

Unit 30: Health Psychology

Unit code:	J/600/8985
QCF Level 3:	BTEC Nationals
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

This unit aims to give learners an understanding of the application of the principles of psychology by gaining knowledge of health-related behaviours. It also aims to give them an understanding of the factors affecting those behaviours, models of stress and the role of psychology in dealing with chronic illness.

● Unit introduction

Many of the health issues the health service has to deal are linked to lifestyle choices and behaviour. As we are living longer, and have an ageing population, the health service struggles to meet demand. This has led to a rise in health promotion and education to try and help people lead more healthy lives. The use of psychology in addressing behavioural change has also developed. It is crucial that health and social care workers understand this area in order to support the people they work with.

This unit explores the role that health psychology has in understanding health and illness behaviours. Learners will investigate psychological theories and factors relevant to the study of health-related behaviours. They will extend their knowledge and understanding to consider the concept of stress and stress management techniques. Learners will also explore other contemporary issues within health behaviour as well as investigating psychological factors in relation to chronic/terminal illness.

On successful completion of this unit, learners will have a good knowledge and understanding of the psychological aspects of health and illness. The unit will be valuable to learners intending to work with people in a caring capacity. It will also be useful for learners who intend to progress to study at a higher level.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Know models of health-related behaviour
- 2 Understand contemporary issues in health psychology
- 3 Understand models of stress and related management strategies
- 4 Understand chronic and terminal illness.

Unit content

1 Know models of health-related behaviour

Health and illness: definitions and concepts of health and illness, medical model, biopsychosocial model; use of holistic concept of health in underpinning complementary treatments, eg acupuncture, homeopathy, herbal medicine; the perception of illness; coping within illness

Health-related behaviours: theories of behaviour change – health-belief model, reasoned action, planned behaviour; compliance and non-compliance; the 'sick role', placebo effects, psychosomatic and somatopsychic effects of illness

Influences on health-related beliefs and behaviours: cultural, eg differing attitudes amongst different ethnic groups; individual, eg age, gender; education eg religious/ethnic/professional sub-cultures; socio-economic, eg social class, economic status; environmental, eg population density, available infrastructure

2 Understand contemporary issues in health psychology

Contemporary issues, eg:

Smoking/alcohol and other substance dependency: health implications of smoking, consumption of alcohol and other substance dependencies; social learning perspective, addictive behaviour (including gambling and sex) – from a psychological viewpoint

Eating behaviour: psychological theories of causes of obesity, anorexia and bulimia; the ethics of the treatment of these disorders

Exercise: exercise behaviour, who exercises, why exercise, physical and psychological benefits and the problems associated with exercise, including when taken to excess

Childbirth: the medicalisation of childbirth, cultural and religious issues, the growth of Caesarean sections, home births, water births and the rationale behind them

3 Understand models of stress and related management strategies

Development of stress models: the fight or flight model, general adaptation syndrome; life events theory; psychosocial models of stress

Coping strategies and responses: problem focused, emotion focused, defence mechanisms, denial

Role of psychological factors: self-control, locus of control, personality type; the cash-rich time-poor lifestyle; status anxiety; effects of the media on expectations, results of not achieving expectations

Stress-illness link: effects of stress on immune system, effects of lack of or too much information on illness, role and extent of family and wider social support; positive coping mechanisms, eg relaxation, yoga; negative coping mechanisms, eg alcohol or other substance abuse

Stress management strategies: behavioural techniques, cognitive techniques; relaxation, eg yoga; the importance to health workers of having knowledge of these

4 Understand chronic and terminal illness

Chronic illness: definitions, trends in prevalence, local, national and worldwide statistics; behavioural processes, cognitive states, anxiety; the availability of intervention/treatment

Pain: theories of pain, the role of psychological factors in pain perception, organic pain, psychogenic pain; acute and chronic pain, referred pain; injury without pain, pain without injury; measuring pain; controlling pain, application of psychological approaches to alleviation of pain

