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### **ASWB Clinical Exam**



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## Question: 1

The fundamental premise of Freud's psychoanalytic theory is that human behavior is best understood as arising from:

- A. social constraints and mores.
- B. drives and unconscious motivations
- C. instinct and physiological needs.
- D. a desire for power and control.

**Answer: B**

Explanation:

The fundamental premise of Freud's psychoanalytic theory is that human behavior is best understood as arising from drives and unconscious motivations. An individual may also respond to environmental stimuli, such as peer pressure, and the need for power and control. However, self-initiated behaviors are frequently the result of unconscious motivations, drives, and desires. Behaviors are shaped by repressed experiences and memories from childhood, and will reflect a related covert purpose. According to Freud, there are three levels of consciousness: the unconscious mind (containing thoughts and ideas that are hidden from awareness), the preconscious mind (containing thoughts beyond active awareness, but which can easily be accessed and recognized), and the conscious mind (containing thoughts and motivations which are already in full awareness, and thus can readily be manipulated, accessed, and otherwise utilized).

## Question: 2

Distressing and anxiety-provoking thoughts may be rejected by the conscious mind and forced into the unconscious mind by a process called:

- A. reaction formation.
- B. denial.
- C. transference.
- D. repression.

**Answer: D**

Explanation:

Repression is the process through which distressing and anxiety-provoking thoughts may be rejected by the conscious mind and forced into the unconscious mind.

## Question: 3

According to Freud's structural theory of personality development, mental disturbances and psychological maladjustments are primarily the result of:

- A. cognitive dissonance.
- B. defense mechanisms.
- C. conflicts between the id, ego, and superego.
- D. neuroses.

**Answer: C**

Explanation:

According to Freud, mental disturbances and psychological maladjustments are primarily the result of conflicts between the id, ego, and superego. These three elements of an individual's personality must be unified and work together smoothly for optimum mental health. Only through adequate coordination of these elements can an individual successfully meet fundamental desires and needs without generating psychological dissonance and conflict. When any of these basic elements of the personality are in conflict, an individual will be hampered in securing basic needs and desires, and frustration will result. The extent of psychiatric maladjustment is a function of the degree of disharmony between these three personality elements.

#### Question: 4

Maria is raising her two children alone, working full time, and caring for her mother, who has recently started wandering away from the house and becoming lost. Maria has started experiencing bouts of anger, followed by apathy. She feels she has more responsibility than she can handle and that she has little control over the financial and physical safety of her family. She continues being a responsible employee and a nurturing caregiver, but she is feeling the pressure. What is the most correct term for Maria's problem?

- A. Existential crisis.
- B. Identity crisis.
- C. Burnout.
- D. Generalized anxiety.

**Answer: C**

Explanation:

Burnout is characterized by feeling that one has more responsibility than control. (Note that there is no change in Maria's outward behavior: She is not in crisis and is not presenting with symptoms of unusual anxiety).

#### Question: 5

Freud's psychoanalytic theory incorporated the structural theory of personality development. Freud believed that personality development is completed by:

- A. 5 years of age.
- B. 3 years of age.
- C. 7 years of age.
- D. 6 years of age.

**Answer: A**

Explanation:

According to Freud, personality development is accomplished through a series of psychosexual stages that culminate before the onset of latency (age 6 to puberty). This process is completed by 5 years of age. Freud's primary focus on an individual's past arose from his theory of personality development. He postulated that patterns of adult behavior reflect the blueprint created during the earliest years of life, as childhood solutions to problems continue to manifest. Thus, Freud postulated that two major aspects shape personality development: 1) natural growth and maturation through five stages of psychosexual development; and 2) the degree of success an individual experiences in overcoming anxieties, conflicts, and frustrations, and in avoiding pain.

### Question: 6

The Freudian terms cathexis and anti-cathexis refer to forces collectively known as:

- A. cognitive forces.
- B. developmental forces.
- C. primary forces.
- D. driving forces.

**Answer: D**

Explanation:

These terms refer to driving forces. The term cathexis refers to the urging force that individuals experience to pursue the unconscious wishes and desires of the id. The term anti-cathexis refers to the checking force that enables individuals to resist the urges of the id. Collectively these forces are referred to as driving forces. An individual's ultimate mental state emerges as a function of the processes of exchange between the driving forces.

### Question: 7

How can a social worker best begin work with a client so that both parties have clear expectations of the goals, the time period the work will cover, and each one's responsibilities in the working relationship?

- A. By having an implicit understanding naturally arise during the work
- B. By discussing and writing goals, processes, and timetables at the beginning of the counseling work and reevaluating priorities at regular intervals
- C. By discussing goals, processes, and timetables as the work proceeds
- D. By reviewing together what's been achieved at the end of treatment

**Answer: B**

Explanation:

The more clearly that goals are defined, the more likely they are to be attained. Likewise, clear-cut agreements about timetables, payment, rights, and responsibilities set the stage for a transparent therapeutic alliance.

### Question: 8

Each of Freud's five stages of psychosexual development is associated with certain age ranges. The phallic stage typically occurs during which age range?

- A. 2-4 years of age
- B. 5-9 years of age
- C. 3-6 years of age
- D. 7-14 years of age

**Answer: C**

Explanation:

The phallic stage typically occurs during 3-6 years of age. In ascending age order, the stages include:

- The oral stage: (0-18 months of age) Characterized by a focus on oral pleasure (sucking, eating, oral exploration of items, etc.).
- The anal stage: (18 months to 3 years of age) Characterized by a focus on the anal experience of elimination and resolved once sphincter control is mastered.
- The phallic stage: (3-6 years of age) Characterized by a focus on the genitals.
- The latency stage: (6-12 years of age) Characterized by the onset of sexuality within socially acceptable bounds, and terminating at the onset of puberty.
- The genital stage: (12 years of age and above) Characterized by genitalia acceptance, and mature sexual feelings.

### Question: 9

The theory of defense mechanisms was developed by:

- A. Sigmund Freud.
- B. Erik Erikson.
- C. Heinz Hartmann.
- D. Anna Freud.

**Answer: D**

Explanation:

It was Anna Freud who proposed the idea that significant threats to the ego could provoke powerful symptoms of anxiety, which served to stimulate the deployment any of a variety of psychological defense mechanisms. These defense mechanisms constitute irrational and unconscious efforts to protect the ego from anxiety and distress by means of reality distortion, denial, or avoidance. Defense mechanisms often serve a vital role, allowing the unconscious mind time to accommodate and prepare for a difficult psychic insult (i.e., denial at a time of unexpected loss, etc.). If taken to an extreme and perpetuated, however, psychological pathology may develop and require intervention.

### Question: 10

The defense mechanism known as reaction formation is best described as:

- A. a psychological response to an internal conflict.
- B. substituting an opposite response to relieve distress.
- C. going to the opposite extreme to resolve distress.
- D. overcompensation for unacceptable impulses.

**Answer: B**

Explanation:

Reaction formation is the act of substituting an opposite response to relieve distress. Each of the above descriptions addresses partial aspects of the defense mechanism known as reaction formation. However, B is the best and most complete description. Reaction formation occurs when an opposing response to the one internally felt is substituted in order to relieve internal dissonance or distress. Specific examples include: 1) someone "bending over backwards" to favor a coworker to cover an intense dislike of the individual, 2) an individual undertaking a public campaign against a vice that he secretly practices, and 3) a married woman treating a man rudely to compensate for the distress of internally feeling attracted to him.

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