To differentiate, behavioral therapy then is a type of therapy that uses the behavioral approach in its processes. As it is based on behaviorism, behavioral therapy largely focuses on the observable behavior of a person and sees psychological disorders as the result of learning the wrong response to something, as it believes people are born tabula rasa (as previously mentioned) and thus might have learned the wrong response from someone in their environment. Because of this, behavioral therapies rests on the fact that if something is learned from the environment, then that thing then, can be unlearned. However, it also important to note that different cultures have their own view and perspective on what behavioral therapies are (discussed more later).

To foster positive behavior change, behavioral therapies are action-based and usually involve increasing a person’s engagement in positive or socially reinforcing activities more often than not, through rewards. Basically two principles underlie the methods of behavioral therapies, and these are: classical conditioning and operant conditioning. As such, systematic desensitization and aversion therapies are all types of therapies resting on the principle of classical conditioning, and token economies, contingency management, modeling, and extinction on the other hand, rest upon the principles of operant conditioning.

Summarizing, the goals of most behavioral therapies is to (1) increase a person's engagement in positive or socially reinforcing activities, (2) to get rid of or to treat behavioral issues such as phobias, panic disorders, and obsessive compulsive disorders, and (3) finally, to help an individual develop new skills or strategies to be used in either a social setting or to help the individual cope up with his/her behavioral issue. Some techniques used in behavioral therapies are particularly used in conjunction with the concept of rewards and punishment, albeit neglecting the punishment part and instead prioritizing giving rewards to a patient for each engagement of positive behavior.

Behavioral therapy can practically be applied to all age groups, although some specific type of behavioral therapies such as token economies and modeling are more applicable to children and adolescents. Moreover, research shows that 2-5 year olds with ADHD are especially receptive to this type of therapy. Below are some examples of the mentioned behavioral therapies, and their corresponding definition and procedure:

**Systematic Desensitization**

This behavioral therapy applies the principles of classical conditioning. It basically involves having a client make a list of fears and then teaching him/her to relax while concentrating on these fears. This method usually works on treating phobias, as it utilizes counter conditioning techniques to desensitize and eliminate the fear response. The entire process basically follows three steps: (1) the client is first taught relaxation techniques, then (2) he/she creates a ranked list (ascending order) of fear-invoking situations, lastly (3) the client
Source(s):

Behavioral Therapy and Its History

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Age Group