

Do It
Now

Psychological Explanations of Depression

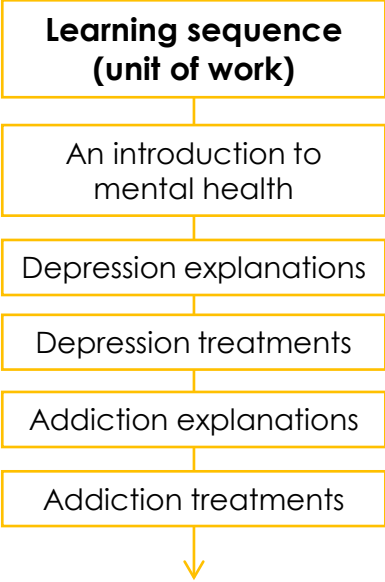
1. What does the word cognitive mean?
2. Define the term schema
3. Define the term nurture
4. Which neurotransmitter is linked to depression?
5. Identify one weakness of the biological explanation of depression

Half full or
half
empty?



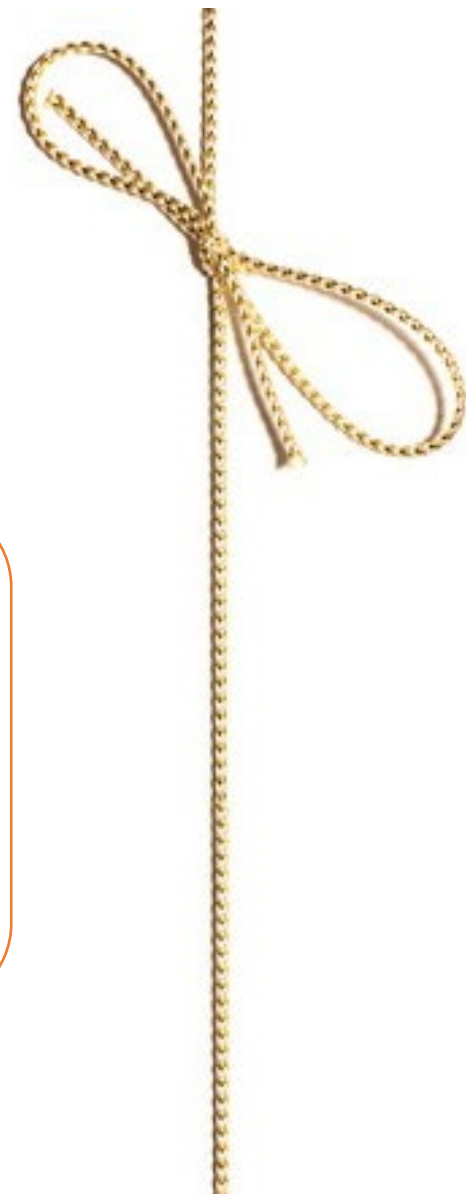
Learning Intention: What is the psychological explanation of depression?

Tier 3 Vocabulary	Definition
Cognitive	
Nurture	
Attribution	
Schema	





Tie your learning together through the golden threads of psychology



The golden threads in Psychological Problems are:

- 1) Culture
- 2) Use of schemas
- 3) Nature vs Nurture
- 4) Brain areas
- 5) Understanding difference
- 6) Psychology in the real world

Cognitive Explanations

People with depression often see the world as negative. They pay more attention to negative aspects of the situation rather than the positives. As a result, they would say the cup is half empty.

This is the result of faulty thinking! They do not think rationally or logically and often think in black or white – all or nothing terms. They also jump to conclusions.

What would the faulty thought process be in each of the scenarios below?

Situation	Rational non depressed thought	Irrational depressed thought
Cara won £1 Million on lottery	Wow I am so lucky and grateful, what can I spend it on?	Someone won £10 Million last week, why couldn't that have been me?
John went for a promotion in his firm but he didn't get it.	Oh well, it was a good experience, I'll learn from my mistakes for next time.	
Jean's son isn't doing very well at school.	Maybe he's not putting enough work in, what can we do to support him?	
James is waiting for his date at a restaurant. She's not arrived yet.	Maybe she got held up or stuck in traffic.	

