

behavioral vs cognitive psychology

behavioral vs cognitive psychology represents a fundamental distinction in the field of psychological science, reflecting two distinct approaches to understanding human behavior and mental processes. Behavioral psychology focuses primarily on observable behaviors and the ways in which they are learned and reinforced through interaction with the environment. In contrast, cognitive psychology emphasizes internal mental processes such as perception, memory, reasoning, and problem-solving. This article explores the key differences and similarities between behavioral and cognitive psychology, highlighting their historical development, core principles, methodologies, and practical applications. By examining these aspects, readers will gain a comprehensive understanding of how each perspective contributes to the broader discipline of psychology. The discussion also addresses contemporary trends and the integration of both approaches in modern psychological research and practice.

- Historical Background
- Core Principles and Theories
- Methodologies and Research Techniques
- Applications in Therapy and Education
- Comparative Analysis of Behavioral vs Cognitive Psychology

Historical Background

Origins of Behavioral Psychology

Behavioral psychology, also known as behaviorism, emerged in the early 20th century as a reaction against introspective methods that were prevalent in psychology at the time. Founded by John B. Watson, behaviorism emphasized the study of observable behavior rather than internal mental states. This approach was further developed by researchers such as B.F. Skinner, who introduced operant conditioning as a key concept for understanding how behavior is shaped by consequences. Behavioral psychology gained prominence due to its emphasis on scientific rigor and measurable data.

Development of Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive psychology arose as a response to the limitations of behaviorism, particularly its neglect of mental processes that could not be directly observed. In the 1950s and 1960s, the cognitive revolution shifted the focus back to understanding how people perceive, think, remember, and learn. Influential figures such as Jean Piaget and Ulric Neisser contributed to this movement by exploring

cognitive development and information processing. Cognitive psychology integrates findings from neuroscience, computer science, and linguistics to explain complex mental functions.

Core Principles and Theories

Fundamental Concepts in Behavioral Psychology

Behavioral psychology is grounded in the principle that all behaviors are acquired through conditioning. Two main types of conditioning are classical conditioning, as demonstrated by Ivan Pavlov's experiments with dogs, and operant conditioning, which focuses on reinforcement and punishment to modify behavior. Behavioral theories assert that environmental stimuli and responses form the basis of learning, often disregarding internal mental states as irrelevant or secondary.

Key Theories in Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive psychology centers on mental processes that influence behavior. Key theories include the information processing model, which likens the mind to a computer that encodes, stores, and retrieves information. Other important concepts are schema theory, which explains how knowledge is organized, and cognitive development theories that describe how thinking evolves across the lifespan. Cognitive psychology also investigates attention, language acquisition, problem-solving strategies, and decision-making processes.

Methodologies and Research Techniques

Behavioral Research Methods

Behavioral psychologists primarily employ experimental methods that focus on observable and measurable behavior. Techniques such as controlled laboratory experiments, behavioral observation, and conditioning paradigms are common. These methods aim to establish cause-and-effect relationships between stimuli and behavioral responses. Quantitative data collection and statistical analysis are essential to validate behavioral hypotheses.

Cognitive Research Techniques

Cognitive psychology utilizes a variety of research methods to infer mental processes. These include experimental tasks designed to measure reaction times, accuracy, and error rates, as well as neuroimaging techniques like fMRI and EEG that examine brain activity during cognitive tasks. Cognitive researchers also use computer simulations and computational models to represent mental processes. Qualitative methods such as verbal protocols and think-aloud procedures provide additional insights into internal thought mechanisms.

Applications in Therapy and Education

Behavioral Therapy Approaches

Behavioral psychology has significantly influenced therapeutic practices, particularly in the treatment of phobias, anxiety disorders, and addiction. Techniques such as systematic desensitization, token economies, and behavior modification programs are widely used. These approaches focus on changing maladaptive behaviors through reinforcement and conditioning, often producing measurable improvements in a relatively short time frame.

Cognitive Therapy and Educational Impact

Cognitive psychology underpins therapies aimed at modifying dysfunctional thought patterns, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). CBT integrates cognitive restructuring with behavioral techniques to address issues like depression and stress. In education, cognitive principles inform instructional design by emphasizing strategies that enhance memory, comprehension, and problem-solving skills. Metacognition, or thinking about one's own thinking, is another key concept applied to improve learning outcomes.

