

Common Psychological Problems – The common reasons that students at UF and at colleges everywhere seek help reflect what Freud once declared the two great domains of life: **love and work**. This stem from his concept of two primary instinctual systems – sex and aggression. Here at UF these correspond to:

**LOVE AND WORK, WORK
AND LOVE... THAT'S ALL
THERE IS.**

SIGMUND FREUD

- 1) **interpersonal anxiety/ depression** – related to boyfriend/girlfriend/significant other, and/or to close friends, friend groups, and/or family, siblings, parents, and/or an authority figure/instructor, boss. Common issues, of course, are rejection, arguing, break up, pressures, hostilities.
- 2) **academic/career anxiety/depression** – poor grades, failure, poor performance, test anxiety, questioning, doubting major and career, changing majors, work stress.

Basic parameters of problems:

Contextual details regarding what clinicians call ‘the presenting problem’ or issue driving one to seeks help are very important in achieving lasting change. The more one reflects on and communicates about related experiences, the better. The most salient, similar, precursor experiences are often critical factors for success. Similarly, identification of existing and missing emotional and practical resources are also key. Basic parameters include exploring the frame of the presenting issue and also related issues from the perspective of:

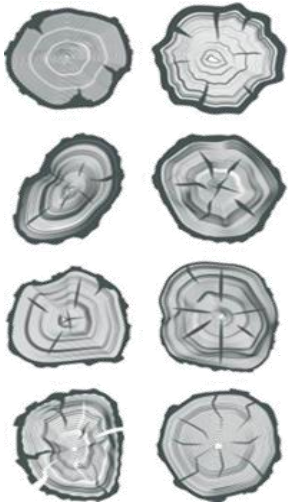
- **duration** - hours, weeks, months, etc.
- **variability/frequency** – The experience may be totally new and unique. It may have never happened before, or may have occurred a couple previous times. Or perhaps there have been many previous similar incidents.
- **Developmental factors:** previous experiences & patterns, any history of neglect / abuse / trauma / acute stress:
 - Childhood or any precursors of the presenting issue tend to matter. For example, any earlier episodes in life with similarities even if seemingly long ago and irrelevant may be significant. Some clients with emotional struggles in adulthood report family-of-origin experiences which bear on later life adjustment and coping. Others report a caring, stable upbringing but profound emotional upset or trauma subsequently. Or perhaps periods of both, stability and instability. Any factors related to current struggles tend to be therapeutically relevant.

RESILIENCE

[ri - zil - yuh ns]

**The power to be
able to recover readily
from adversity or challenge.**

- What clinicians refer to as neglect, abuse or as an attachment wounding in early life contribute to so-called 'trust issues'. A person may feel unlovable, desperate, or an insatiable longing for love and validation. Childhood experiences may leave a person overly trusting and even at the very same time, with a sense they cannot trust anyone. They may feel overly confident and then overwhelmed and unable to recover when a relationship does not proceed as hoped. Any vulnerability to rejection stemming in part from childhood, perhaps related to emotional neglect, some sort of abuse or parental fighting or divorce is important to consider as possibly relevant to a current concern.
- **acuity** - mild to intolerable/acute/overwhelming



“Tree Rings”

- How the past, for better or worse, bears on the present tends to be hard to narrow down in any precise, exacting manner. Sometimes the use of metaphor or analogy help. For example, the blends of these **basic parameters** might be analogous to tree rings. Changes in seasons, storms at different points in life, affect a tree's growth. An earlier event may influence later ones and this impact is recorded by the tree rings. On the other hand, a tree may thrive and grow despite adversity, and this too may be recorded in a sense in the rings. Regardless, life shapes us all. Both easy and hard seasons contribute to our uniqueness.
- Any analysis and effort to clinically address recent and current issues may get off on the wrong foot without an ongoing uncovering of underlying factors.