

Abnormal Psychology

3. The psychodynamic theorist Sigmund Freud in the discussion of depression argues that there is a pattern in the way that a person tends to behave who experiences depression. In putting the view forward Freud has been assisted by his student Abraham, (1916,1911). Generally speaking, this pattern involves the person behaving in a withdrawn way when someone close to them dies. They are usually unable to accept the loss and this loss shows itself in the way that they behave. They become withdrawn at first, and their grief gets worse over time. Additional symptoms include loss of appetite, being unable to sleep, easily brought to tears and their interest in engaging in anything pleasurable decreases.

In addition to acting out in different ways which exhibit their depressive state certain occurrences may be associated with the person who has deceased. Failure in something can be related to a very strict father and the way in which he would react to that failure. This feeling would be internalized and be expressed in a depressive manner. Freud referred this experience to being symbolic of imagined loss. Love of the deceased is equated only with being successful. The act of failure represented withdrawal of love and, therefore produced more anguish. Many psychodynamic theorists have not fully accepted this argument but Freud's proposal is still widely accepted.

There are psychodynamic theorists who argue that depression is encouraged when a person's relationship leaves them feeling unsafe and insecure (Schaffner & Sharer, 2011; Blatt, 2004). Someone who was pushed away by their parent toward independence and self-support may become overtaken with depression at a later date when they lose someone who is important to them. There are studies which have shown that there is a link between a major loss experienced at an early age and the development of depression in later years.