

Karen Horney

Karen Horney hypothesized that the neurotic personality is governed by one of ten needs. Each of these needs is directed toward making life and interactions bearable. Examples of these neurotic needs are the need for affection and approval, the need for exploit others, and the need for self-sufficiency and independence. While healthy people have the need for affection and the need for independence, Horney emphasized that these neurotic needs resemble healthy ones except in four respects : one, they are disproportionate in intensity; two, they are indiscriminate in application; three, they partially disregard reality; and four, they have a tendency to provoke intense anxiety.

Horney's primary concepts is the basic anxiety. This is based on the premise that a child's early perception of the self is important. A sense of helplessness as a child confuses the child, makes the child feel insecure, and produces basic anxiety in the child. To overcome basic anxiety and attain a degree of security, the child uses three strategies in his relationship with others : moving toward people to obtain the good will of people who provide security; moving against people or fighting them to obtain the upper hand; and moving away or withdrawing from people. These strategies are the general headings under which the ten neurotic needs fall. Healthy people use all three strategies, depending on the situation. However, the highly threatened child will use one of these strategies rigidly and exclusively.