Name _____ Date _____ Class _____

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITY 10

Personality, Cognition, and Memory

Directions: Read the following material, then answer the questions on a separate sheet of paper.

In order to view memory and central processing of information from a clinical perspective, thinking, cognition, and memory will be described in relation to four personality types: obsessive-compulsive, paranoid, hysterical, and impulsive. These explanations use the extremes of personality types for purposes of description. You will not likely encounter these extremes in daily life. The descriptions do help you see how thinking and memory are influenced by personality.

Obsessive-Compulsive	
Thinking and Cognition	• Rigid with sharp, intense attention • Consumed with details • Not receptive to new facts or different points of view
Memory	• Precise, technical, and factual memories • Can absorb and retain a high number of facts • Will likely have vivid, detailed memories of past events

Paranoid	
Thinking and Cognition	• Suspiciousness with a determination to confirm suspicious beliefs • Rigid • Intense concentration directed toward any aspect of the initial suspicion • Normal perceptions are misinterpreted and distorted • Attention focused on imposing their own conclusions
Memory	• Used to collect injustices and perceived injustices • Creates links to build and confirm their suspicions

Hysterical	
Thinking and Cognition	• Global impressions and perceptions with little attention to detail • Difficulty maintaining focus and concentration • Cognition is based on hunches with a focus on the obvious or what is immediately available • Deficits in factual knowledge • Little or no intellectual curiosity
Memory	• Based on impressions • Lacks detail • Gaps are filled in with embellishments • May repress memories

Impulsive	
Thinking and Cognition	• Poor concentration • Limited ability to think abstractly • Allows whims and impulses to control their thinking • The initial impression becomes the final conclusion, alternatives are not considered • Lacks goals, aims, or interests beyond immediate or short-term gratification
Memory	• Inconsistent and discontinuous • Limited ability to integrate facts and impressions • Events are screened for short-term gain • Easily distractible

Consider how each type of personality would react to a major natural disaster, such as a hurricane. Obsessive-compulsive personalities would have considered all the possible courses of action. They would carefully track the path of the storm, know all the evacuation routes, and have taken every precaution to protect their property. They will also remember facts related to previous hurricanes in great detail. Their great danger is being buried in a sea of facts.

Paranoid personalities are likely to believe that the hurricane has been sent specifically to disrupt their lives. They may even create bizarre theories to explain why hurricanes happen. They will remember every storm in which they have been involved. They will already have elaborate precautions in place to protect themselves and their property.

Hysterical personalities believe that the worst will occur to them, even if they live 500 miles from the expected danger area. They may not make appropriate plans because they are consumed with worry. They may not remember how they have handled such disasters in the past, or they may create fanciful stories of how they survived previous storms. These memories will not lead them to productive action.

Impulsive personalities will generally ignore warnings and make few preparations for the storm. If they have lived through a major storm in the past, they may begin to make preparations but may become distracted and lose focus. They may be the first or the last to evacuate, or they may decide to take their chances just for the thrill of it.

Questions

Directions: Answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. Which of the categories might include an individual who believes that her neighbors are spying on her and trying to get her to leave the neighborhood?

   _____

   _____

2. If you were on a work team that needed to gather facts about pollution of the groundwater, which personality types would you most prefer to have on the team with you? Which would you least prefer? Explain.

   _____

   _____

3. Which personality types would be most likely to use confabulation in their recall of events?

   _____

   _____

Enrichment Activities