



## THE PSYCHODYNAMIC APPROACH

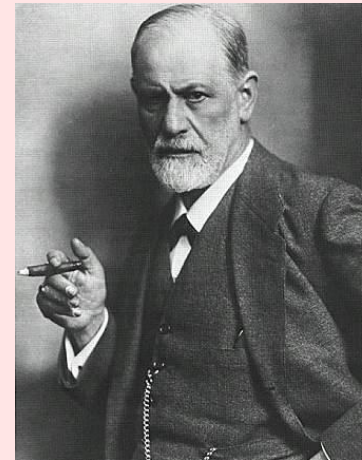
# AN INTRODUCTION TO FREUD

A bit of history about Sigmund Freud and an introduction to his psychosexual theory

### Sigmund Freud

Freud was a medical doctor, who saw people who suffered severe mental health problems, **neuroses**. Freud was an ambitious man who wanted to develop a theory which was applicable to all people. Consult **M7 The Case Study as Used in the Psychodynamic Approach** for more information on Freud's methods of developing his theory and why he wanted to do so

One of the biggest problems with Freud's theories is the questionable **credibility** of his ideas. The concepts from his final psychosexual theory are very controversial, and not everybody will agree with him. But he seemed to be a compassionate man, who firmly believed in his ideas, which he frequently amended and improved. Freud used very few case studies in his time, but the most famous of them (that of **Little Hans**) provided key evidence for some of the concepts from his psychosexual theory



### Key assumptions of the Psychodynamic Approach

This approach to psychology relies on *four* key assumptions. It is important that you understand that the Psychodynamic Approach is all about Freud, his ideas and the concepts from his psychosexual theory, all of which you will come onto over the next two chapters. That is why these four key assumptions are *Freud's ideas*, and it is not true that everyone will agree that they are all definitely correct. The key assumptions of the approach are:

- the importance of the first five years  
*As you will learn in the coming chapters through Freud's ideas, Freud believed that the first five years of life are the most important in terms of forming a personality, and that if there are any unsolved problems at one particular stage at this time in your life, your gender development will be disrupted*
- development occurs through stages that all children pass through  
*Freud's theory suggests that there are three psychosexual stages (five in total, if also counting the two extra periods) which happen in sequential order, and if a child does well in each stage and no problems arise, they may move on to the next stage and they will go on to develop healthy, normal relationships later on in life*
- the significance of the unconscious  
*The unconscious part of the mind is the largest and most powerful, and Freud was definitely interested in this area of the mind, which he said was almost inaccessible, but he believed accessing it was the cure for neurosis*
- the presence of energy and libido energy  
*Freud stated that we all have a certain amount of energy which does not ever increase or decrease, but remains with us throughout all psychosexual stages and life, and some of this energy is called 'libido' which means sexual energy, which leads to Freud's theory being called psychosexual, as you will discover later on*