

## Psychology

Are you interested in the behaviour of people and animals? If you are, then you might enjoy the study of psychology. Psychology is the study of behaviour, but this is a very large area of study. There are several different branches of psychology, each of which studies a different aspect of behaviour.

Social psychologists study interactions among people. For example, a social psychologist might try to learn about the situations that cause people to behave aggressively. Another question studied by social psychologists is why certain people become attracted to each other. One of the interesting problems in social psychology is conformity: what causes people to behave in the same way, and to follow what others do and say?

Cognitive psychologists study thinking, memory, and language. One problem studied by cognitive psychologists is how people remember numbers. For example, what is the best way to memorize some numbers? Is it better to repeat the numbers to oneself, or to try to attach some meaning to these numbers? A cognitive psychologist might also study language. For example, why can young children learn a second language so quickly and easily? Cognitive psychologists are also interested in the ways that people learn to solve problems, such as finding a new place.

Clinical psychologists study mental illnesses. For example, a clinical psychologist might try to find out the causes of depression and to figure out ways of helping people who are depressed. Other clinical psychologists might study the behaviour of people who suffer from addiction to drugs, so that this problem can be prevented and treated. Another topic of interest to clinical psychologists is violent behaviour. It is very important to find ways of preventing violence and to change the behaviour of persons who act violently.

Some psychologists are interested in the measurement of psychological characteristics. For example, psychologists might develop tests to assess a person's intelligence, personality traits, or interests. These tests can be used to help people make decisions about education, occupation, and clinical treatment.

Psychologists who study the behaviour of animals are called ethologists. Ethologists often go into wilderness areas to watch the activity of birds, fish, or other animals. These psychologists try to figure out why it is that some animals have "instincts" for various behaviours such as parenting, mating, or fighting. Some ethologists have learned very much about the unusual behaviours observed in many animals.

These are only a few of the many areas of psychology. Truly, psychology is one of the most interesting areas of knowledge!