Psychological theories related to: diagnosis and behaviour change; alleviation of symptoms, coping mechanisms; effect on families and cared ones; illnesses, eg heart disease, cancer, HIV/AIDS, back pain, asthma, diabetes

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 describe theories of behaviour change in relation to health [IE4; IE5; IE6]		
P2 describe factors that may influence responses to health and illness [IE3; IE5; CT4]		
P3 explain specific health psychology issues [IE1; IE2; IE4; RL2; RL3; SM3]	M1 compare two specific health psychology issues in relation to common themes and differences	D1 evaluate the contribution of health behaviour theories to the two specific health psychology issues
P4 explain models of stress and possible coping strategies [IE3; IE4]	M2 discuss how stress and stress management techniques can influence illness	D2 evaluate the effectiveness of stress management techniques linked to different models of stress.
P5 explain the role of psychology in understanding one chronic or terminal illness. [IE1; RL2]	M3 discuss the role of psychology in the management of chronic/terminal illness.	

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills which are embedded in the assessment of this unit. By achieving the criteria, learners will have demonstrated effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

Understanding health psychology will benefit learners who wish to gain employment in health and social care on completion of their programme, and to those planning to progress to further or higher levels of study. An understanding of the psychological aspects of health and illness will help learners to deal with situations they may experience in health and social care settings.

The unit should be introduced by reviewing learners' knowledge of psychological perspectives and their role in the health and social care sectors, as gained through studying *Unit 8: Psychological Perspectives for Health and Social Care*, and possibly *Unit 29: Applied Psychological Perspectives for Health and Social Care*. The latter is not, however, a prerequisite for this unit, as the focus here is specifically health psychology.

Different concepts of health and illness, and different health behaviours, could be introduced through a combination of class and small group discussions, case studies and tutor input. There are links here with a number of other units in the programme, including *Unit 7: Sociological Perspectives for Health and Social Care*, *Unit 20: Health Education* and *Unit 23: Complementary Therapies for Health and Social Care*. If appropriate, these can be referred to, with learners being encouraged to take a more psychological viewpoint and extend their knowledge and understanding.

A range of specific health psychology issues could be introduced through case studies, discussions and small-group research, where learners gather information from a range of resources in relation to a specific issue of interest to them, followed by class presentations.

Tutor input will be needed in order to introduce models of stress and stress management strategies, with the possible use of guest speakers. Class discussions could facilitate the sharing of experiences and ideas. The unit could be made more practical by the use in class of relaxation techniques, as previously suggested for *Unit 23: Complementary Therapies for Health and Social Care*. The importance of knowing the stress management strategies available to health workers should be emphasised.

Finally, chronic and terminal illness could be delivered using case studies, sensitively managed discussions based on learners' experiences, and guest speakers. A visit to a hospice could also be arranged if possible. Again, links could be made with *Unit 23: Complementary Therapies for Health and Social Care*.

Learners should be encouraged to relate their studies in psychology to observations they may have made whilst on work experience placements. Small-group or whole-class discussions could facilitate sharing and exploration of these observations, with due respect for confidentiality.