Comparative Analysis of Behavioral vs Cognitive Psychology

While behavioral and cognitive psychology share the common goal of understanding human behavior, their approaches and emphases differ significantly. Behavioral psychology prioritizes observable behavior and external stimuli, often excluding internal mental states from analysis. In contrast, cognitive psychology seeks to explain behavior through the lens of internal mental functions and processes.

Several factors distinguish these two perspectives:

- **Focus:** Behavioral psychology focuses on stimulus-response relationships; cognitive psychology focuses on mental processes.
- **Methods:** Behavioral research relies on observable behavior and conditioning experiments; cognitive research incorporates experimental tasks, neuroimaging, and computational models.
- **Applications:** Behavioral methods are often used for behavior modification; cognitive methods contribute to therapies addressing thought patterns and learning strategies.
- **Philosophical Basis:** Behaviorism is rooted in empiricism and positivism; cognitive psychology embraces information processing and constructivist views.

Modern psychology increasingly integrates both behavioral and cognitive approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of human behavior. This integration allows for more effective interventions and a deeper insight into the interplay between external behaviors and internal cognitive functions.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main difference between behavioral and cognitive psychology?

Behavioral psychology focuses on observable behaviors and how they are learned or conditioned, while cognitive psychology studies internal mental processes such as thinking, memory, and problem-solving.

How do behavioral psychologists explain learning?

Behavioral psychologists explain learning primarily through conditioning processes, such as classical and operant conditioning, where behavior is shaped by environmental stimuli and consequences.

What role do mental processes play in cognitive psychology?

In cognitive psychology, mental processes like perception, attention, memory, and reasoning are central, as this field seeks to understand how people acquire, process, and store information.

Can behavioral and cognitive psychology be integrated?

Yes, many modern approaches, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), integrate principles from both behavioral and cognitive psychology to address both observable behaviors and underlying thought patterns.

Which psychological approach is more focused on observable behavior?

Behavioral psychology is more focused on observable behavior, emphasizing measurable and objective data rather than internal mental states.

How does cognitive psychology study the mind?

Cognitive psychology studies the mind using experimental methods, computer models, and neuroimaging techniques to understand mental functions like memory, attention, and language.

What historical figures are associated with behavioral psychology?

Key figures in behavioral psychology include John B. Watson, who popularized behaviorism, and B.F.

Skinner, known for his work on operant conditioning.

Who are prominent contributors to cognitive psychology?

Prominent contributors to cognitive psychology include Ulric Neisser, often called the father of cognitive psychology, and Jean Piaget, known for his work on cognitive development.

How do behavioral and cognitive psychology differ in their treatment approaches?

Behavioral psychology uses techniques like behavior modification and reinforcement to change behavior, while cognitive psychology focuses on changing dysfunctional thought patterns through therapies such as cognitive restructuring.

Why has cognitive psychology become more prominent in recent years compared to behavioral psychology?

Cognitive psychology has gained prominence because it addresses complex mental processes that behaviorism overlooks, incorporates advances in neuroscience and technology, and offers a more comprehensive understanding of human behavior.

Additional Resources

1. *Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman

This seminal book explores the dual systems of the human mind: the fast, intuitive, and emotional system versus the slow, deliberate, and logical system. Kahneman delves into cognitive psychology by examining how we think, make decisions, and the biases that affect our judgment. It bridges cognitive processes and behavioral outcomes, offering insights into why we sometimes act against rationality.

2. *Behaviorism* by John B. Watson

A foundational text in behavioral psychology, this book outlines the principles of behaviorism, focusing on observable behavior rather than internal mental states. Watson argues that psychology should be an objective science based on measurable actions. The book provides a clear contrast to cognitive psychology by emphasizing environmental influences on behavior.

3. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* by Carol S. Dweck

Dweck's work explores how our beliefs about our abilities influence our behavior and cognitive processes. She distinguishes between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset, demonstrating how cognitive perceptions shape motivation and learning behaviors. The book integrates cognitive psychology concepts with behavioral change strategies.

