

Horowitz, Leonard M.

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Leonard M. Horowitz is an emeritus professor of Psychology at Stanford University. In the course of his long and diverse career, Horowitz originally studied verbal learning and memory before making major contributions to the field of interpersonal assessment as well as the analysis of social and motivational foundations of psychopathology.

Educational Background and Professional Appointments

Horowitz received his education from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, where he earned his B.A. and M.A. in 1957 and his Ph.D. in Psychology in 1960. During his doctoral training, Horowitz was supported by several prestigious fellowships, including a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, a Social Science Research Council Fellowship, and a Fulbright Fellowship completed at University College, London. Upon receiving his doctorate in 1960, Horowitz joined

the faculty of Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, where he remained throughout his career.

Research Interests

Until the early 1970s, Horowitz's research focused on verbal learning and memory. He then shifted his professional focus rather profoundly: During 1972–1975, Horowitz completed intensive training in psychodynamic psychotherapy at Mt. Zion Psychiatric Clinic in San Francisco, where he subsequently offered his services as a psychologist for many years. He considers his clinical training at Mt. Zion to have been exceptionally rewarding and feels especially grateful to Harold Sampson, Ph.D., his primary mentor at Mt. Zion. He considers Sampson truly gifted – stunningly clear and accurate in formulating cases in interpersonal terms and equally specific about therapeutic interventions implied by the formulation.

After his training, Horowitz reoriented his research towards understanding interpersonal and therapeutic relationships. However, even after shifting the substance of his scholarship, Horowitz continued to draw on his training and experience in measurement, cognition, and experimental methodology to better understand interpersonal behavior, psychological disorders, and psychotherapy.

For example, during the 1970s cognitive psychologists were increasingly recognizing that “natural kinds” such as birds and chairs are *fuzzy sets* rather than strictly definable, and that people categorize the exemplars they encounter based on their similarity to prototypes or schemas (Rosch 1978). Horowitz realized that psychological and interpersonal states and syndromes – such as depression, loneliness, and intimacy – could also be viewed as fuzzy sets, and that eliciting and formulating prototypes could be a way of consolidating the collective understanding of a particular state or syndrome (e.g., Horowitz et al. 1981a, b). Accordingly, such a prototype could be used as a standard of validity with which an individual’s distinctive understanding may be compared (e.g., Horowitz and Turan 2008). Furthermore, Horowitz advocated applying the same basic approach (of aggregating descriptive statements from multiple observers) for the purpose of generating consensual psychodynamic case formulations (e.g., Horowitz et al. 1989).

Horowitz may be best known as the creator of the Inventory of Interpersonal Problems (IIP), a measure of recurring difficulties that people may experience in their everyday encounters and relationships with others (Horowitz et al. 1988). The IIP items were developed based on statements made by patients during therapy sessions (Horowitz 1979), and the resulting measure has been used in hundreds of psychotherapy studies, complementing more standard assessments of psychopathological symptoms like anxiety or depression. Subsequently, Alden et al. (1990) established an explicit link between the problems encompassed by the IIP and the Interpersonal Circumplex Model (Leary 1957; Wiggins 1979; Kiesler 1983). The 64-item circumplex version of the IIP (with eight items capturing each of the eight segments of the circumplex) has become the standard – and most widely used – version (Horowitz et al. 2000).

In addition to his more general contributions to improving the process of assessing problems and formulating cases, Horowitz has elaborated on how the two basic Interpersonal Circumplex dimensions (Dominance/Agency and Affiliation/Communion; Wiggins 1991) can be used to model

the interpersonal dynamics that are associated with various specific clinical problems (e.g., Horowitz and Vitkus 1986; Horowitz et al. 1991). He also examined the role of attachment styles in psychopathology. For example, he theorized that a person’s “Model of Self” (positive or negative) when combined with the person’s “Model of Other” (positive or negative) yields four theoretical attachment styles: secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful. The research has shown which types of interpersonal problems are associated with each attachment style (Bartholomew and Horowitz 1991; Horowitz et al. 1993).

Later in his career, he increasingly emphasized the centrality of motivation – and particularly agentic and communal interpersonal motives – for understanding psychopathology (Horowitz 2004). In an influential 2006 *Personality and Social Psychology Review* paper, Horowitz and colleagues framed person A’s overt interpersonal behaviors mainly as an implicit invitation to person B to respond in ways that are commensurable with person A’s goals (Horowitz et al. 2006). The extent to which person B responds accordingly should predict the extent to which person A is satisfied with the interaction. A series of experimental studies by Dryer and Horowitz (1997) has shown just that. In another study, Shechtman and Horowitz (2006) demonstrated that participants’ views of how well an interaction via written messages went depended critically on whether the participants believed that their communication partner was an algorithm or an actual person; thus, human interpersonal judgment seems to routinely take others’ suspected motivations into account.

In summary, in his many scholarly contributions, Horowitz has utilized a mixture of classic psychometric and experimental methodologies as well as analyses of individual clinical cases. Much of his work has elucidated the ways in which people perceive and behave toward one another, and the difficulties they may encounter when doing either of these two things. Notably, Horowitz has always endeavored to show how his empirical work connects both to broad theoretical

concerns and to the everyday challenges of practicing diagnosticians and psychotherapists.

Other Professional Contributions and Honors

In addition to serving as a reviewer for many academic journals, Horowitz served as a Consulting Editor for the *Journal of Experimental Psychology* from 1963 to 1972 and served on the advisory boards of the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* (1984–1990), the *Journal of Personality Disorders* (1985–1992), and *Psychotherapy Research* (1990–2010). He also is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and the Society for Personality and Social Psychology.

Horowitz is a regular attendant of the international meetings of the Society for Psychotherapy Research (SPR), served as President of SPR in 1993–1994, and in 2010 was awarded that society's Distinguished Career Award. Relatedly, Horowitz (along with Hans Strupp and Michael Lambert) directed an American Psychological Association task force on standardizing the assessment of therapy outcomes, which culminated in the book *Measuring Patient Changes in Mood, Anxiety, and Personality Disorders: Toward a Core Battery* (Strupp et al. 1997).

In 1997, Horowitz became one of the co-founders of the Society for Interpersonal Theory and Research (SITAR), and in 1999 served as SITAR's first President. A primary goal of this society, which has been holding regular annual meetings since its inception, is to help promote a more prominent role for evidence-based interpersonal theory and theory-based interpersonal research within the broader field of psychology. In 2010, Len Horowitz and Steve Strack edited the comprehensive *Handbook of Interpersonal Psychology*, to which many members of SITAR as well as other researchers from all over the world contributed chapters (Horowitz and Strack 2010). At the 2014 SITAR meeting in Berlin, Horowitz was awarded the first of SITAR's life-time achievement awards.

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