M1: Theoretical Perspectives and Subfields in Psychology

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During the reading in this module, we were introduced to Psychology, it’s history, divisions of Psychology, and careers in the field of psychology. The reading defines Psychology as the scientific study of the mind and behavior. Psychology is a process that can is both empirical and a social science, as it explores biological and social aspects of behavior. Furthermore, psychology is an undervalued skill to learn because many don’t recognize the benefits of understanding your behavior and the behaviors of people around you.

Through the history of psychology, we got to learn about its beginnings, starting with Wilhelm Wundt and William James. These two men are credited with founding psychology. Wundt was known for structuralism, which involves looking at each part of the brain to understand behaviors. James developed functionalism, being the self-explanatory in name, its goal is to describe how to be more functional. The text goes on to cover Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic theory, and many other famous psychologists’ theories such as behaviorism led by Pavlov. We also learned how psychology was a “male-dominant” field for much of its existence. Only recently has that stigma gone away. The same can also be applied to different races, psychology was a “white-dominant” field up until recently.

Psychology is a large field, with over 54 divisions defined under the American Psychological Association (APA). The APA started with intents to bring more diversity to the field, leading to the many divisions. For example, there are fields such as biopsychology that explores the link between biology and behavior. There is also cognitive psychology, which is the study of mental processes, such as thinking, emotion, and problem-solving abilities.

The last segment in the reading covered the educational requirements in psychology and the various career pathways. It is often necessary for aspiring psychologists to obtain either a PhD or PsyD. Someone would obtain a PhD if they wanted to explore research and teaching, whereas a PsyD would be for someone who wishes to apply psychological principles in clinical practice. Finally, we learn how psychology can be useful in fields outside of psychology. For example, a salesperson can greatly benefit from understanding psychology. By knowing how the mind works, and how our behaviors can give insights into how we think, a salesperson can use that to better close deals.