

# Bandura & the Social- Learning Approach

SIUE PSYC 340



# Albert Bandura

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# Life of Bandura

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- Albert Bandura (1925-) is a Canadian-American psychologist who challenged Skinner's operant conditioning and promoted a social-learning approach.
- He proposed the concept of **reciprocal determinism**, suggesting behavior is controlled by both the individual and the environment.

# Life of Bandura

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- Born in Canada in 1925 to parents who stressed the value of education
- Earned a PhD from the University of Iowa in 1952
- Taught at Stanford University from 1953-2010
- Elected APA President in 1974
- *Very* distinguished with many awards and honorary degrees

# Bandura's Approach

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- **Observational learning:** Learning by observing other people's behavior
  - More specifically, by observing the consequences of others' behavior (**vicarious reinforcement**)
  - Influenced by cognitive processes and characteristics of the situation
- **Modeling:** A behavior modification technique that involves observing the behavior of a model and then repeating the behavior
  - Makes it possible to acquire responses that have never been performed before and to strengthen or weaken existing responses

# Modeling

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- Demonstrated through the Bobo doll studies ([Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961](#))
  - A group of 72 preschoolers was split into several groups.
    - One experimental group watched an adult “attack” an inflatable plastic doll.
    - The control group did not observe these aggressive behaviors.
  - Individual children were left alone with the doll, and Bandura et al. observed them.
    - Compared to the control group, the experimental group was twice as likely to attack the doll.

Watch a clip from the Bobo doll studies:  
<https://youtu.be/dmBqwWlJg8U>

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# Modeling

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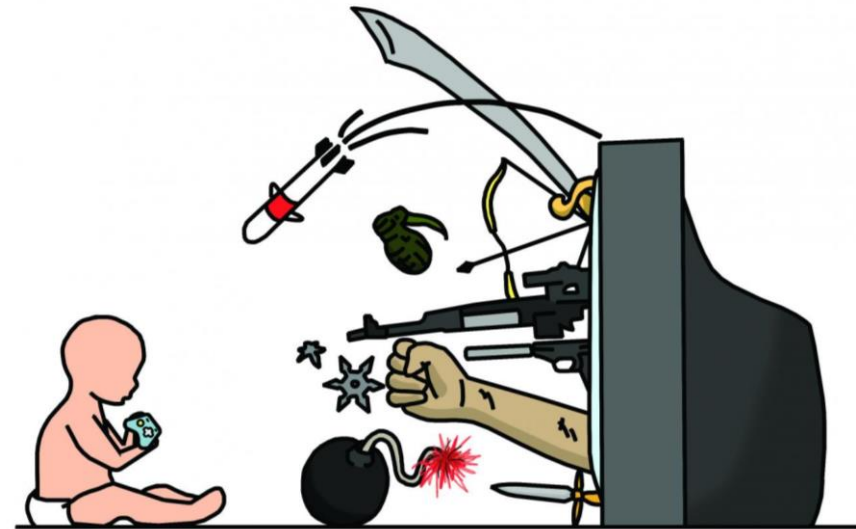
- After comparing inhibited children and highly aggressive children, they found that the children's behavior reflected their parents' behavior.
- They also found that the behaviors people usually suppress may be performed more readily under the influence of a model.
  - **Disinhibition:** The weakening of inhibition by observing a model's behavior



# Modeling

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- Bandura suggested that many behaviors (good, bad, normal, abnormal) are learned by imitating others' behavior.
- He criticized society's that provide the wrong models for its children.
  - E.g., violent behavior shown on television and in movies, music, and video games



# Characteristics of the Modeling Situation

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- Bandura et al. studied 3 factors that influence modeling:

## Characteristics of the models

- Similarity
- Age and sex
- Status
- Type of behavior displayed
- Size and weight

## Characteristics of observers

- Age
- Self-confidence
- Self-esteem

## Reward consequences of behaviors

- Affects the extent of modeling
- Prevails over characteristics of models and observers

# Characteristics of the Modeling Situation

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- The characteristics of the models affect the individual's tendency to imitate them.
  - Infancy – Babies imitate behavior immediately after observation.
  - Age 2 – Children imitate behavior some time after the observation.
- The characteristics of the observers also impact the observational learning.
  - People who are low in self-esteem are more likely to imitate a model's behavior than are people high in self-esteem.

