Why Patterns Persist

Four ways to explain behavior that disrupts daily life

P.6.3 "Identify and describe the theories of maladaptive behaviors."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the names of four theories. For each theory, circle a cause or process it uses to explain maladaptive behavior.

Looking Beyond the Behavior

1. Maladaptive behavior is a pattern that interferes with daily life or causes significant distress, not simply behavior others dislike. Imagine a student who repeatedly misses rehearsals because intense fear makes entering the room difficult. A biological theory looks at inherited vulnerability and brain processes that shape responses to stress. It might examine how a sensitive threat-response system increases fear. A behavioral theory focuses on actions learned through experience. If leaving rehearsal quickly reduces fear, that relief can reinforce leaving, making avoidance more likely next time. Neither theory alone can show why this particular student struggles.

2. A cognitive theory asks how thoughts and interpretations affect feelings and actions. A student who reads one awkward comment as proof that everyone is judging them may feel more fear and avoid speaking. This theory looks for patterns such as predicting the worst without enough evidence. A sociocultural theory looks outward at social conditions, shared expectations, and access to support. Bullying, a school culture that punishes mistakes, or limited access to counseling can increase stress or make help harder to seek. These theories do not blame students for their symptoms, and social pressure is not itself a diagnosis.

3. These are explanations, not four separate disorders. Someone investigating a behavior might ask whether family history, learned avoidance, threatening interpretations, and school pressures interact for the same person. For example, a person could be especially sensitive to stress, learn that skipping a crowded event brings immediate relief, and expect humiliation after earlier teasing. A theory directs attention to particular causes and possible supports. Evidence from more than one theory may matter. A single action, such as leaving a noisy room, does not prove a disorder. The behavior's context, persistence, and effects on daily functioning matter before anyone draws conclusions.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. A student has a family history of strong stress responses and avoids lunch after one unpleasant experience. Which theory would investigate each clue, and what would it look for?

2. A student assumes one low quiz score means everyone sees them as incapable, while classmates mock mistakes. How would cognitive and sociocultural theories explain different parts of this situation?

3. A student takes a different route each day to avoid a hallway where they were once frightened. How might a behavioral theory explain why the avoidance continues?

4. Why could two theories offer useful but different explanations for a student repeatedly skipping a club? Why can't the absences alone prove a disorder?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a fictional behavior that disrupts a student's daily life. In four or five sentences, describe how two different theories from the passage could explain it, naming a distinct clue each theory would investigate; do not diagnose the student.

Why Patterns Persist

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the names of four theories. For each theory, circle a cause or process it uses to explain maladaptive behavior. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	A student has a family history of strong stress responses and avoids lunch after one unpleasant experience. Which theory would investigate each clue, and what would it look for?	**A biological theory would investigate inherited vulnerability to stress. A behavioral theory would investigate whether avoiding lunch brings relief that reinforces avoidance.**
2	A student assumes one low quiz score means everyone sees them as incapable, while classmates mock mistakes. How would cognitive and sociocultural theories explain different parts of this situation?	**A cognitive theory would examine the student's interpretation of the score. A sociocultural theory would examine the classmates' mockery as a source of social pressure.**
3	A student takes a different route each day to avoid a hallway where they were once frightened. How might a behavioral theory explain why the avoidance continues?	**Avoiding the hallway may bring immediate relief from fear, which reinforces taking a different route.**
4	Why could two theories offer useful but different explanations for a student repeatedly skipping a club? Why can't the absences alone prove a disorder?	**Different theories investigate different influences, such as learned avoidance and social pressure, that may interact. Absences alone do not establish the behavior's context, effects, or whether a disorder is present.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A student repeatedly rewrites homework until it is too late to submit. A cognitive theory would investigate the student's belief that one small mistake will lead to failure. A behavioral theory would investigate whether rewriting brings brief relief from worry, reinforcing the habit. These are possible explanations for the pattern, not a diagnosis.

Accept other accurate clues tied to the named theories. For the open task, look for a daily-life effect and two distinct, plausible explanations without a diagnosis.