4. *Principles of Behavior* by Richard W. Malott

This textbook offers an in-depth introduction to behavioral psychology, including operant and classical conditioning. It emphasizes the role of environmental contingencies in shaping behavior. The book contrasts with cognitive psychology by focusing on observable behavior patterns rather than internal mental processes.

5. *Cognitive Psychology: A Student's Handbook* by Michael W. Eysenck and Mark T. Keane
A comprehensive guide to cognitive psychology, this book covers perception, memory, language, and problem-solving. It highlights the mental processes underlying behavior and contrasts these with behaviorist perspectives. The text is widely used in academic settings to explain core cognitive theories.

6. *Verbal Behavior* by B.F. Skinner
Skinner's influential book applies behavioral principles to language acquisition and use. He argues that language can be understood through operant conditioning, focusing on observable verbal behavior rather than internal cognitive mechanisms. The book presents a behavioral perspective that challenges cognitive theories of language.

7. *How the Mind Works* by Steven Pinker
Pinker explores cognitive psychology by examining the evolutionary mechanisms behind human thought and behavior. He combines insights from cognitive science, psychology, and neuroscience to explain mental functions. The book contrasts with purely behavioral approaches by emphasizing internal mental processes.

8. *About Behaviorism* by B.F. Skinner
This book provides a thorough defense of behaviorism, addressing common misconceptions and contrasting it with cognitive psychology. Skinner explains the philosophical and scientific foundations of behaviorism and its applicability to understanding human behavior. The text is essential for understanding the behavioral perspective in psychology.

9. *Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective* by Albert Bandura
Bandura's work synthesizes cognitive and behavioral psychology by introducing the concept of reciprocal determinism, where behavior, cognition, and environment interact. The book emphasizes self-efficacy and observational learning as key components of human behavior. It bridges the gap between traditional behaviorism and cognitive theories.

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behavioral vs cognitive psychology: *Psychosocial Conceptual Practice Models in Occupational Therapy* Moses N. Ikiugu, Elizabeth A. Ciaravino, 2007-01-01 This book examines the occupational

therapy paradigm (its focal viewpoint, core constructs, and values) as well as the role of complexity/chaos theory as a scientific framework for occupational therapy research and practice. Unlike other current OT texts, this book uses clinical case examples to illustrate application of proposed changes to make procedures consistent with the latest Occupational Therapy Practice Framework. The reader walks away with a clear grasp of the theoretical principles guiding his or her treatment interventions, the explanations behind those principles, and the applicable intervention for said techniques and procedures. An emphasis on clinical-reasoning skills, including information on different types of reasoning skills as well as the MAPP model of teaching helps the student and clinician translate theoretical principles into practice. The section on specific interventions addresses each of the conceptual practice models according to a consistent chapter template, which enables the reader to apply conceptual practice models in real-world contexts. Preview questions at the beginning of each chapter alert the reader to important concepts in the upcoming text. Critical analysis of the theoretical core provides suggested modifications to increase consistency with the new occupational therapy paradigm.

behavioral vs cognitive psychology: *Perspectives and Trends in Education and Technology*
Anabela Mesquita, António Abreu, João Vidal Carvalho, Cristina Helena Pinto de Mello, 2023-01-02
This book presents high-quality, peer-reviewed papers from the International Conference in Information Technology & Education (ICITED 2022), to be held at the ESPM - Higher School of Advertising and Marketing, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, between July 14 - 16, 2022. This book covers a specific field of knowledge. This intends to cover not only two fields of knowledge - Education and Technology - but also the interaction among them and the impact/result in the job market and organizations. It covers the research and pedagogic component of Education and Information Technologies and also the connection with Society, addressing the three pillars of higher education. This book addresses impact of pandemic on education and use of technology in education. Finally, it also encourages companies to present their professional cases which will be discussed. These can constitute real examples of how companies are overcoming their challenges with the uncertainty of the market.

