

# BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE & HEALTH EDUCATION

## What is Behavioral Science & Health Education?

Behavioral Science and Health Education engages people to make healthy decisions. It is one of the five core disciplines of public health. Students pursuing a degree in this field may end up in a career that:

- Educates parents on how to provide a healthy environment for their children
- Helps adolescents make better decisions regarding drugs and alcohol
- Creates campaigns to encourage positive health behaviors
- Works with seniors on how to improve their quality of life

## What are examples of careers in Behavioral Science & Health Education?

A variety of careers exist for those interested in behavioral science and health education. Below are just a sample of the professions related to this field:

### *Local*

- Breastfeeding Educator, MilkWorks
- Minority Health Program Coordinator, OneWorld Community Health Centers, Inc.
- WIC Supervisor, Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

### *National/International*

- Marketing and Communications Officer, Cleveland Clinic
- Project Director, NewBorn Screening UCLA
- Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator, Ohio State University Student Wellness Center

## Who might be interested in a Behavioral Science & Health Education career?

Students interested in behavioral science and health promotion typically have backgrounds in social sciences, education, marketing/advertising, or communication. If you want to know answers to the following types of questions, you might want to explore this field some more:

- What messages are the most effective for smoking cessation campaigns?
- How do different sexual education models effect adolescent behaviors?
- Who is most likely to engage in regular exercise over their life course?
- How can social media campaigns promote healthier eating habits?
- What impact does paid-maternity/paternity leave have on child health in European nations?

## Where can I get a degree in Behavioral Science & Health Education?

All schools of public health should have graduate degrees in fields related to behavioral science and health education. Students should consult each school they plan to apply to in order to know what coursework will be required for admission. These requirements may vary by school. UNMC has the following programs available:

### *Master of Public Health (with any of the concentrations below):*

- Health Promotion
- Maternal and Child Health

### *Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research*

A master's or other advanced degree is required for admission, but exceptional undergraduate students will be considered.

## **What courses can I take to prepare for a Behavioral Science & Health Education program?**

See our Pre-Public Health sheet for courses that will broadly prepare you for a public health graduate program. Beyond those, specific courses that are relevant to this field include those below. Please consult an academic advisor and the Undergraduate Bulletin to discuss these classes before enrolling.

Additional social science classes in Psychology and Sociology

Communication: ALEC 305, COMM 101, 286, POLS 430

Education: EDPS 250, 251, 362, SPED 201, TEAC 330

Leadership: ALEC 134, 202, 234, 302, 400, 466, 477

Mass Media: JOMC 101, SOCI 273

## **What can I do to explore Behavioral Science & Health Education?**

- **Research:** Gain experience through a UCARE project or by identifying an internship at a governmental or advocacy organization that is involved in health promotion or behavioral health. Even if you aren't directly creating programs/campaigns or researching their effectiveness, getting a first-hand look at these kinds of organizations is a great background for an undergraduate student interested in a career related to behavioral science and health education.
- **Career Information:** Find a professional who you can do an informational interview with in order to learn more about career paths in the field.
- **Student Organizations:** Consider joining the Pre-Public Health Club, Campus Red Cross, or becoming a Peer Health Educator through the University Health Center.

## **How do I apply?**

For admission to UNMC's MPH or PhD programs, students must apply through the centralized application process – SOPHAS. Information on SOPHAS can be found at [www.sophas.org](http://www.sophas.org) and on the UNMC admissions page at <http://unmc.edu/publichealth/admissions/index.html>.

Students can apply to start the MPH program in either the fall or spring semesters each year. The PhD program only admits students to the fall semester. Please see UNMC's admissions page for specific application dates.

The admissions committee reviews grade point average, letters of recommendation, knowledge of profession, service, and leadership experience. In addition to a GRE (or other acceptable entrance exam), students will need to provide a one page personal statement and a resume reflecting one or more years of work/volunteer history related to health and/or human services.

## **Where can I go for more information?**

UNMC College of Public Health

Department of Health Promotion, Social & Behavioral Health

<http://unmc.edu/publichealth/departments/healthpromotion/>

Associations of Schools and Programs of Public Health

<http://www.aspph.org/study/>

Society of Public Health Education

<http://www.sophe.org/>

Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness

<http://www.abhw.org/>

Explore Health Careers

<http://explorehealthcareers.org>