching, small group approaches, less formal instruction.

Consultancy: The community mental health programmes are designed to supplement traditional hospitals and clinics, and also to increase the preventive possibilities of programs & the numbers of community persons who can be reached. The primary new role

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of the clinical psychologist in this expanding concept of community mental health programming is as consultant. The consultant role consists of interactions primarily with professionals & administrative staff rather than with direct patient or client. Now a single consultant may be available to a score or more consultees and through them, admittedly indirectly, large number of patients & clients whose behavior he could never have attempted to modify because of the weight of sheer numbers.

Problems dealt with by clinicians: Anxiety, depression, panic disorder, addictive disorders, sexual dysfunctions, phobias, obsessive compulsive disorders, anger, posttraumatic stress disorder, smoking, gambling, somatoform disorders, eating disorders, schizophrenias, disorders of childhood & adolescence, marital conflict,

Clinical Psychology in Bangladesh:

More than half a century ago a post of clinical

remained vacant till 2005. A 3-year post graduate training course of international standard was started at Dhaka University as a link programme with London University in 1994 by the writer. The Department of Clinical Psychology was created by him in 1997. He has also succeeded in having created 30 posts of clinical psychologist at Govt. Medical Colleges and Hospitals. *Bangladesh needs several thousand clinical psychologists.*

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Bangladesh needs several thousand Clinical Psychologists:

The UK, an average country with about 70 million people only, employs about ten thousand clinical psychologists in its National Health Service. Living in

Bangladesh is increasingly becoming more complex predisposing people to severe stress and strain. Ignorance and superstition add to the problems. Renowned physicians of Bangladesh report that about 40% of the patients who seek medical help actually have psychological problems and they need psychological treatment. So, in addition to the rising number of mentally ill people in the country a considerable percentage of population needs psychological care. Clinical Psychologists are also the best health professionals to provide palliative management for terminally ill persons.

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❖ ৪০% শারীরিক সমস্যায় আক্রান্ত ব্যক্তিদের উপসর্গের মূল কারণ মানসিক

❖ আপনি জানেন কি? বাংলাদেশের ১৬.১% মানুষ মানসিকভাবে অসুস্থ

❖ আপনি জানেন কি? ১৮% শিশু মানসিক সমস্যায় ভুগছে

❖ মানসিক স্বাস্থ্য - অর্থ-সামাজিক ও পরিবেশগত উপাধান দ্বারা প্রভাবিত হয়

❖ শরীর ও মনে একটি অন্যটির অবিরোধিতা অংশ

আপনার একটু মহৎ উদ্যোগ
তা হতে পারে সামান্য বিনিয়োগ
বদলে দিতে পারে মানসিক স্বাস্থ্য সেবাকে,
নিয়ে যেতে পারে
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