

## Success Center

✓ Study on MyPsychLab

Dynamic Study Modules

👁 Watch the Video, on MyPsychLab

Study Methods

Managing Time

Reading the Text

Lecture Notes

Exam Prep

Paper Writing

Improve Memory

## Treatment of Psychological Disorders: Past to Present

14.1 How have psychological disorders been treated throughout history, and what are two modern ways they are treated today?

As discussed in Chapter Thirteen, although psychological or social causes might have been identified for some disorders, until the late 1700s, people suffering severe mental illnesses were sometimes thought to be possessed by demons or evil spirits, and the “treatments” to rid the person of these spirits were severe and deadly. Even within the last 200 years, a period of supposedly more “enlightened” awareness, the mentally ill did not always receive humane\* treatment. 📺 Watch the Video, *Thinking Like a Psychologist: Assessing Treatment Effectiveness: History of Treatments*, at MyPsychLab

### EARLY TREATMENT OF THE MENTALLY ILL

💬 I’ve seen movies about mental hospitals, and they didn’t look like great places to be in even now—how bad was it back then? What did people do with relatives who were ill that way?

The first truly organized effort to do something with mentally ill persons began in England in the middle of the sixteenth century. Bethlehem Hospital in London (later known as “Bedlam”) was converted into an asylum (a word meaning “place of safety”) for the mentally ill. In reality, the first asylums were little more than prisons where the mentally ill were chained to their beds. “Treatments” consisted of bloodletting (which more often than not led to death or the need for lifelong care for the patient), beatings, ice baths in which the person was submerged until passing out or suffering a seizure, and induced vomiting in a kind of spiritual cleansing (Hunt, 1993). This cleansing or purging was meant to rid the body of physical impurities so that the person’s mind and soul could function more perfectly.

It was not until 1793 that efforts were made to treat the mentally ill with kindness and guidance—known as “moral treatment”—rather than beating them or subjecting them to the harsh physical purging that had been commonplace. It was at this time that Philippe Pinel personally unchained the inmates at La Bicêtre Asylum in Paris, France, beginning the movement of humane treatment of the mentally ill (Brigham, 1844; Curtis, 1993). Dorothea Dix, a champion of rights for the mentally ill in the United States, lobbied for mental institutions starting in the 1840s.

AP Identify major historical figures in psychology.

AP Describe the central characteristics of psychotherapeutic intervention.

### CURRENT TREATMENTS: TWO KINDS OF THERAPY

Today, we can group the primary approaches to **therapy** (treatment methods aimed at making people feel better and function more effectively) into two broad categories. One category is based primarily in psychological theory and techniques; people tell the therapist about their problems, and the therapist listens and tries to help them understand those problems or assists them in changing the behaviors related to the problem. The other category uses medical interventions to bring the symptoms under control. Although we can separate treatments into these two larger categories, in actual practice, many effective treatment strategies or treatment plans combine facets of both. Just as there is no one single “cause” of a disorder (Maxmen et al., 2009), different psychological treatments are often used in tandem or combined with biomedical interventions. Furthermore, many psychology professionals do not limit themselves to a single technique and are **eclectic**, using more than one treatment approach or technique to best meet the needs of the people they are working with. The fields of clinical psychology and counseling psychology are diverse, and professionals have a wide variety of educational and training experiences. 🔗 to Learning Objective A.5. Before we discuss the various types of therapy in more detail, take a moment to evaluate your own views and experiences with therapy in the experiment, *How Do You Take Care of Your Mental Health?*

\*humane: marked by compassion, sympathy, or consideration for humans (and animals).



In this famous painting by French artist Robert Fleury, French psychiatrist Dr. Philippe Pinel orders the chains removed from patients at a Paris asylum for insane women. Pinel was one of the first psychiatrists to recommend humane treatment of the mentally ill.

## Simulation

### How Do You Take Care of Your Mental Health?

This survey asks you about your attitudes toward and experiences with taking care of your mental health.

Go to the Experiment ▶

Thinking of your overall experiences with psychological therapy or counseling, please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statement below. (Mark N/A if you have never participated in therapy/counseling).

Therapy helped me learn more effective ways of interacting with others.

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree
- N/A

 Simulate the Experiment, *How Do You Take Care of Your Mental Health?*, on MyPsychLab

**PSYCHOTHERAPY** Psychotherapy typically involves an individual, couple, or small group of individuals working directly with a therapist and discussing their concerns or problems. The goal of most psychotherapy is to help both mentally healthy and psychologically disordered persons understand themselves better (Goin, 2005; Wolberg, 1977). Because understanding of one's motives and actions is called *insight*, therapies aimed mainly at this goal are called **insight therapies**. A therapy that is directed more at changing behavior than providing insights into the reasons for that behavior is called **action therapy**. Many psychological professionals use a combination of insight and action therapeutic\* methods.

**BIOMEDICAL THERAPY** The other main type of therapy uses some biological treatment in the form of a medical procedure to bring about changes in the person's disordered behavior. **Biomedical therapies** include the use of drugs, surgical methods, electric shock treatments, and noninvasive stimulation techniques. It is important to understand that biomedical therapy often eliminates or alleviates the symptoms of a disorder, while psychotherapy addresses issues associated with the disorder, and when used together, these two types of therapy facilitate\*\* each other (Maxmen et al., 2009). For example, when medications are needed, individuals taking the proper medications are going to benefit more from psychotherapy, as their symptoms will be better controlled. Furthermore, psychotherapy, not medication, is going to help them better understand what the symptoms of their disorder are and facilitate adjustment, other coping strategies, and proactive ways of addressing the disorder or its related outcomes (Maxmen et al., 2009).

## Psychotherapy Begins

14.2

What were the basic elements of Freud's psychoanalysis, and how do psychodynamic approaches differ today?



So what exactly happens in psychoanalysis? I've heard lots of stories about it, but what's it really like?

In a sense, Freud took the sixteenth-century method of physical cleansing to a different level. Instead of a physical purge, cleansing for Freud meant removing all the "impurities"

\*therapeutic: providing or assisting in a cure.

\*\*facilitate: to assist, make possible, or make easier.

14.2

14.6

14.7

**AP** Describe major treatment orientations used in therapy and how those orientations influence therapeutic planning.

**AP** Evaluate the strengths and limitations of various approaches to explaining psychological disorders: medical model, psychoanalytic, humanistic, cognitive, biological, and sociocultural.

**AP** Identify major figures in psychological treatment.