

Learning Theory & Depression

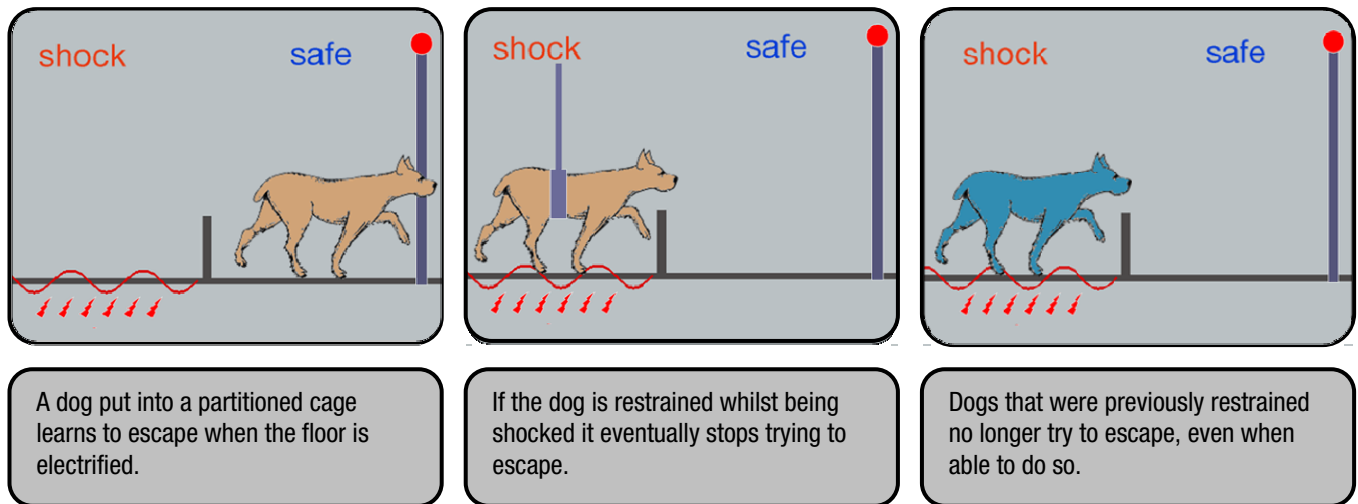


This activity will help you to:

- Understand Seligman's (1974) Learned Helplessness theory of depression
- Comment on the implications of Seligman's research
- Critically assess Seligman's animal studies

Learned Helplessness

According to Seligman's learned helplessness theory, depression occurs when a person learns that their attempts to escape negative situations make no difference. As a consequence they become passive and will endure aversive stimuli or environments even when escape is possible. Seligman based his theory on research using dogs.



How might Seligman's research help us to understand depression in humans?

Outline a scientific objection to Seligman's research

Outline an ethical objection to Seligman's research