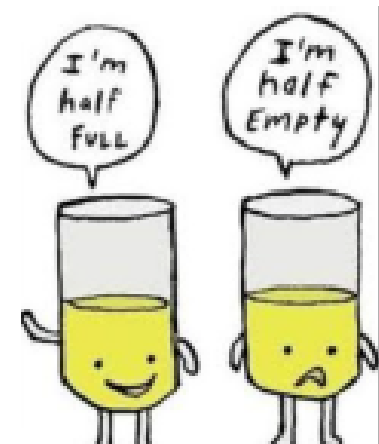
Cognitive Explanations

Situation	Rational non depressed thought	Irrational depressed thought
Cara won £1 Million on lottery	Wow I am so lucky and grateful, what can I spend it on?	Someone won £10 Million last week, why couldn't that have been me?
John went for a promotion in his firm but he didn't get it.	Oh well, it was a good experience, I'll learn from my mistakes for next time.	I'm a total failure. I'll never get promoted. My career is over.
Jean's son isn't doing very well at school.	Maybe he's not putting enough work in, what can we do to support him?	It's all my fault. I've let him down. I'm a bad mother.
James is waiting for his date at a restaurant. She's not arrived yet.	Maybe she got held up or stuck in traffic.	She's stood me up. I've put her off. I'm ugly. She can do better than me.

FAULTY THINKING

People with depression typically have faulty thinking patterns. They are often described as thinking as if the 'glass is half empty' (pessimistic) rather than the 'glass as half full' (optimistic).

For example, if somebody with faulty thinking patterns won £1 million on the lottery but remembered somebody won £10 million the previous week, they would focus on that instead.



Cognitive Explanations: Negative self-schema

NEGATIVE SCHEMAS



We covered schemas in the development topic. As well as having schemas about our world, we can have schemas about ourselves too. These are known as **self-schemas**. People with depression typically have negative **self-schemas** and will, therefore, interpret any information they receive about themselves negatively.

Cognitive Explanations: Attribution

ATTRIBUTIONAL STYLE

An *attribution* is a way of explaining the cause of behaviour. People with depression typically have a negative attributional style. Attributional style can be categorised into three types: **internal** (to do with me), **stable** (persistent) and **global** (in relation to everything). For example, somebody with depression would attribute a bad exam grade to them being 'stupid' (**internal**), thinking that means nobody will like them (**stable**) and that everything they do moving forward will go wrong (**global**).



Cognitive Explanations: Attribution

Link attribution to depression by answering the following questions.

- 1) What is attribution? (AO1)
- 2) What are internal and external attributions, and which are characteristics of depressed people? (AO1)
- 3) How does Seligman explain depression using attribution? (AO2)
- 4) Give an example of a negative attributional style (AO2)
- 5) **Stretch:** Could this idea be evaluated in any way? (AO3)

Attribution notes

Cognitive Explanations: AO3

Which of the following are strengths and limitations of the cognitive approach to explaining depression?

Seligman found that dogs stopped trying to escape electric shocks that they had no control over. They just gave up.

This is a strength/limitation because...

The cognitive approach has developed CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) which challenges irrational thoughts and aims to make the patient think more positively.

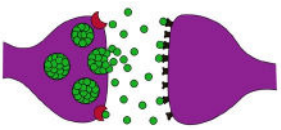
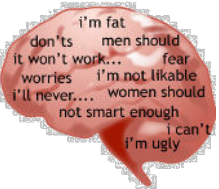
This is a strength/limitation because....

There are times when it is ok to feel depressed because life is difficult. Maybe depressed people are sadder but more wise as they are just realistic. Maybe a depressed attributional style offers a more realistic picture of the world.

This is a strength/limitation because....

Stretch: To what extent is it straightforward to test the cognitive explanation?

Comparison

	What causes depression?	Nature or nurture?	How is it treated?	Reductionist or holistic?
Biological Explanation 				
Cognitive Explanation 				

Exam Q & Writing Frame

Describe and evaluate the cognitive explanation of depression (9 marks)

Describe (AO1)	Evaluate (AO3)
The cognitive approach believes that depression originates from....	Ignores the role of biology....
Patients of depression usually have negative schema. These are....	Practical application of CBT...
Another faulty thought process is attributional style. People with depression....	Being negative is sometimes just being realistic...