

# ISSUES IN PSYCHOLOGY



## USEFULNESS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

# DESCRIPTION OF USEFULNESS

- This examines the contribution that psychology makes to **human welfare**.



- **Miller (1969)** argues that we should 'give psychology away'; psychology should aim to improve people's quality of life & it should be useful to everyone

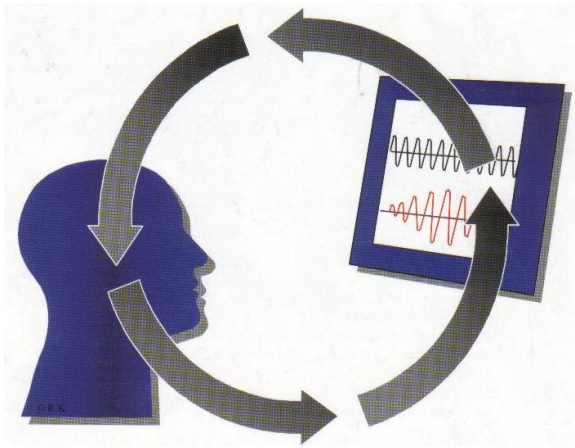
# Evidence 1

- Usefulness of therapies such as:
- - Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT):  
**Beck et al** (1978); Depression
- - Stress inoculation therapy (SIT):  
**Meichenbaum** (1972); anxiety disorder
- - Systematic desensitisation:  
**McGrath** (1990);  
noise phobia



## EVIDENCE 2

- Usefulness of **behaviourist** strategies:
- **Watt et al** (2003); Improving adherence in asthma patients (OC)
- **Budzynski et al** (1970); Biofeedback & tension headaches (OC/CC)



# EVIDENCE 3

- Usefulness to **everyday life** situations:
- **Loftus & Palmer**; Eyewitness testimony - police training in interview techniques
- **Samuel & Bryant**; Cognitive development - education of children.
- **Less Useful research?:**
- **Freud**; phobia of 'Little Hans' - subjective interpretation
- **Holmes & Rahe**; Using the SRRS as a measurement of stress - lacks validity
- NB: Other research may lack usefulness due to **methodological weaknesses**

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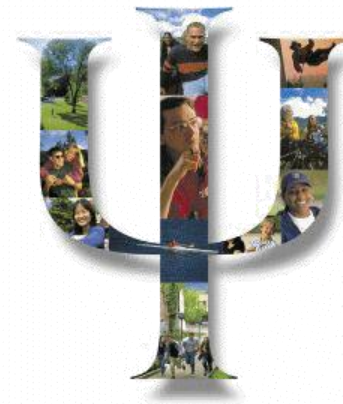
# STRENGTHS OF USEFUL PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH



- If research is useful, it benefits society & therefore improves our lives.



- If research is useful, it enhances the value of psychology as a subject.



# WEAKNESSES OF 'USEFUL' RESEARCH



- **Ethics:** research should have **informed consent** and not be **deceptive**, but truly useful studies may need to be unethical. **Eg:**
- **Ecological Validity:** laboratory experiments may lack usefulness, as they are too artificial. **Eg:**
- **Sample:** this should be representative & generalisable. Useful research should not be ethnocentric. **Eg:**
- **Reductionism:** research should not only apply in isolation from other behaviours but in various contexts. **Eg:**



# USEFULNESS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

This means:

Strengths



Evidence:

Weaknesses

