



# Anxiety disorders 3: the behavioural approach

Module PSYB2

Section C – Individual Differences

3.2.5 anxiety disorders

## What we will be learning about

Biological psychologists see abnormal behaviour as being caused by things going wrong inside a person's brain. By contrast, behaviourists see the problem as being outside the person, in their environment. This might seem an odd idea: how can the problem be *outside* the person when it is clearly *their* behaviour that's abnormal? A behaviourist would say that people act as they do – normally or abnormally – because of the environment they are in now and the things they have learned from their environment in the past. In this topic we will learn how behaviourists see problems like phobia or OCD as sets of learned behaviours that are not intrinsically different from other ways of acting. If we look at the problem in this way, then drugs aren't the solution. Rather, the person needs to unlearn these abnormal ways of acting and learn other, better ways. We will see how behavioural treatments like systematic desensitization and flooding help people not to be anxious any more, and consider whether they are more effective treatments for anxiety than drugs.

## What you could be tested on

	A01 – knowledge & understanding	A02 – application, analysis & evaluation	A03 – methods, statistics & ethics (how science works)
<b>You must be able to...</b>	<b>State</b> the main assumptions of the behavioural approach to abnormal behaviour (importance of environment; role of conditioning). <b>Outline</b> one or more behavioural explanations of phobia & OCD. <b>Describe</b> desensitization & flooding in the treatment of anxiety disorders.	<b>Distinguish</b> between flooding and systematic desensitization.	<b>Outline</b> the use of clinical case studies in the investigation of abnormal behaviour.
<b>You should be able to...</b>	<b>Describe</b> one or more research studies of behavioural causes of phobia/ and one or more research studies of biological treatments of phobia/OCD. <b>Outline</b> the link between behavioural processes and specific symptoms of phobia/OCD.	<b>Interpret</b> evidence from studies in terms of what it tells us about behavioral explanations of anxiety disorder. <b>Assess</b> the behavioural view of anxiety disorders in terms of support from evidence, strengths and weaknesses.	<b>Suggest</b> how the effectiveness of behavioural treatments could be measured. <b>Assess</b> strengths and weaknesses of research methods used by the behavioural approach. <b>Identify</b> ethical issues raised by behavioural treatments.
<b>You could be able to...</b>	<b>Explain</b> the links between the behavioural model of abnormality and behavioural treatments for it.	<b>Evaluate</b> behavioural explanations and treatments for phobias and OCD.	<b>Consider</b> ethical issues of behavioural treatments in terms of a cost-benefit analysis.

