

Module code	HPY	NQF level	5
Credit value	15	Study duration	9 weeks

# Health Psychology

## Module description

This module aims to introduce students to the application of psychological knowledge, theory and research to health and chronic illness. Key issues in the field of health psychology, including, theories of health behaviour, behaviour change and the psychology of chronic illness management will be explored. Students will also have the opportunity critically review the fundamental theoretical and empirical issues raised by the application of psychology to health and illness.

More specifically, this health psychology module will discuss the role of psychology in promoting health behaviours including diet, physical activity and sleep and how unhealthy behaviours such as smoking can be limited. Students will also consider how health psychology can be used to understand chronic illnesses (such as cancer, arthritis, dementia and diabetes), disease management and the professional issues that health psychologists and allied healthcare professionals face when working in health and social care settings.

## This module aims to:

- Develop students':
  - understanding of how key health psychology theories and models can be applied to individuals and populations with a view to improving health
  - knowledge of the history of health psychology and critically understanding how different approaches to health psychology can inform our understanding of health and illness related behaviours
  - use of research to critically evaluate how key issues such as stress, health inequalities, quality of life and lifestyle choices affect health beliefs, health behaviours and health outcomes
  - critical appraisal of key health psychology theories for their ability to map the predictors of health behaviour, and understand the application of theory to strategies to improve health and/or limit the impact of illness
  - critical understanding of the role that psychology plays across a range of stages in chronic illness
  - understanding of a range of professional issues faced by healthcare professionals and health psychologists, and how psychology can be used to inform, manage and resolve

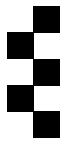
## Learning outcomes

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

- critically analyse the current research evidence related to health and/or illness beliefs and/or health behaviours
- understand key issues related to health, health/illness beliefs and health/illness behaviours and critically appraise their impact on individuals, groups and society
- critically evaluate approaches to health promotion, behaviour change and illness management, and understand how theory and research can inform the development of health psychology interventions
- understand the role health psychologists, and related professionals (including nurses and allied healthcare professionals and health educators), and the skills required to develop evidence-based practice and theory driven interventions

## Syllabus

- Introduction to the field of psychology
- Understanding and predicting health behaviours
- Individual and group differences in health
- Health promotion and behaviour change
- Chronic disease self-management
- Professional issues in health psychology



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## Learning and teaching methods

The pedagogical approach for this module is informed through the principles of collaborative enquiry, constructionism and scientific apprenticeship.

Collaborative enquiry is supported through our internet-mediated learning platform that aims to develop a learning community and support dialogue and collaboration between students. This is encouraged through online peer discussion and debate to construct a unique learning experience that enhances students' subject understanding through social interactions and empowers them to explain their understandings, and receive feedback from tutors and peers.

Teaching will be delivered through the provision of specified reading materials that will be provided on the University of Essex Online learning platform, and will be supported by specified discussion forums, pre-recorded lecturecasts and biweekly online question and answer sessions (using synchronous communication software and application sharing facility).

Students will be provided with indicative guidance on, and encouraged to look at relevant websites which are appropriate to the learning outcomes, and to identify and share appropriate web-based resources (as learning support references) with their fellow students.

The pre-recorded lecturecasts and the online question and answer sessions will include referenced use of selected case studies which will be drawn from the reading materials and the practice-based and professional/educational contexts and experience of the tutors.

Self-managed learning will supplement lectures and students will be given direction on required and indicative reading.

Description of unit of assessment	Length/Duration	Submission date	Weighting
Theory led poster design – with a 500-word executive summary of the poster to be posted on a discussion forum. In addition, respond to two of your peer's posters (200 words per response).	900 words plus the creation of the poster	Unit 3-4	30%
Behaviour change intervention proposal	2,200 words	End of module	70%