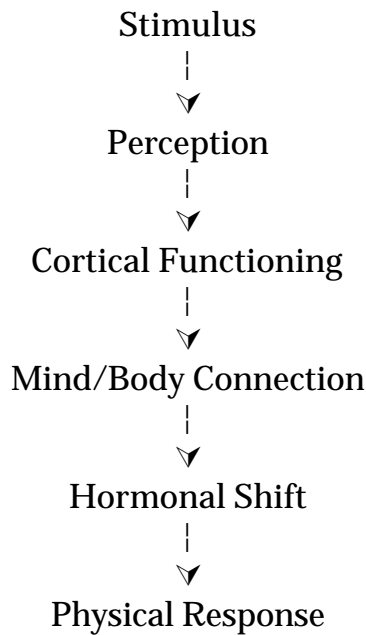


FANTASY RESPONSE SYSTEM



Fantasy

To imagine, visualize, or create a story line which fulfills a wish or desire. Fantasies usually occur in the visual (sight) or auditory (story line) modes. They can be very elaborate including much detail or can be simple passing thoughts. Fantasy extends reality in that elements are added to or removed from the real situation.

Stimulus

Any condition or event which causes or motivates a response. Fantasy begins as a cortical response to a stimuli and is reinforced through physiological changes (physical responses such as the release of tension). All living people who have cortical functioning have fantasies. For some people, fantasies have developed into a problem because they have either: 1) become too self reinforcing or 2) resulted in unacceptable physical responses. Stimuli, in and of themselves, do not have intentions or motivation, they simply exist. Stimuli can be positioned or manipulated in such a way as to produce a predictable outcome.

Perception

The sensory intake of stimuli. Perception occurs at two levels. The first level involves the 5 sensory mechanisms (sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell) and includes the encoding of the environmental stimuli into a format that the brain can understand. The sensory organs are influenced by the biological (hormonal) balance of the person. The second level of perception involves the interpretation of stimuli in terms of its meaning (placing a label on the stimuli). This level of perception is highly influenced by environmental cues (other stimuli which create the context of the situation) and prior knowledge/beliefs (cortical functioning).

Cortical Functioning

Involves interpreting, categorizing, retrieving prior knowledge, and drawing association between prior knowledge and the perceived stimuli. Cortical functioning includes what we usually think of as "thinking," "memory," and "feeling." These processes occur in the part of the brain referred to as the cerebral cortex.

Mind/Body Connection

Links the mind and body such that changes in one creates changes which are parallel in the other. That is, because of the mind/body connection, changes in the "mind" (cortical functioning) result in corresponding changes in the "body" (hormonal shifts) and changes in the "body" result in corresponding changes in the "mind." This mind/body connection is physically located in parts of the brain commonly referred to as the mid-brain and brain stem. These two parts of the brain create the mind/body connection by translating information from the brain to the body and from the body to the brain, (the mind and the body "speak" different languages).

Hormonal Shifts

In response to the signals from the mind/body connection, the chemical balance (hormones) begin to change resulting in biological changes in the body. That is, hormonal shifts serve as signals to organs in the body to change their state. These hormones are created in a variety of glands distributed throughout the body (ie. adrenaline comes from the adrenal medulla located on top of the kidneys). Alterations of the chemical/hormonal balance of the system will result in a miscommunication between the organs in the body and the brain. Hormonal shifts also alter the organisms that are responsible for perception, cortical functioning, and the mind/body connection.

Physical Response

Measurable changes in the activity of internal organs. Physical responses occur at body structures known as "end organs" which include the heart, liver, arteries, lungs, skeletal muscles, and intestines. These structures perform the work of the body. Changes in "end organs" produce changes in the hormonal balance in the system, thus sending a signal through the mind/body connection back to the cortex for interpretation and other types of processing.