Three Lenses, One Experience

How different models explain mental illness

SS24.P.16a "Describe various approaches for explaining mental illness, including biological and medical, cognitive, and sociocultural models."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two body-related influences on Alia's fear, circle one thought that could keep her fear going, and number two social conditions that could affect her distress or access to support.

Why Does School Feel Frightening?

1. Every Sunday night, Alia's stomach tightens when she thinks about school. On Monday, she sometimes stays home because her fear feels overwhelming. A biological and medical approach asks how the body's systems might shape that fear. A clinician might consider inherited vulnerability, sleep, and the brain circuits that help detect threats and regulate stress. These factors can affect how strongly a person reacts to everyday events. A clinician would also check whether a health condition or medication could contribute to the symptoms. This approach can guide care, but no single brain test explains Alia's experience.

2. A cognitive approach looks at patterns of thought that influence emotion and behavior. When Alia sees two classmates whisper, she assumes they are criticizing her, although she does not know what they said. She predicts that one awkward moment will ruin her whole day. Staying home briefly lowers her fear, but it also keeps her from finding out whether her prediction is true. A cognitive explanation focuses on how interpretations and expectations may maintain distress, not on blaming Alia for having it. A therapist might help her test a prediction and consider other explanations for the whispering.

3. A sociocultural approach examines conditions around a person, including relationships, community expectations, and access to support. Alia's family recently moved, and she has not yet found friends at her new school. Her family works long shifts, so getting to an appointment across town would be difficult. Some classmates also mock her accent, making school feel less welcoming. These experiences could add stress or make help harder to reach. None proves why Alia feels afraid. The three approaches can work together: biology may affect stress responses, thoughts may amplify fear, and social experiences may shape what happens next.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How would the biological and medical approach investigate Alia's fear? Name two factors it would consider.

2. How would a cognitive approach explain why staying home might keep Alia's fear going?

3. How could two social conditions in Alia's life affect her distress or her access to support?

4. Why might combining cognitive and sociocultural explanations give a fuller account of Alia's fear than using either one alone?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a brief fictional situation in which a teen has ongoing emotional distress. In five to six sentences, explain how biological and medical, cognitive, and sociocultural approaches might each account for part of the situation, without claiming any single cause is certain.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.P.16a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two body-related influences on Alia's fear, circle one thought that could keep her fear going, and number two social conditions that could affect her distress or access to support. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How would the biological and medical approach investigate Alia's fear? Name two factors it would consider.	**It would examine how body-related factors shape her fear, such as inherited vulnerability and sleep.**
2	How would a cognitive approach explain why staying home might keep Alia's fear going?	**Staying home prevents Alia from testing her prediction that an awkward moment will ruin her day, so the expectation may continue.**
3	How could two social conditions in Alia's life affect her distress or her access to support?	**Classmates mocking her accent could add stress. Her family's long work shifts could make it harder to get to an appointment.**
4	Why might combining cognitive and sociocultural explanations give a fuller account of Alia's fear than using either one alone?	**Her prediction about classmates may amplify her fear, while being mocked and struggling to make friends may make school feel less welcoming. Both thoughts and social experiences may matter.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

After a long winter, Nico feels down most days and has stopped enjoying guitar practice. A biological and medical approach might examine whether disrupted sleep or a health condition contributes to his low energy. A cognitive approach might examine his belief that one poor performance means he will never improve. That belief could make him avoid practicing, leaving fewer chances to feel capable. A sociocultural approach might consider how caring for younger siblings leaves little time for friends and music. These influences could interact, and none alone proves why Nico feels this way.

Accept other passage-supported factors and explanations for the short answers. For the open task, look for a distinct possible contribution from each approach and language that avoids treating any explanation as certain.