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Human Behavior in The Social Environment I

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Reflection #4: Psychodynamic Theory

1) Freud's five stages of psychosexual development are the oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genitalia stages. According to Freud, each stage happens at a different age. The oral stage occurs from birth to a year or 18 months. In this stage, an infant uses their mouth to receive gratification. There are two phases in this stage, oral passive and oral aggressive. Oral passive is characterized by sucking, like when a baby is breast or bottle feeding. Oral aggressive is characterized by biting. This stage is all about comfort and feeling support. If an infant receives too much or too little satisfaction during this stage, it can impact their personality and its development.

The anal stage occurs from 2 to 3 years of age. In this stage, the rectum and urethra become areas of gratification. This is when children are toilet trained, so they are learning about that bodily function and what that feels like. There are two phases within this stage, expulsion and retention. During expulsion, the toddler is learning the feeling of "letting go". In retention, they are experiencing "holding on". They learn this all through the process of potty training, by understanding how to control the functions associated with urination and elimination. If a parent is too harsh or too lenient during this stage, it can cause them to be anal retentive or anal aggressive.

The phallic stage happens from ages three to five. The focus in this stage turns to the genitalia. Children begin to realize that they can get pleasure from this area. At this stage, boys begin to have a desire for their mothers, and fear their fathers. This is known as the Oedipus complex. Due to castration anxiety, boys stop looking at their father as a rival. They then look to identify with them. He gets closer to the same-sex parent at this point. During this phase, girls face other struggles. They realize they do not have a penis and get penis envy. When they realize they are similar to their mother in that way, they resent her. This ties into her then wanting to have her father's child. Freud also states that although the Oedipus complex gives way to the male superego, the female does not fully develop a superego.

The latency stage runs from five or six through puberty. In this phase, the erotic drives are still located at the genitals. However, during this phase, they are completely repressed. Boys and girls continue to be close to the same-sex parent. During this stage, the superego gets stronger as the values of the parent are instilled.

The genital stage happens from puberty to adulthood. The focus is now towards the opposite sex. Genital maturity is marked by this stage. According to Freud, during this stage, the female erotic zone shifts from the clitoris to the vagina. This is thought to be because the female sex organ now has the recognition it has yet to have. This is likely though understanding the importance of the vagina and how it fits with the male sex organ.

2) Freud added id, ego, and superego to the levels of consciousness. The id consists of the instinctual energies and drives and is present at birth. This also includes sexuality. Freud referred to this as libido. The ego derives from the id. The ego is formed through a child distinguishing their "self" from "others". The ego includes both the preconscious and the conscious. The last to

develop is the superego. This is thought to be part of the ego. It is thought to sit and watch over and judge. Superego is derived from the ego.

3) Freud believed that the mind was broken into three parts, the unconscious, preconscious, and conscious. The unconscious holds memories, ideas, and thoughts that we cannot recall or be consciously aware of. On the other hand, our preconscious holds ideas and thoughts that we are not currently thinking about, but we have the ability to bring them to our conscious awareness. Freud believed that people could have repressed memories, which can occur when someone tries to ignore or push down a negative memory or experience. Much of Freud's work focused on the unconscious mind. According to Freud's psychoanalytic theory, the human behavior is the result of the individual's id, ego, and superego.

Ego psychology focuses on the process of adaptation. This process of adaptation includes all aspects of our world that adapt (genetic, spiritual, cultural, geographical, and social environment) and the impact that our ego has on our decisions. Harttman, the father of ego psychology, stated that the ego is separate from an individual's id, unlike Freud's psychoanalytic theory which states that ego is derived from id. Harttman said the ego and id are both present at birth, but can have conflicts with one another. There are parts of the ego, however, that are not in conflict with the id. This is referred to as the conflict-free ego sphere. Harttman also emphasized competence as an important construct of the ego. He believed that an individual's drive towards competency allowed them to reach competencies at different ages. This contradicts Freud's developmental phases.

4) The object relations theory focuses on Freud's theory that infants store and internalize images and objects that satisfy them sexually. The objects relations theory explores the impact of this

process and how it affects personalities in adulthood and later in life. The self-psychology theory, on the other hand, states that the human experience is based on the healthy psychological interdependence. Unlike the object relations theory, self-psychologists believed that psychological models based on individuation and separation were not a correct representation of the human experience.

5) One of James' psychological strengths is his problem solving skills. Although he sounds to be depressed and a danger to himself, he did come to see a social worker. That means that he was able to begin solving this problem in his life. Unfortunately, I do not currently see any other psychological strengths present in James' life. I do, however, think that this can quickly change after James made the brave and smart decision to speak to a social worker. He divulged a great deal in this conversation, and that can lead to him getting the help he needs and deserves.

6) James unfortunately, has some psychological risk factors. He is in a stressful situation in his life. His long time partner left him. He is now living in poor conditions and dealing with the loss of that relationship. He also has a negative view on life at the moment. This is evident in his attempt at suicide. He also does not want to help himself by getting medical attention.

7) To help James, a social worker can first make sure he is safe and not a danger to himself or others. Then, the social worker can help him talk about his relationship and how it ended. Allowing James to open up about what has happened can help him to move forward. I feel his schizophrenia must be treated in order for him to rise out of this negative situation. The social worker could refer him to a trusted psychiatrist who can prescribe medication. We may also need to work through why James stopped taking his medication in the first place. Once James is stable and being treated with medication, the social worker can help him work towards life goals.

Achieving different goals such as getting a job, can lead him into a better living situation. This sense of pride will also help James to have a better outlook on life.