# Characteristics of the Modeling Situation

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- The reward consequences linked to a particular behavior can:
  - Affect the extent of the modeling.
  - Override the impact of the characteristics of the models and the observers.
    - If the rewards of a high-status model's behavior are not meaningful, we will discontinue the behavior and be less likely to be influenced by that model in the future.

# Observational Learning Processes

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## Attentional processes

- Imitation is more likely when attention is high, which is more likely when cognitive and perceptual skills are highly developed and when knowledge is high.

## Retention processes

- Information about the behavior is retained through an imaginal internal representational system or through a verbal system.

## Production processes

- Practice of the proper physical movements (and feedback on their accuracy) helps produce a well-performed behavior.

## Incentive and motivational processes

- The presence of incentives (given by others, experienced vicariously, or self-administered) more quickly translates observation into action.

# Self-Reinforcement

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- Said behavior is regulated by a continuing process of **self-reinforcement**, administering rewards or punishments to oneself based on personal standards
  - An initial set of internal standards is formed during childhood from observing models, typically parents and teachers.
  - Past behavior may become a reference point and an incentive.
  - Failure to meet unrealistic standards causes emotional punishment and destructive behavior.

# Self-Efficacy

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- Believed the most important factor in determining success or failure is **self-efficacy**, feelings of adequacy, efficiency, and competence in coping with life
  - People low in self-efficacy feel helpless and unable to control their life events.
    - They give up quickly and doubt themselves.
  - People high in self-efficacy believe that they can deal effectively with situations and overcome obstacles.
    - They persevere, are less afraid of failure, and often perform at a high level.

# Self-Efficacy

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- Said people base their self-efficacy judgments on 4 sources of information:
  - Performance attainment - Prior achievements or failures
  - Vicarious experiences - Seeing others' successful performance or failures
  - Verbal persuasion - Reminding people of their abilities
  - Physiological and emotional arousal - Being calm and composed



# Ways of Increasing Self-Efficacy

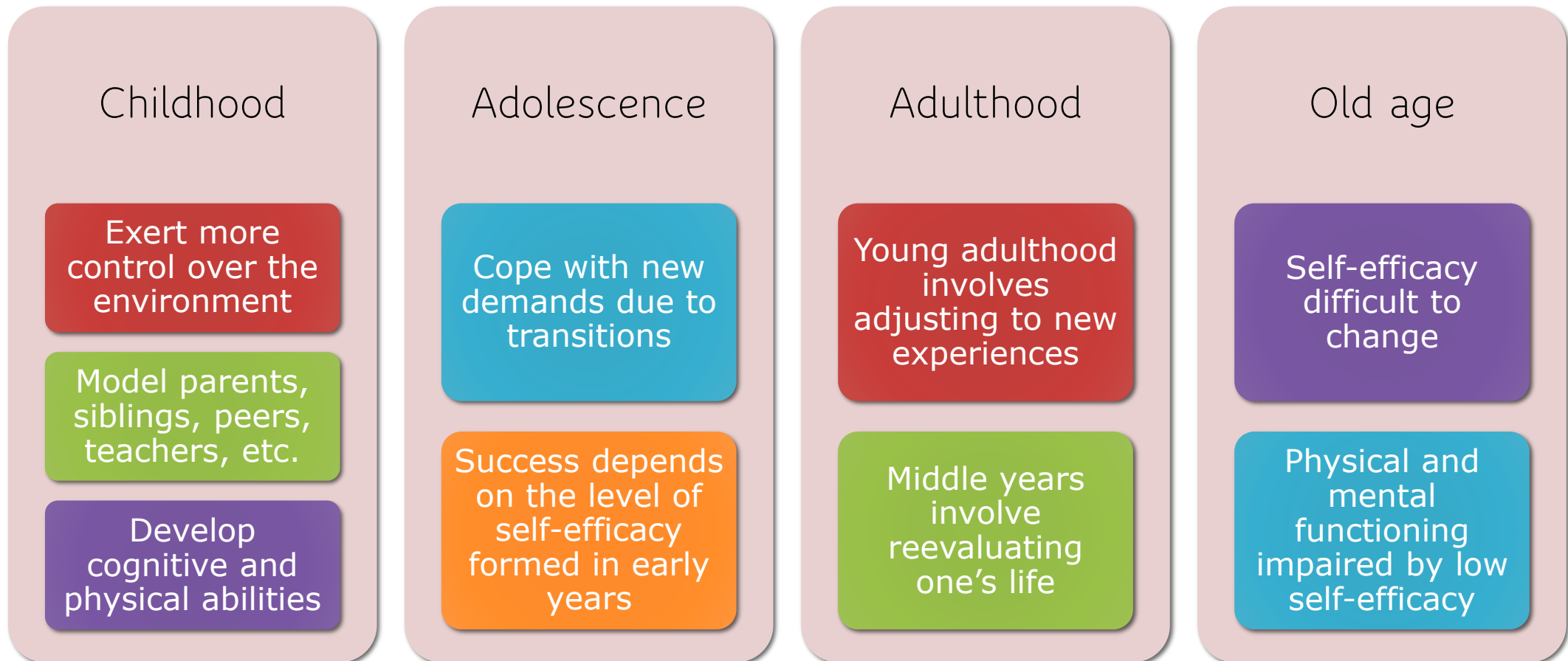
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- ❑ Exposing people to success by arranging reachable goals
- ❑ Exposing people to appropriate models who perform successfully
- ❑ Reminding people that they can achieve whatever they want to achieve
- ❑ Strengthening physiological arousal through proper diet, stress reduction, and exercise programs



