

Dorothy Johnson-Behavioral Systems Model

Dorothy Johnson's Behavioral Systems Model provides a framework for understanding and addressing the complexities of human behavior in nursing practice. This theory emphasizes the interplay of organized subsystems within a behavioral system and the importance of maintaining balance and stability. Below are the key components of this model for nursing students to study and apply.

The Person as a Behavioral System

Johnson conceptualized the person as a behavioral system comprised of a set of organized, interactive, interdependent, and integrated subsystems. Each subsystem works in harmony to maintain the overall integrity of the behavioral system.

Maintaining Constancy

Constancy within the behavioral system is achieved through biological, psychological, and sociological factors. By adapting and adjusting to internal and external forces, the behavioral system strives to maintain a steady state, promoting stability and balance.

Johnson's Seven Subsystems

Johnson identified seven key subsystems that collectively form the behavioral system:

1. Affiliative Subsystem

- Focuses on the formation and maintenance of social bonds. These bonds provide support and a sense of belonging, which are critical for emotional well-being.

2. Dependency Subsystem

- Encompasses behaviors related to helping and nurturing. This subsystem reflects the need for support, reassurance, and dependency on others.

3. Ingestive Subsystem

- Pertains to food intake and behaviors associated with satisfying nutritional needs. It also includes cultural and social aspects of eating.

4. Eliminative Subsystem

- Involves the processes and behaviors related to excretion. This subsystem is influenced by societal norms and personal habits.

5. Sexual Subsystem

- Focuses on procreation, reproduction, and sexual gratification. It also includes the sociocultural and psychological dimensions of sexuality.

6. Aggressive Subsystem

- Deals with behaviors aimed at self-protection and preservation. This subsystem is essential for ensuring personal safety and security.

7. Achievement Subsystem

- Encompasses efforts to achieve mastery and control. It reflects the drive for competence, accomplishment, and the pursuit of goals.

Johnson's Key Concepts

1. Person

Johnson described the person as a behavioral system comprised of subsystems constantly striving to maintain a steady state. This perspective highlights the importance of understanding and addressing the interrelated components of human behavior.

2. Environment

While not explicitly defined, Johnson acknowledged the presence of both internal and external environments. These environments interact with the behavioral system, influencing the person's ability to maintain balance and stability.

3. Health

Health, according to Johnson, is a state of balance and stability within the behavioral system. Disruptions to this balance necessitate interventions to restore harmony.

4. Nursing

Nursing is described as an external regulatory force that intervenes when there is instability within the behavioral system. The role of nursing is to help the individual achieve or regain balance and stability through targeted interventions.

Applications in Nursing Practice

Johnson's Behavioral Systems Model provides a structured approach to assessing and addressing the needs of patients. By understanding the subsystems and their interrelations, nurses can identify areas of imbalance and implement interventions to restore stability. This model emphasizes the importance of considering biological, psychological, and sociological factors when planning and delivering care.