behavioral vs cognitive psychology: *Fundamental Issues in Defense Training and Simulation*
George Galanis, Robert Sottolare, 2017-05-15
Defense forces have always invested a great deal of their resources in training. In recent times, changes in the complexity and intensity of operations have reaffirmed the importance of ensuring that warfighters are adequately prepared for the environments in which they are required to work. The emergence of new operational drivers such as asymmetric threats, urban operations, joint and coalition operations and the widespread use of military communications and information technology networks has highlighted the importance of providing warfighters with the competencies required to act in a coordinated, adaptable fashion, and to make effective decisions in environments characterized by large amounts of sometimes ambiguous information. While investment in new technologies can make available new opportunities for action, it is only through effective training that personnel can be made ready to apply their tools in the most decisive and discriminating fashion. There are many factors which can have an impact on the efficacy of training and many issues to consider when designing and implementing training strategies. These issues are often complex and nuanced, and in order to grasp them fully a significant investment of time and energy is required. However, the requirement to respond quickly to ever-changing technology, a high operational tempo and minimal staffing may preclude many in today's defense forces from seeking out all such resources on their own. This edited collection provides brief, easy-to-understand summaries of the key issues in defense training and simulation, as well as guidance for further reading. It consists of a collection of short essays, each of which addresses a fundamental issue in defense training and simulation, and features an up-to-date reference list to enable the reader to undertake further investigation of the issues addressed. In essence, this book provides the optimum starting point, or first resource, for readers to come to terms with the important issues associated with defense training and simulation. The contributions are written by leading scholars from military research institutions in the US, UK, Canada, Australia

and New Zealand, as well as selected researchers from academic and private sector research institutions.

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behavioral vs cognitive psychology: *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Clinical Neuropsychology* William B. Barr, Linas A. Bieliauskas, 2024 While its origins date back to the 19th Century, the field of clinical neuropsychology has existed as a distinct discipline for less than 60 years. The *Oxford Handbook of the History of Neuropsychology* tells this story of how neuropsychology has evolved to its present state and where it is going. This comprehensive volume begins with chapters reviewing the history of neuropsychology's approaches to disorders of attention, language, memory, and other conditions. Other chapters focus on the origins of neuropsychology's methods including neuropsychological testing, brain imaging, and studies of laterality including the Wada test. While this volume has a number of chapters covering regional developments in clinical neuropsychology as a profession in the United States, it is one of the first volumes to provide additional chapters on development of neuropsychology across different countries. This Handbook gathers the work of experts in the field to provide extensive coverage of the origins of neuropsychology's methods and its approach to various clinical conditions across the globe.

behavioral vs cognitive psychology: **Handbook of Behavior, Food and Nutrition** Victor R. Preedy, Ronald Ross Watson, Colin R. Martin, 2011-04-15 This book disseminates current information pertaining to the modulatory effects of foods and other food substances on behavior and neurological pathways and, importantly, vice versa. This ranges from the neuroendocrine control of eating to the effects of life-threatening disease on eating behavior. The importance of this contribution to the scientific literature lies in the fact that food and eating are an essential component of cultural heritage but the effects of perturbations in the food/cognitive axis can be profound. The complex interrelationship between neuropsychological processing, diet, and

behavioral outcome is explored within the context of the most contemporary psychobiological research in the area. This comprehensive psychobiology- and pathology-themed text examines the broad spectrum of diet, behavioral, and neuropsychological interactions from normative function to occurrences of severe and enduring psychopathological processes.

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and technological innovation, while others focus on behavioral change. Each approach has its limitations, however, since technology and behavior often appear so closely intertwined. Human behavior results not only from intentions and deliberate decisions, but also from its interaction with technological artifacts. In the area of traffic safety, for instance, people's driving behavior is determined as much by curves, speed bumps and the power of their motors as by considerations of safety and responsibility. How can we best describe and understand these interactions between behavior and technology? What conceptual frameworks and empirical studies are available, and how can they be integrated? And how can we bring these interactions to bear on product design and policy making? The book *User Behavior and Technology Development* explores these relationships between technology and behavior from an interdisciplinary perspective. This includes contributions from cognitive psychology, industrial design, public administration, marketing, sociology, ergonomics, science and technology studies, and philosophy. The book aims to create a conceptual basis for analyzing interactions between technology and behavior, and to provide insights that are relevant to technology design and environmental policy.