This unit needs to be delivered by an appropriately qualified tutor, with the use of appropriate guest speakers, visits, links with local voluntary and community groups, and DVDs/videos to enhance delivery.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Unit introduction.
Learning outcome 1 Tutor input: definitions of health and illness. Models of health and how people perceive and cope with illness. Approaches could be compared using examples such as chronic fatigue syndrome (ME). Discussion: learners could bring personal examples, although these should be treated with sensitivity.
Overview of a holistic approach to health and wellbeing using complementary therapies as examples. This could be used as an introduction to <i>Unit 23: Complementary Therapies for Health and Social Care</i> . Learner research: different therapies and present their finding to the rest of the group.
Case studies: theories of health behaviour change.
Learning outcome 2 Group work: factors that impact on health-related behaviours. Tutor input: looking at statistics on risk factors could be used to explain health differences across different groups.
Assignment 1: Models of health behaviour (P1, P2)
Learning outcome 3 Learner research: two contemporary issues of interest to them in order to produce a report. Group work: collecting data about BMI, frame size and fitness as a way of introducing some practical activities. This will need to be carried out sensitively. Food diaries could be kept which links with <i>Unit 21: Nutrition for Health and Social Care</i> .
Assignment 2: Contemporary health issues (P3, M1, D1)
Learning outcome 4 This learning outcome is best delivered by tutor input although there are several activities that learners could undertake such as an Eysenck personality test, Holmes and Rahe rating scale and others. Group work: look at media expectations of issues such as appearance and income and the impact this has on celebrities and themselves. Stress management techniques can be linked to <i>Unit 23: Complementary Therapies for Health and Social Care</i> . Outside speakers could be used to provide information on different techniques.
Assignment 3: Stress and stress management (P4, M2, D2)
Learning outcome 5 Learners will need to identify which illness they will research and then look at trends of incidence and available treatments. Tutor input: the theories and perception of pain are probably best delivered theoretically. Learners can then apply this information to their chosen condition. Learner research: there are many self-help group websites which would be useful for this topic.
Assignment 4: Chronic/terminal illness (P5, M3)
Unit review and assessment.

Assessment

Evidence for this unit should mainly be written work/essays, but records from presentations or class discussions could be used to supplement these. Learners need to demonstrate an understanding of different psychological approaches to study by applying these approaches to aspects of health and social care.

Evidence for this unit could be provided through four assignments. An initial assignment could be used as the basis to assess P1 and P2. In order to achieve P1 and P2, learners need to produce a piece of writing that describes theories of behaviour change. Learners who have already produced evidence for *Unit 20: Promoting Health Education* should be encouraged to choose models other than those previously presented. This piece of writing needs to be extended to include a description of factors that may contribute to predicting health behaviour. This gives learners the opportunity to present evidence about factors of particular interest to them, such as cultural, individual and socio-economic. Finally, learners need to include a description of different health-related behaviours, using examples to illustrate these. This gives learners the scope to cover issues such as perceptions of illness, the 'sick role' and compliance.

A second assignment could cover P3, M1 and D1. Learners need to choose and explain two health psychology issues of interest to them and produce a report. For M1, common themes and differences between the two issues should be compared. For D1, learners need to evaluate the theories addressed in the first assignment as they relate to their health psychology issues.

A third assignment could cover P4, M2 and D2, concerning the psychology of stress. A piece of writing for P4, explaining models of stress and possible coping strategies and responses, needs to be extended for M2 in terms of discussing how stress and stress management techniques can influence illness. D2 then requires learners to draw P4 and M2 together and evaluate the effectiveness of various stress management techniques linked to the different models of stress. Learners should be encouraged to link theory to practice and draw on their work placement experiences for examples.

Likewise, for the final assignment covering P5 and M3, learners should be encouraged to choose a chronic or terminal illness of interest to them, research it and present written evidence. For P5, learners need to explain how psychology can help understanding of a chronic or terminal illness. M3 requires learners to discuss the role psychology can play in the management of such an illness. Again, learners should draw on their own experiences, if possible, in order to link theory with practice. Case studies could also be used as the basis of evidence. Evidence here may link to that provided for other units within the programme, such as *Unit 23: Complementary Therapies for Health and Social Care*, or *Unit 25: Coping with Change in a Health and Social Care Context*, but learners need to be encouraged to present the evidence from a more psychological viewpoint, and extend it.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, P2	Models of health behaviour	As part of your studies to become a health psychologist you are required to produce pieces of work that consider health issues and how people deal with them.	Essay based on case studies.
P3, M1, D1	Contemporary health issues		Report.
P4, M2, D2	Stress and stress management		Essay.
P5, M3	Chronic/terminal illness		Essay.

Links to National Occupational Standards (NOS), other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Health and Social Care sector suite (see *Appendix A*) and has links with units from other qualifications in that suite. See *Appendix E* for NOS links and *Appendix G* for a mapping of the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework against particular units in this qualification.

