Objectives

Behavior contributes significantly to health, well-being and longevity. An abundance of research supports numerous behavioral guidelines for health promotion, including: regular physical activity; the maintenance of appropriate weight; the avoidance of tobacco products and illicit drugs; dietary intake of fruits, vegetables, and fiber, coupled with low consumption of saturated fats; moderate use of alcohol; and the ability to cope effectively with stress. Thus, the purpose of this course is to present an overview of health-promoting behaviors from the perspective of clinical health psychology. The course will emphasize changing behaviors to improve health and prevent disease. Psychological approaches for conceptualizing and changing behaviors to improve health will represent the major focus of the course. While the primary focus of the course will be intervention at the individual and group level, we will also review public health approaches that focus on change at the community or organizational level, and we will touch upon the contributions of sociology, epidemiology, medicine, political science and economics to understanding health and illness.

The specific topics chosen for in-depth exploration during the course comprise the major health issues facing our population, namely, obesity, nutrition, physical activity, and the use of tobacco. We will examine the behavioral antecedents of major diseases, particularly heart disease and cancer, by reviewing epidemiological and population-based studies of associations between behavioral and psychosocial variables and the occurrence of chronic disease conditions and decreased longevity. We will focus in detail on behavioral interventions to modify risk factors for disease, including the conceptual basis for the interventions, clinical trial data supporting their efficacy, and their application in the practice of health psychology.

Basis for Evaluation/Grading

The course will include the opportunity to design and carry out a health-promotion intervention, either with an appropriate clinical patient or with oneself as the subject in a self-management project. In addition, each class participant will design and propose a health-promotion research project. Both the clinical project and the research proposal will be presented in class. The grade for the class will be based on (a) the research proposal (20%), (b) the clinical project and presentation (20%), (c) a final exam (30%), and (d) class participation (20%).
Scheduled Topics & Readings

January 9, 2013 Health Promotion: An Overview

Anton, S. D., & Perri, M. G., Disease Prevention through lifestyle intervention for diet and physical activity. The Oxford Handbook of Rehabilitation Psychology.


January 16, 2013 Obesity: Prevalence, Determinants, and Consequences


January 23, 2013 Obesity: Treatment Issues & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations


January 30, 2013 Diet and Health & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations

Hauppauge, NY


February 6, 2013 Dietary Interventions & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations


February 13, 2013 Physical Activity & Health & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations


February 20, 2013 Physical Activity Interventions & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations


February 27, 2013 Community Health Promotion & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations


March 13, 2013 Smoking Cessation & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations

Abrams, D.B. Adherence to Treatment for Nicotine Dependence.


March 6, 2013 SPRING BREAK – no class

March 20, 2013 Clinical Presentations

March 27, 2013 Clinical presentations

April 3, 2013 Clinical presentations + research presentations

April 10, 2013 Research presentations

April 17, 2013 Research presentations

April 24, 2013 Final Exam

Additional Requirements

- Students are expected to adhere to the University of Florida's honesty policy regarding cheating and use of copyrighted materials.
- Students are expected to attend class and to notify the instructor in advance of absences. Make-up assignments or delays in meeting assignment deadlines must be approved in advance.
- Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.