behavioral vs cognitive psychology: Handbook of Clinical Behavior Therapy with the Elderly Client Patricia A. Wisocki, 2013-11-21 Although we speak of the elderly as if there were one body of people with common characteristics, older adults are more heterogeneous than any other population. People over the age of 65 are also the fastest-growing segment of the population in the United States, currently numbering 25 million. The majority of older adults reside in their communities; a small fraction of them are cared for in institutions. Most may expect to experience some kind of physical impairment. Approximately a quarter of the population may expect to suffer mental health impairment. While traditional therapies have not been especially effective for older adults, behavior therapy has shown exceptional promise as a treatment modality. This book presents a comprehensive explication of the relatively new field of behavioral gerontology. It was written for the clinician interested in the interaction of medical, environmental, and psychological variables and their effects on treatment of elderly clients and for the researcher who will be looking to extend knowledge about interventions with this population. It will be useful for the graduate student in clinical psychology, as well as the experienced clinician, who will want to include the elderly in his or her therapeutic population.

behavioral vs cognitive psychology: Emotion-Centered Problem-Solving Therapy Arthur M. Nezu, Christine Maguth Nezu, 2018-12-14 Written by the developers of the popular Problem-Solving Approach (PST), this evidence-based manual reflects important advances in neuroscience that underscore the important role of emotion as a crucial aspect of behavioral health treatment. This updated treatment model, Emotion-Centered Problem-Solving Therapy (EC-PST) moves emotion to a critical position that is integrated throughout its therapeutic strategies. This is a significant shift in interventions that had previously focused on cognitive approaches. Comprehensive and detailed, this manual provides specific treatment guidelines based on a "stepped-care" model of PST through four major toolkits, clinical examples, and case studies for the application of EC-PST. It describes approaches that can be used for a wide variety of populations (including such targeted groups as U.S. Veterans and active military personnel), settings, and client issues. It addresses such new implementation systems as telehealth, and community collaborative care models. In addition, the authors provide empirically-based evidence of the treatment's efficacy underlying positive functioning factors such as hope, well-being, enhanced leadership, and more. The print version of the book includes free, searchable, digital access to the entire contents. Therapy client workbook available as an added resource with book purchase. Key Features: Provides evidence-based update of popular treatment modality Authored by the co-developers of PST and EC-PST Includes clinical examples, treatment aids, and case studies for treatment with a variety of populations Offers new treatment guidelines for suicide risk reduction, enhancing positive functioning, and fostering resilience among U.S. veterans and active military personnel Adopted by the VA and DOD Also available for purchase, Emotion-Centered Problem-Solving Therapy Client Workbook

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behavioral vs cognitive psychology: Handbook of Understanding and Measuring Intelligence Oliver Wilhelm, Randall W. Engle, 2005 ...it is extremely useful and contemporary, covering among its five hundred pages, genetics, neuro-imaging and emotional intelligence. It also provides a good indicator of current psychological work in the area with empirical evidence and theory sitting alongside each other. The material on meta-cognition would, I suspect, be of most interest to philosophers, along with the more basic questions concerning the nature of memory and intelligence.--PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY This volume provides an in-depth yet accessible and up-to-date review of the key topics pertinent to current intelligence research. This state-of-the-art summary about our theoretical understanding of human abilities and their measurement is of interest for researchers, practitioners, and advanced students in psychology, education, and related disciplines. It's a great summary and a good read on a truly important topic.--Dr. Heinz Holling, University of Muenster Wilhelm and Engle have compiled a highly informative set of chapters on various topics related to intelligence. The chapters describing recent European work will be especially informative for North American readers. The work is strengthened by provision of review chapters that keep the reader in sight of the forest rather than the trees.--Earl Hunt, University of Washington Without an informed cognitive understanding of intelligence as a construct, the technology of intelligence testing will make little to no progress. Psychologists with a more psychometric background need detailed knowledge about the cognitive processes underlying intelligent behavior. Likewise, psychologists with a more cognitive or experimental background need to make more use of applied knowledge from psychometric research. Earl Hunt, Without an informed cognitive understanding of intelligence as a construct, the technology of intelligence testing will make little to no progress. Psychologists with a more psychometric background need detailed knowledge about the cognitive processes underlying intelligent behavior. Likewise, psychologists with a more cognitive or experimental background need to make more use of applied knowledge from psychometric research. The Handbook of Understanding and Measuring

