What IS Psychology?

(Breakdown and History)

You are about to enter into a new and interesting world. You will be exposed to information that can alter the way you view yourself, others, and the world around you. It is a world in which you learn about topics such as how people can behave violently towards others, why and how people fall in love, how to people with devastating illnesses can be helped, why people conform, how people can fall into cults like Heaven's Gate, how memory works and is influenced by others, and much, much, more.

What IS Psychology?

There is so much _____ in the field of psychology

- Topics studied, theoretical perspectives, disciplines involved

For example, try to define basketball. There are many perspectives. Is it…..

- Game, sport, hobby, art form?
- Skill, technique, luck?
- Objective to score as many points as possible, prevent the other team from scoring, defeat another team, get better than you were before?

What IS Psychology?

1) _____→ Ask questions in a precise manner; systematic observation (cause & effect with focus on specific issues)
2) _____→ Many different types of psychologists (daily events with people, why people fall in love, why people behave differently in groups, and more)
   a) O.J. Simpson Trial: Forensic Psychology had to figure out if he really killed his wife
   b) OKC Bombings: Cognitive Psychology had to determine if the eye-witness was telling the truth
3) _____→ Collect data to understand the world around them, pieces things together, and create theories
4) _____ → As society changes, the study/perspectives of people and behaviors will change with it

What IS Psychology?

Psychology - the study of behavior and cognition

- _____ → any observable activity

- _____ → any mental process

History of Psychology

- Began just over 100 years ago
  - People believed the mind could not be studied objectively
- Grew out of two other existing sciences:
  - _____ → grappling with psychological questions hundreds of years ago
    - How do senses become thoughts? Is the world that we perceive truly reality (ex: does color exist)? Do we actually choose our actions or are they predetermined?
    - Used Rationalism to address these (proper reasoning and logic to find truth)
  - _____ → used the scientific method to study observations

History of Psychology

- _____
  - Wilhelm Wundt → set up first psychological laboratory in 1879
    - Believed the way to learn about the brain and functions was to break the mind down into most basic elements
      - _____ (feelings, thoughts, sensations)
      - _____ (look within and examine own thoughts and feelings)
  - Cons → relied on subjective or self-report data, which is a weak form of data collection

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History of Psychology

- _____
  - How the conscious mind is related to behavior
    - What function does a behavior have (ex: puzzle box → animals behavior was to get out of the box)
  - William James viewed the mind as a stream, which couldn't be broken down into distinct components

History of Psychology

- _____
  - John B. Watson, Ivan Pavlov, B.F. Skinner → rejected the study of mental processes
    - Studied observable behavior and external factors
    - Concluded that in order to understand and study psychology, we must study what we can see and record

History of Psychology

- _____
  - Focused on _____ and _____
  - Max Wertheimer → claimed that we perceive and think about wholes rather than combinations of separate elements
    - Ex: geese flying in a "V" → we see the flying "V" and not the individual geese flying separately

History of Psychology

- _____
  - Focused on the importance of the unconscious mind (behavior is determined by _____)
  - Sigmund Freud → attempted to cure patients of physical symptoms (ex: leg paralysis) that had no apparent cause
    - Concluded that disorders were the result of unconscious psychological conflicts about sex. These conflicts were converted into physical symptoms that provided the patient with an excuse not to engage in the "taboo" behaviors

Which is Best?

Which of the eras of psychology that we briefly discussed do you find the most interesting? Why?

1. Structuralism
2. Functionalism
3. Behaviorism
4. Gestalt
5. Psychoanalysis