4.2 Characteristics of Phobias: Behavioural, Emotional and Cognitive: Test Pack

AQA 7182 · about 15 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Define the term 'phobia' as it is used in clinical psychology, naming the three exemplar types: specific phobia, social anxiety (social phobia) and agoraphobia.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Vignette: Amelia finds that even in safe, well-lit parks her chest tightens and she feels overwhelming fear at the thought of leaving her home. She recognises the park is safe but still feels intense anxiety when thinking about going out.

Identify the emotional characteristic shown by Amelia and justify your answer using the vignette.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

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3 Outline one behavioural characteristic of phobias with reference to panic responses, using the example of a person with a spider phobia (specific phobia).

(Total for Question 3 is 3 marks)

4 Describe selective attention to the threat stimulus as a cognitive characteristic of phobias, using the example of someone with a fear of flying who scans cabin noises for signs of danger.

(Total for Question 4 is 3 marks)

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Mark scheme · 4.2 Characteristics of Phobias: Behavioural, Emotional and Cognitive: Test Pack

Question 1

a phobia is an excessive, persistent fear or anxiety triggered by a specific object, situation or social stimulus oe	**B1**
names at least two of the three exemplars: specific phobia, social anxiety (social phobia) and agoraphobia oe	**B1**

Answer: A phobia is an excessive, persistent fear or anxiety triggered by a specific object, situation or social stimulus. Examples include specific phobia, social anxiety (social phobia) and agoraphobia.

Question 2

identifies persistent and excessive fear/anxiety as the emotional characteristic cao	**B1**
justifies by noting she feels overwhelming fear and chest tightness even though she recognises the park is safe oe	**M1**
explains the disproportionate nature of the fear given the objective safety of the setting oe	**A1**
links this emotional response to agoraphobic features like fear of leaving home despite recognising low objective risk oe	**A1**

Answer: Persistent and excessive fear and anxiety. Amelia experiences overwhelming fear and chest tightness about going to safe parks despite recognising they are safe, showing a disproportionate emotional response typical of agoraphobia.

Question 3

identifies panic as a behavioural characteristic, e.g. crying, screaming, trembling, or a fight-or-flight reaction oe	**M1**
links panic to the example, e.g. a person with spider phobia might scream or freeze when they see a spider oe	**A1**
explains why this counts as behavioural, referring to observable actions or physiological reactions oe	**A1**

Answer: Panic involves observable responses such as crying, screaming, trembling or a fight-or-flight reaction when exposed to the stimulus; for example, someone with a spider phobia might scream and freeze on seeing a spider.

Question 4

describes selective attention: the tendency to focus on threat-related cues and ignore neutral information oe	**M1**
applies to the example, e.g. a person with fear of flying listens to every noise and interprets it as a sign of danger oe	**A1**
explains the effect, e.g. selective attention maintains anxiety because neutral evidence that flight is safe is overlooked oe	**A1**

Answer: Selective attention means focusing on threat cues and ignoring neutral information. For example, someone afraid of flying may concentrate on every cabin noise and interpret it as dangerous, which maintains their anxiety because safety cues are ignored.

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