Health Behavior Research (Ph.D.) Learning Objectives

Upon program completion, graduates will be able to:

1. Understand the theories of behavior that are typically used in health behavior research, including (but not limited to) the Health Belief Model, Theory of Reasoned Action/Planned Behavior, Stages of Change, Relapse Prevention models, Harm Reduction models, Social Cognitive Theory, social ecological models, dual process models, Diffusion of Innovations, and PRECEDE/PROCEED. Know the components of each model, how to select the appropriate model to address a given research question, and how to use the models to predict and modify health risk and protective behaviors.

2. Design studies to test hypotheses about the etiology, modification, and effects of health-risk and health-protective behaviors. Understand how to choose the appropriate experimental, quasi-experimental, or non-experimental research design, balancing the potential threats to validity against practical, ethical, and financial constraints. Know how to design and evaluate health promotion programs, including process evaluation, outcome evaluation, and dissemination.

3. Select the appropriate statistical tests to evaluate hypotheses, perform the appropriate statistical tests, interpret the results, and report the findings to scientific and lay audiences. These statistical analyses include, but are not limited to, t-tests, chi-square, linear regression, logistic regression, structural equation analysis, latent class analysis, multilevel modeling, growth curves, time series analysis, and structural equation modeling.

4. Competently convey research findings to scientific and lay audiences orally and in writing. This may include, but is not limited to, peer-reviewed journal articles, oral presentations and poster sessions at scientific conferences, presentations and reports to community-based organizations, legislators, granting agencies, or other stakeholders, and interviews with the media.

5. Write empirical and review papers for publication in scientific journals and complete the process of manuscript submission and revision for publication. Write grant proposals to NIH or other large funding agencies.

6. Use the principles of community-based participatory research (CBPR) as appropriate when working with underserved or vulnerable populations.

7. Use the latest technologies, as appropriate, to deliver intervention content and/or gather data.

8. Work as a member of a collaborative research team. Competently and effectively teach and mentor students and more junior members of research teams.