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Behavioral-Cognitive Inhibition Theory: Conceptualization of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Other Psychopathology Disorders

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ABSTRACT

A comprehensive and behaviorally formulated theory for psychopathology disorders termed as behavioral-cognitive inhibition theory is presented. It constitutes an integration and re-formulation of several influential psychological theories of psychopathology and empirical findings in imagery research. According to the behavioral-cognitive inhibition theory the development of PTSD and other psychopathology disorders are due to the development of dysfunctional respondent-functional-appraisal memories. The maintenance of psychopathology disorders is due to a continuous retrieval of dysfunctional respondent-functional-appraisal memories, to inhibition of incompatible respondent-functional-appraisal memories, and to current dysfunctional appraisals and behaviors. Dysfunctional and incompatible respondent-functional-appraisal memories consist of respondent, discriminative, behavioral response, appraisal and consequence memory elements. It is proposed that the recovery from PTSD and other psychopathology disorders is accomplished when (a) strong enough matching incompatible respondent-functional-appraisal memories are retrieved in the same circumstances as dysfunctional respondent-functional-appraisal memories, (b) dysfunctional respondent-functional-appraisal memories become inhibited by incompatible respondent-functional-appraisal memories, and (c) new incompatible or functional contingencies are encoded, stored and become effective incompatible respondent-functional-appraisal memories. Concrete examples of respondent-functional-appraisal memory elements in emotional and personality disorders are presented. In addition, incompatible respondent-functional-appraisal memory elements are presented. Furthermore, central hypotheses of the behavioral-cognitive inhibition theory are formulated and important issues are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Behavioral-Cognitive Inhibition Theory, Comorbidity, Respondent, Functional, Appraisal, Memories, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Emotional and Personality Disorders

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