

## BASIC PSYCHOLOGY

### INTRODUCTION

Psychology is a basic science dedicated to the study of human behaviour at the levels of complexity that are necessary and, therefore, includes motor (what a person does), emotional (what they feel) and cognitive behaviour (what they think). It also examines complex human attributes such as consciousness, experience, personality, intelligence and the mind. As a basic science, psychology aims to establish the basic principles that govern psychological phenomena but also concerns itself with the conditions under which individual behaviour and psychological attributes differ. In other words, it considers which situations result in individual differences in the behaviour of persons on the basis of their age, gender, or other biological or social conditions. *Basic Psychology* is therefore a speciality within psychology that we may define as scientific, universal and fundamental for other specialities. By knowing the common and universal rules it is possible to understand and explain deviations and differences. The focus of this subject is to learn the basics of psychology – the areas of study, basic cognitive processes, methods, discoveries and their applications – as clearly as possible, and paying particular attention to practical value, with the on-going intention to motivate students to reflect as they study and learn, so that they arrive at their own conclusions. The practical aspects of the subject focus on the context of social work.

### COMPETENCIES

- Analyse the various psychological schools of thought and recognize those that have had the greatest impact in shaping social work as a profession.
- Evaluate various psychological processes and extract from each one the most significant elements for the functions and duties of a social worker.
- Examine language and communication as key processes in diagnosis and social intervention with families, individuals and groups.
- Analyse and use (if possible) standardized tools for measuring attitudes, memory, attention, anxiety, etc.
- Describe the learning models that explain, through the experimental method, infant maltreatment, helplessness, and other associated effects
- Reflect on the value of information provided in class and lectures and come to one's own conclusions.

### CONTENT

1. Introduction to psychology: what is psychology? Schools of thought in psychology, areas of specialization, contribution of psychology to social work.
2. Biology and behaviour: nature and behaviour, the functioning of the nervous system, mind and brain, brain alterations, cognitive dysfunctions associated with the brain, brain mapping.
3. Sleep, drugs and altered states: consciousness, content and functions, altered states of consciousness, biological rhythms, sleep cycles, altered sleep, basic description of drugs and their effects.
4. Psychology of sensation and perception: basic principles, social and personal perception, selective and subliminal perception, altered sensation and perception, extrasensory perception, experience of pain.
5. Attention: factors affecting attention, types of attention, childhood disorders, diagnosis of and intervention in disorders, controlled and automatic processes, Stroop effect, arousal and sustained attention.
6. Learning: categories of learning, conditioned responses and their applications, instrumental conditioning and its applications, reinforcers and punishments.
7. Side effects of punishment, learned helplessness, conditioning disputes, modelling, role of social models.
8. Cognition and thought: mind and mental processes, cognitive system (structures, processes and functions), acquisition of knowledge (types and forms), social cognition, concepts and categories, reasoning and problem solving.
9. Memory: nature and measures, sensory memory, short-term memory, long-term memory, representation of knowledge in memory, theories of forgetting, memory disorders, cognitive reserve and maintenance programmes.
10. Language and communication: language and thought, properties of language, universal linguistics, non-human language, gestures and body language, developmental milestones, communicative skills in social work, role of communication in the social work profession, language and communication disorders.
11. Motivation: the reason for behaviour, approaches and theories, biological basis, primary and secondary motivations, achievement motivation, cognitive motivation, frustration and conflicts.
12. Emotion: nature and basic components, approaches and theories, stress, coping and health, General Adaptation Syndrome, techniques for dealing with stress, functions of the emotions.
13. Social dimension of behaviour: social perception and attribution, formation of attitudes, social stereotypes, prejudices, discrimination on grounds of race and gender.