# Developmental Stages of Self-Efficacy

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# Bandura's Methods

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- Favored well-controlled laboratory investigations
  - Compared the average performance of large groups using statistical analysis
  - Focused on cognitive variables and overt behavior
- Techniques:
  - Direct observation
  - Self-report inventories
  - Physiological measurements

# Behavior Modification

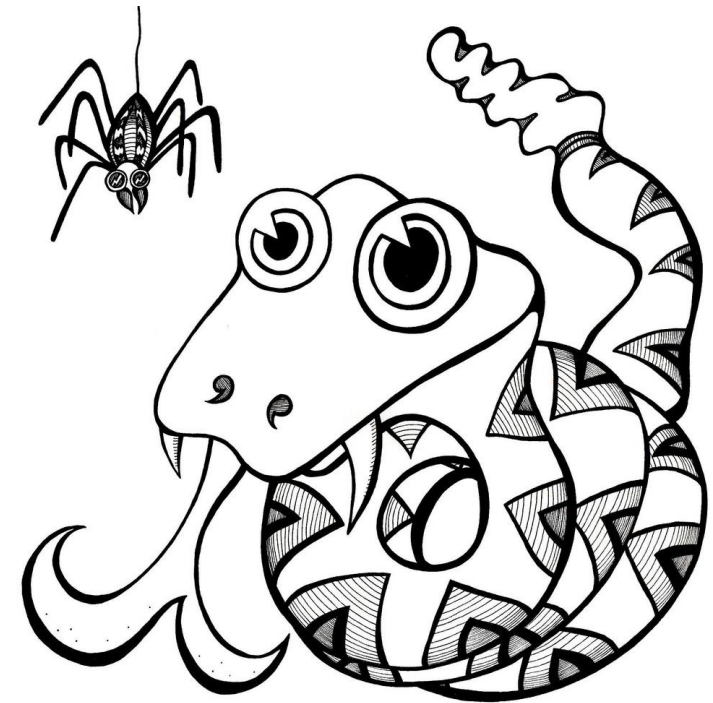
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- Sought to change learned behaviors considered undesirable by society
- Applied modeling techniques to eliminate fears and reduce anxiety
  - **Guided participation:** Involves watching a live model and then participating with the model before eventually coming in contact with what they fear
  - **Covert modeling:** Involves imagining a model coping with a feared or threatening situation

# Behavior Modification

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- Effective with phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorders, and sexual dysfunctions
  - Used to treat fear of medical treatment and test anxiety
- Positive effects can last for years
- Can be used with groups to save time and money



# Research on Bandura's Approach

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- Studies of self-efficacy suggest that it:
  - Increases into adulthood, peaks in middle age, and declines after age 60..
  - Is positively correlated with parents' self-efficacy.
  - Is positively correlated with self-esteem, grades, commitment to career goals, job performance, health, pain tolerance, recovery time, and parents' self-efficacy.
  - Is negatively correlated with drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, and experiencing depression, test anxiety, and job stress.

