

06 - 2. Self psychology

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© SPMM Course 2. Self psychology In self-psychology, various concepts are often used to describe the nature of self. □ Self-consciousness: Awareness of distinct self, compared to other objects in the environment. Only humans are thought to possess full self-consciousness. □ Self-image: This refers to an answer one might give for the question 'who are you?' It includes one's description of social roles (social self), personality traits and physical characters (bodily self). □ Self-esteem: This refers to a personal judgment of worthiness expressed in the attitudes one holds towards oneself. Self-image is descriptive, but self-esteem is evaluative. □ Ideal self: This represents 'what we would like ourselves to be'. One's self-esteem depends on the discrepancy between one's ideal self and self-image. We develop self-concept depending upon:

1. Reaction of others (Theory of looking glass self by Cooley suggests that like a mirror, others around us reflect our self-image)
2. Comparison with others
3. Social roles we play
4. Identification with role models Self-recognition could be demonstrated in a growing infant by using a mirror. Gallup conducted the famous 'touching the dot' experiments to demonstrate self-recognition. It is noted that only higher primates and humans older than 20 months successfully demonstrate 'touching the dot'. When a red dot is unknowingly placed on the face of a child, the child starts touching its face to explore the dot when a mirror is shown. This 'touching the dot' phenomenon does not occur less than 15 months of age. 5 to 25% infants touch the dot by 18 months while nearly 75% touch the dot by age 20 months. It is thus concluded that self-recognition rapidly develops between 18 to 20 months. Object permanence is necessary for self-recognition. Mirror recognition by primates may be a reflection of behavioural recognition i.e. 'the one in the mirror is same as me' rather than self-recognition i.e. 'the one in the mirror is me'. Autobiographical memory in humans develops around age 3 ½ to 4 ½ yrs.