Intelligence provides an overview of recent studies on intelligence to help readers develop a sound understanding of results and perspectives in intelligence research. In this volume, editors Oliver Wilhelm and Randall W. Engle bring together a group of respected experts from two fields of intelligence research, cognition and methods, to summarize, review, and evaluate research in their areas of expertise. The chapters in this book present state-of-the-art examinations of a particular domain of intelligence research and highlight important methodological considerations, theoretical claims, and pervasive problems in the field. The Handbook provides those with a broad interest in individual differences, cognitive abilities, intelligence, educational measurement, thinking, reasoning, or problem solving with a comprehensive description of the status quo and prospects of intelligence research. The book is divided into two parts that are intended to build upon and relate to one another. Part I, the cognitive section, explores several theoretical viewpoints on intelligence and Part II, the methodological section, addresses fundamental statistical problems and pragmatic assessment problems in measuring intelligence. Key Features The volume editors provide a general introduction and conclude the book with an integrative epilogue. Contributors to this volume are experts in intelligence with a background in methodology or theory who offer current theoretical perspectives and recent empirical results, which are of interest to a broad audience. In addition to contributions from U.S. intelligence experts, authors from Europe and Australia provide an international perspective and articulate viewpoints and results not otherwise readily available to an American audience. Developments in theory are described with respect to their implications at the measurement level, and developments on the methodological level are evaluated with respect to their contribution to the theoretical understanding of intelligence. The Handbook is designed for scholars and psychology professionals interested in intelligence, cognitive abilities, educational testing and measurement, reasoning, and problem solving. It can also be used by advanced undergraduate and graduate students studying intelligence or the psychology of individual differences. In addition, the Handbook will be a welcome addition to any academic library.

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Roberta Greene, 2017-09-08 This new edition of Human Behavior Theory and Social Work Practice provides a broadly synthetic approach to selecting theoretical concepts crucial to one's activities in casework. Centered on the notion of the client as an individual, Roberta Greene and the contributing authors examine the biological, psychological, and social aspects of development, and evaluate their utility for social work practice. Social work is characterized by a dynamic helping process and a diversity of roles, and functions. The aims of social work--to improve societal conditions for individuals, families, and groups--are put into action across all fields of practice and realized through a variety of methods in a range of settings. To work in the field, it is important to acquire conceptual frameworks that help one understand the complexities of contemporary practice. This volume is concerned with the application of knowledge about behavior in the social environment that serves as the theoretical underpinning for direct practice in social work. The chapters explore the ways in which specific theories have contributed to understanding the person in the environment construct and examine the idea that all clinical social work intervention is anchored in reshaping the context of the person in the environment configuration. The book explores the challenges and limitations of the various theories in use and addresses many relevant questions: What does the theory offer for understanding development across the lifecycle? What does each theory suggest about the interaction among biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors of human development and functioning? What does the theory suggest about healthy/functional and unhealthy/dysfunctional behaviors or wellness? Is theory universal in its application, and may it lend itself to cross-cultural social work practice? What role does theory propose for the social worker as an agent of change? Human Behavior Theory and Social Work Practice is an original contribution to social work theory, and will be mandatory reading for anyone pursuing a career in the field.

behavioral vs cognitive psychology: Mental and Behavioral Dysfunction in Movement

Disorders Marc-André Bédard, Yves Agid, Sylvain Chouinard, Stanley Fahn, Amos D. Korczyn, 2003-03-27 A state-of-the-art review of the many cognitive, affective, and behavioral dysfunctions

associated with movement disorders. These dysfunctions include depression, dementia, psychosis, sleep disorders arising from Parkinson's and Huntington's disease, Tourette's syndrome, as well as multiple system atrophy, progressive supranuclear palsy, corticobasal degeneration, and many other related disorders. The authors describe these behavioral syndromes and their neurophysiological and neuropathological substratum, as well as their diagnostic criteria and therapeutic guidelines. The cognitive and affective dysfunctions are spelled out in detail.

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