# Research on Bandura's Approach

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- Studies of aggressive behavior suggest it is positively correlated with:
  - Watching violent behavior on television and online in childhood.
  - Playing violent video games in childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood.
- Studies of cyberbullying suggest it:
  - Is more likely to be practiced by those who are high in disinhibition.
  - Has fewer effects on those who are high in self-efficacy.

# Strengths of Bandura's Theory

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- Objective and amenable to experimental methods
- Observational learning and behavior modification are pragmatic and functional
- Use of role models can be applied to resolution of problems
- Focus on overt behavior ignores inner aspects of personality
- Treats only the symptom and not the cause
- Criticized an exploitation and manipulation



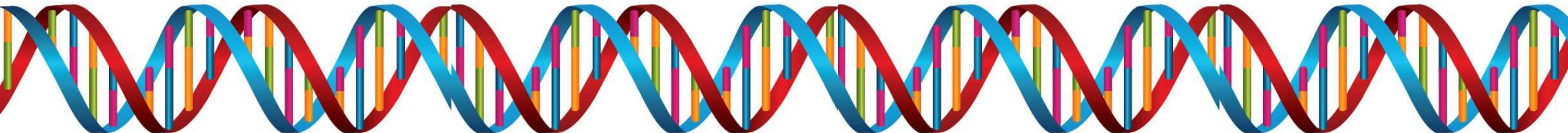
# Summary of Personality Theories

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# Summary of the Genetic Factor

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- Theoretical support:
  - Eysenck
  - McCrae and Costa
  - Buss and Plomin
  - Zuckerman
- Research findings:
  - People inherit dispositions and not destinies or certainties.
  - Our genes influence everyday behavior as well.



# Summary of the Environmental Factor

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- Theoretical support:
  - Adler – Birth order affects personality
  - Horney – Culture affects gender roles
  - Allport – Social environment shapes genetic factors
  - Cattell – Affects 16 personality factors
  - Erickson – Stages of psychosocial development depend on environment
  - Maslow and Rogers – Environment inhibits or promotes self-actualization
- Research findings:
  - Societal events
  - Rearing of children
  - Social standards and attitudes
  - Culture
  - Jobs
  - Stressful events
  - Ethnic background
  - Economic conditions

# Summary of the Learning Factor

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- Theoretical support:
  - Skinner's positive reinforcement, successive approximation, and superstitious behavior
  - Bandura's observational learning
- Research findings:
  - Self-efficacy
  - Locus of control
  - Learned helplessness
  - Optimism vs. pessimism



# Summary of the Parental Factor

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- Theoretical support:
  - Freud – Parental influence in formation
  - Adler – Parental rejection
  - Horney – The lack of parental warmth
  - Allport – The mother as the primary source of affection and security
  - Cattell – Parents' behavior in childhood
  - Maslow – Parents' satisfaction of the child's physiological and safety needs
- Research findings:
  - Child rearing factors
  - Parental personality traits
  - Cultural differences
  - Upbringing of parents
  - Relationship type with children

# Summary of the Developmental Factor

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- Theoretical support:
  - Freud - Personality is fixed at about age 5.
  - Cattell, Allport, and Erikson - Personality continues to develop after childhood.
  - Jung, Maslow, Erikson, and Cattell - Personality undergoes drastic changes in middle age.
- Research findings:
  - Some aspects change; some are stable.
  - Personality changes in adulthood are due to social, environmental, and economical influences.

# Summary of the Consciousness Factor

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- Theoretical support:
  - Freud and Jung wrote that consciousness lies in the ego.
  - Adler held that humans consciously plan and direct the course of their lives.
  - Allport said humans are aware of and are in control of the forces that motivate them.
  - Rogers stated that people are governed by a conscious perception of themselves.
  - Maslow described a cognitive need to know and understand.
  - Kelly held that people made predictions based on their environmental and people constructs.
  - Bandura said people learn through example.
- Research findings
  - There is widespread agreement that consciousness influences personality!

# Summary of the Unconscious Factor

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- Theoretical support:
  - Freud's theory of the unconscious
  - Cognitive psychology
- Research findings:
  - Unconscious cognitive processes are rational.
  - Rational unconscious is studied through subliminal psychodynamic activation.

