

Health, Gender & Personality Careers

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, we'll finish our discussion of the different career specialties in psychology.

The specific areas of focus include:

1. Category of Medical and Psychological Fields
2. Health Psychology
3. Medical Psychology
4. Gender Psychology
5. Personality Psychology

1. Category of Medical and Psychological Fields

When we think of psychology, we tend to think of clinical psychology, which refers to psychotherapy, the study of different mental disorders, and the development of treatments to help people afflicted by those disorders. However, there's a lot more to this area of study than simply treating patients with those disorders.

The focus of all of these different categories in psychology is to understand the psychological issues and disorders that might be underlying behavior and negatively affecting people's lives.

Thus, the idea is to improve upon the lives of those people through these different areas of research.

2. Health Psychology

The first two areas of study in this larger category, health and medical psychology, sound very similar to clinical psychology. However, they deal with psychology in more of a hospital or physical sense.

Health psychology studies how a person's behaviors can either promote health or deter it. This is very much a biological approach to psychology because it involves the use of psychological principles to promote better health, as well as to prevent different illnesses.

➦ **EXAMPLE** Health psychologists might look at the effect that stress has on the physical body, such as

how stress prevents growth and increases adrenalin, causing people to become more tired at the end of the day. These psychologists may also study the psychological effects of stress, such as how it tends to make people irritable and prevent them from sleeping.

Studying both the physical and psychological aspects of an issue means that research can be put together to create a whole picture of how behavior and mental states can affect physical health.



TERM TO KNOW

Health Psychology

Studies the relationship between a person's behaviors and his or her mental and physical health

3. Medical Psychology

Medical psychology tries to apply psychological concepts to the management of different medical problems. This can involve looking at the emotional impact that an illness might have on somebody afflicted with it.

➦ **EXAMPLE** Medical psychologists might study a disease such as cancer, and how somebody can better cope with it. These psychologists might also help counsel people with cancer so that those patients can feel more at ease as they're going through treatment.

Medical psychology can also involve studying the compliance of people in taking different kinds of medications. The goal is to improve compliance so that people will be able to take their drugs on a more effective schedule, to remember this schedule, and to hopefully become better over time as a result of this.



TERM TO KNOW

Medical Psychology

The use of psychological concepts to help in the treatment of medical problems

4. Gender Psychology

Gender psychology looks at the differences between males and females, and how those differences can change and develop over the course of people's lives.

This is a related field to developmental psychology, which we discussed in a previous lesson because the idea is that a person's individual sense of being male or female, or a person's gender identity, can change over time and develop throughout the person's life.

According to those who study gender psychology, this gender identity can thus have an effect on other aspects of the person's life, such as sexuality.

Another important distinction that gender psychologists make is that people's gender identity can differ from the actual physical characteristics that they have.



TERM TO KNOW

Gender Psychology

Researches the difference between males and females throughout life and its effects on other aspects of their lives

5. Personality Psychology

Personality psychology, which is an area that we'll discuss in more detail later on in the course, is the physical and psychological study of personality over the course of a person's life.

Personality psychologists develop theories about people's personalities and often make tests to assess those different kinds of traits. A trait is a stable or enduring quality that a person shows in most situations over time.

If you've ever taken any kind of personality test online, either for work or for pleasure, you're probably familiar with some of these different trait theories.

This idea of traits is a bit different from relative theories of behavior, such as cultural relativity, because it doesn't depend on a specific situation. Rather, it stays the same over an extended period of time.

These traits could be things like how outgoing and sociable you are, how trusting you are of other people, and how open you are to being creative and trying new experiences.

Again, these are aspects that we'll cover more in depth later, but they might be something you'll be interested in and want to do further research on before getting to those lessons.



TERM TO KNOW

Personality Psychology

The study of personality traits and dynamics



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about some specific career paths in the **category of medical and psychological fields**. **Health psychology** and **medical psychology** appear similar to to the field of clinical psychology, but they are more focused on patients in hospitals.

Gender psychology is related to the field of developmental psychology in that it focuses on the idea that gender identity can develop over the course of a person's life. Conversely, **personality psychology**, which will be discussed further in other lessons, is the study of different traits that tend to stay the same over a person's life.

Good luck!

Source: Adapted from Sophia tutorial by Erick Taggart.

**Gender Psychology**

Researches the difference between males and females throughout life and its effects on other aspects of their lives.

Health Psychology

Studies the relationship between a person's behaviors and his or her mental and physical health.

Medical Psychology

The use of psychological concepts to help in the treatment of medical problems.

Personality Psychology

The study of personality traits and dynamics.