

BIOLOGICAL EXPLANATION- Social Rank Theory

The Social Rank (evolution) theory claims that we behave in a certain way for because of **evolutionary adaptation (1)**, so that we can **survive** and pass on our genes (1). When we **lose a level of status or rank** we can lose confidence in our abilities to regain it. (1) If we were to fight to try and regain our rank we may suffer further losses, which would be detrimental for our survival. (1) Therefore, symptoms of depression (such as loss of energy or motivation and low mood) will prevent the defeated individual **from competing further and reduce conflict**. (1) This will ensure **protection from the winner** and the **continued survival** of the subordinate individual. (1)

The theory is limited because it is reductionist as it only views depression as a process of evolution and ignores individual differences. (1) It is also reductionist within the biological approach as it fails to take into account other biological explanations (such as imbalance of neurotransmitters). (1)

The theory ignores depression that is caused by life events other than social rank conflicts. (1) For example, being in an accident that causes life-changing injuries. (1)

PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATION – ABC Model

Ellis (1957) proposed the ABC model, which states that **depression caused by irrational thinking** (1) from an individual's **perception of events**. (1) He believed that **beliefs** following an **activating event**, could be rational or irrational, which then led to particular **consequences**. (1) According to Ellis the 'B' is the most important part of the model as **irrational beliefs** led to **negative consequences**, (1) and depression could result from this prolonged thinking. (1) Irrational beliefs include **catastrophising**, which is the belief that something is far worse than it actually is, or **personalising**, which is where the person believes that anything that occurs is completely their fault.

The theory can be criticised in relation to the freewill/determinism debate. Free will suggests that the individual is in control of their own thoughts, rather than them being determined by biological factors. (1) This means that cognitive explanations suggest that individuals are to blame for their own mental illness. (1)

The model assumes that people become depressed due to an irrational response, however the response may have been rational. E.g. loss of a job, which results in the loss of income and family home would not necessarily involve an irrational response. (1) In some circumstances a more undesirable response may be rational when faced with such difficulty. (1)