Essential resources

The following resources are essential for delivery of this unit:

- an appropriately qualified tutor
- people/day-to-day interactions, eg school/college or local counsellors, special need tutors, project workers, speech therapists, psychologists, social workers
- library resources with key texts and other reference materials.

In addition, the following resources are considered to be highly valuable:

- work experience placements
- case study materials
- audio and visual records, eg television interviews, soap operas, chat shows, magazines or newspapers.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Work experience placements would be useful to allow learners to link theory and practice.

Visits from speakers from support groups and those delivering complementary therapies would also be useful.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

- Banyard P – *Psychology in Practice: Health* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2002) ISBN 9780340844960
- Brain C – *Advanced Subsidiary Psychology Approaches and Methods* (Nelson Thornes, 2000) ISBN 9780174900573
- Eysenck M – *Psychology, An Integrated Approach* (Prentice Hall, 1998) ISBN 9780582298842
- Forshaw M – *Essential Health Psychology* (Hodder Arnold, 2002) ISBN 9780340759714
- Harari P and Legge K – *Psychology and Health* (Heinemann, 2001) ISBN 9780435806590
- Lindon J – *Understanding Child Development* (Hodder Arnold, 2005) ISBN 9780340886694
- Myers B and Shaw L – *The Social Sciences* (Nelson Thornes, 2004) ISBN 9780748785858
- Russell J – *Introduction to Psychology for Health Carers* (Nelson Thornes, 2005) ISBN 9780748780747
- Sarafino E – *Health Psychology – Biopsychosocial Interactions, 5th Edition* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2006) ISBN 9780471691003
- Stretch B – *Core Themes in Health and Social Care* (Heinemann, 2007) ISBN 9780435464257
- Stretch B and Whitehouse M – *BTEC National Health and Social Care Book 2* (Heinemann, 2007) ISBN 9780435499167
- Stretch B and Whitehouse M – *BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Health and Social Care Student Book 1* (Pearson, 2010) ISBN 9781846907663
- Stretch B and Whitehouse M – *BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Health and Social Care Student Book 2* (Pearson, 2010) ISBN 9781846907470
- Walsh M, Stephens P, Billingham M, Crittenden M, Thomson A and Thomson D – *Health and Social Care A2* (Collins, 2006) ISBN 9780007200405

Websites

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| www.bps.org.uk | British Psychological Society |
| www.communitycare.co.uk | Community Care |
| www.csci.org.uk | Commission for Social Care |
| www.dh.gov.uk | Department of Health |
| www.ncb.org.uk | National Children's Bureau |
| www.nhs.uk | National Health Service |
| www.nursingtimes.net | Nursing Times |
| www.qeliz.ac.uk/psychology | Psychology resource |
| www.s-cool.co.uk | Revision website |
| www.scie.org.uk | Social Care Institute for Excellence |
| www.skillsforhealth.org.uk | Sector Skills Council for the UK Health Sector |

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	[IE1] identifying which two contemporary health psychology issues to investigate and which chronic/terminal illness to study [IE2] researching their two contemporary health psychology issues [IE3] considering factors which influence health behaviours and exploring issues related to stress [IE4] researching health behaviours, health psychology issues and stress [IE5] investigating theories of health behaviour change and considering factors which influence health behaviours
Creative thinkers	[CT4] discussing factors that impact on responses to health and illness
Reflective learners	[RL2] investigating two contemporary health psychology issues and researching the role of psychology in chronic/terminal illness [RL3] producing a report on two contemporary health psychology issues
Self-managers	[SM3] producing a report on two contemporary health psychology issues.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	researching for their assessments and selecting information from a variety of sources
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	researching for their assessments, using search engines and assessing the relevance of the information they retrieve
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records 	producing their written work, proofreading to ensure accuracy producing their report on two contemporary issues in health psychology using an accepted convention
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	researching different therapies, delivering opportunities presentations and contributing to group discussions
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	researching for their assignments obtaining relevant information from a variety of sources and summarising it
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	communicating their ideas in a concise, clear and logical manner for their assignments using an appropriate style of writing when producing their report on two contemporary issues in health psychology presenting written work with accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.