

MAJOR BRANCHES OF PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

[Psychology](#) is such a broad field that conveying its depth and breadth can be difficult. As a result, a number of unique and distinctive branches of psychology have emerged, each one dealing with specific psychological areas within the study of the mind, brain, and behavior.

Key words: abnormal, personal, testology, clinic

Introduction. Each of these psychological areas looks at questions and problems from a different [perspective](#). While they all have their own focus, they still share a [common goal](#) of studying and explaining human thought and behavior. Because human behavior is so varied, the number of subfields in psychology is constantly growing and evolving. Some of these subfields have been firmly established as areas of interest, and many colleges and universities offer courses and degree programs in these topics. Each type of psychology represents a specific area of study focused on a particular topic. Oftentimes, psychologists specialize in one of these as a career. The following are just some of the major branches of psychology. For many of these, working in that specific area requires graduate study in that particular field.

[Abnormal psychology](#) looks at psychopathology and abnormal behavior. It involves the study of people's emotional, thought, and behavior patterns to identify, understand, and potentially resolve any issues that may be negatively affecting a person's life. Mental health professionals in this branch of psychology assess, diagnose, and treat a wide variety of [psychological disorders](#), including anxiety and depression. Counselors, clinical psychologists, and psychotherapists often work directly in this field.

Behavioral psychology, also known as [behaviorism](#), is a theory of learning based on the idea that all behaviors are acquired through conditioning. Behavioral strategies such as [classical conditioning](#) and [operant conditioning](#) are often utilized to teach or modify behaviors. For example, a teacher might use a rewards system to teach students to behave during class. When students are good, they receive gold stars, which can then be turned in for some sort of special privilege. While this type of psychology dominated the field during the first part of the twentieth century, it became less prominent during the 1950s. However, behavioral techniques remain a mainstay in therapy, education, and many other areas.

[Biopsychology](#) is a psychological area focused on how the brain, neurons, and nervous system influence thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. This field draws upon many different disciplines, including basic psychology, cognitive psychology, experimental psychology, biology, physiology,

and neuroscience. People who work in this type of psychology often study how [brain injuries](#) and brain diseases impact human behavior. Biopsychology is also sometimes referred to as physiological psychology, behavioral neuroscience, or psychobiology.¹ So, if you are interested in studying or earning a degree in this psychology branch, you may want to look for courses or programs with these names.

[Clinical psychology](#) is the branch of psychology concerned with the assessment and treatment of mental illness, abnormal behavior, and psychiatric disorders. Clinicians often work in private practices, but many also work in community centers or at universities and colleges. You can even find clinical psychology professionals in hospital settings and mental health clinics. In these organizations, they often work as part of a collaborative team that may include physicians, [psychiatrists](#), and other mental health professionals.

[Cognitive psychology](#) is a psychological area that focuses on internal mental states. This area has continued to grow since it emerged in the 1960s and is centered on the science of how people think, learn, and remember. Professionals who work in this type of psychology typically study cognitive functions such as perception, [motivation](#), emotion, language, learning, memory, [attention](#), [decision-making](#), and [problem-solving](#). Cognitive psychologists often use an information-processing model to describe how the mind works, suggesting that the brain stores and processes information much like a computer. [Comparative psychology](#) is the branch of psychology concerned with the study of animal behavior. This is important because the study of how animals behave can lead to a deeper and broader understanding of human psychology. This psychology subtype has its roots in the work of researchers such as Charles Darwin and George Romanes and has grown into a highly multidisciplinary subject. In addition to psychologists contributing to this field, so do biologists, anthropologists, ecologists, geneticists, and several others.

[Counseling psychology](#) is one of the largest areas of psychology. It is centered on treating clients in mental distress who may be experiencing a wide variety of psychological symptoms. The Society of Counseling Psychology explains that professionals working in this type of psychology can improve their clients' interpersonal functioning throughout life. They do this by improving the client's social and emotional health, as well as addressing concerns about health, [work](#), [family](#), [marriage](#), and more.

[Cross-cultural psychology](#) is a branch of psychology that looks at how cultural factors influence human behavior. This may involve looking at differences between [collective](#) and [individualist cultures](#), for instance. Cross-cultural psychologists might also look at how cultures vary in terms of emotion, personality, or child development. The International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology (IACCP) was established in 1972. This type of psychology has continued to grow and develop since that time, with increasing numbers of psychologists investigating how behavior differs among cultures throughout the world.

[Developmental psychology](#) focuses on how people change and grow throughout life. This area of psychology seeks to understand and explain how and why people change. Developmental psychologists study physical growth, intellectual development, emotional changes, social growth, and perceptual changes that occur over the course of the lifespan. These types of psychologists may specialize in infant, child, adolescent, or geriatric development, while others might primarily study the effects of developmental delays. This psychology branch covers a huge range of topics, ranging from [prenatal development](#) to [Alzheimer's disease](#).

[Educational psychology](#) is the branch of psychology concerned with schools, teaching psychology, educational issues, and student concerns. Educational psychologists often study how students learn. They may also work directly with students, parents, teachers, and administrators to improve student outcomes. Professionals in this type of psychology sometimes study how different variables influence individual students. They may also study learning disabilities, giftedness, and the instructional process.

Conclusion

Psychology is always evolving and new fields and branches continue to emerge. It is important to remember that no single branch of psychology is more important or better than any other. Each area contributes to our understanding of the many different psychological factors that influence who we are, how we behave, and how we think. By conducting research and developing new applications for psychological knowledge, professionals working in all psychological areas are able to help people better understand themselves, confront the problems they may face, and live better lives.

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