

## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Behavioural Science in Health Care

**Unit code:** D88V 04

**Unit purpose:** This Unit should enable the candidate to understand psychological theories of individual development and sociological theories and concepts, in relation to health issues. This knowledge is then used to explain a health issue in contemporary society. On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

1. Review two psychological theories of individual development and explain how one of the theories can be used to understand the health of an individual.
2. Review two sociological theories and demonstrate the relationship between social factors and health.

**Credit value:** 1 HN Credit

**Recommended prior knowledge and skills:** It would be beneficial if candidates have some work experience but this is not essential, although they should have some understanding of the role of the carer.

**Core skills:** There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components.

**Context for delivery:** This Unit is specifically designed for delivery as part of the HNC in Health Care.

**Assessment:** The Unit could be assessed by instruments of assessment holistically or by Outcome. One piece of the work relates to individual development and the other relates to sociological theory.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards**

**Unit title:** Behavioural Science in Health Care

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

### **Outcome 1**

Review two psychological theories of individual development and explain how one of the theories can be used to understand the health of an individual

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- Psychoanalytic theory
- Behaviourist theory
- Psycho social theory
- Cognitive theory
- Humanistic theory
- Personality theory
- Lifespan theory

#### **Evidence requirements**

Candidates will need to investigate and review two theories of individual development. Evidence will be presented to demonstrate that two theories have been comprehensively reviewed and understood. Candidates will also identify a health issue and select one of the theories reviewed. Candidate evidence will show an ability to clearly explain how the health of an individual can be understood in relation to the chosen theory.

#### **Assessment guidelines**

Assessment for Outcomes 1 and 2 should be carried out separately.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Behavioural Science in Health Care

### **Outcome 2**

Review two sociological theories and demonstrate the relationship between social factors and health

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- Functionalist Theory
- Conflict Theory
- Social Action Theory
- Feminist Theory
  
- Introduction to epidemiology
- Health Targets
- Socio-economic factors
- Culture
- Lifestyle

#### **Evidence requirements**

Candidates will need to investigate and review two sociological theories. Evidence will be presented to demonstrate that two theories have been comprehensively reviewed and understood. Candidates will show an understanding of sociological explanations of aspects of society. Candidates will identify a health issue and select sociological concepts and perspectives, which have been reviewed. Candidate evidence will show an ability to clearly explain the relationship between social factors and health in contemporary society.

#### **Assessment guidelines**

Assessment for Outcomes 1 and 2 should be carried out separately.

## **Administrative Information**

**Unit code:** D88V 04

**Unit title:** Behavioural Science in Health Care

**Superclass category:** PK

**Date of publication:** March 2002

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## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes**

### **Unit title:** Behavioural Science in Health Care

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

### **Guidance on the content and context for this Unit**

This Unit is intended to provide candidates with an insight into the psychological and sociological factors that contribute to the health of an individual and to society in general. This Unit should complement the content of other Units in the HNC Health Care award; in particular Physiology for Health Care professions that looks at physical body function and the Health Promotion Unit which looks at dimensions of health. This Unit will enable candidates to consider in detail how factors relating to individual development and wider society can also affect health. Candidates should be given an overview of behavioural science theory and related concepts to enable them to select theories for further investigation and review. Examples of how health issues, eg coronary heart disease or depression can be understood using knowledge from psychological and sociological perspectives should be provided to allow candidates to see the application of theory. Candidates should be encouraged to select a health issue that has relevance for people in the client groups with whom they would like to work. It is recommended that the candidate uses the same health issue and applies both psychological and sociological knowledge to demonstrate understanding of the issue from both perspectives.

### **Outcome 1**

Psychology should be defined as a field of scientific study of human behaviour and this can be compared with common sense explanations of behaviour or ‘pop psychology’ which attempts to explain behaviour in very simple terms.

This Outcome should develop an understanding of how psychology has developed and grown as a body of knowledge to help explain individual behaviour. Health should be discussed as a subjective concept, ie ‘You are as healthy as you feel’. Consideration can be given to differences that personality, risk taking behaviour or coping strategies can influence health. It is suggested that candidates be introduced to theory in relation to the perspectives listed.

Psychoanalytic theory  
Behaviourist theory  
Psycho social theory  
Cognitive theory  
Humanistic theory  
Personality theory (trait/type theory)  
Lifespan theory

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Behavioural Science in Health Care

It is not intended that all the theories listed should be examined in detail but candidates should be aware of the range of perspectives and the basic concepts from these perspectives.

Candidates should understand that different theoretical approaches offer different insights into human behaviour. For example:

Psychoanalytic theory: a condition such as anxiety could be examined using this approach and the use of defence mechanisms in relation to coping with loss could be discussed.

Behaviourist theory: shaping desired behaviour, goal setting and the use of reinforcement could be discussed. Development of Social Learning Theory from this approach could be discussed. Smoking behaviour could be discussed using concepts from these theories.

Psycho social theory: the relevance of the social relationships to the development of the individual throughout the lifespan should be discussed. Stage theory with conflict resolution needed at each stage for healthy psycho-social development.

Cognitive theory: the role in mental processes in the development of behaviours, eg schemas for smoking or exercise.

Humanistic theory: concept of self-image and self-esteem could be related to eating disorders.

Personality theory: (trait/type theory) could be discussed in relation to coronary heart disease.

Lifespan approach: to consider factors that are significant at particular ages and stages of development. Fertility issues could be considered to demonstrate that the issues can be different at different stages of development.

Discussion of the different perspectives will help give some insight into how behaviour can be understood and explained. A link should then be made to demonstrate how therapeutic approaches use these perspectives as a basis for the different actions that can be taken to improve health. For example, token economy systems based on behaviour approaches to individual experiences of topical health issues can be gathered from media sources to provide case studies for discussion. These issues should be examined from different theoretical perspectives to gain insight into the situation.

This input will enable the candidate to select theoretical perspectives and issues that are of particular interest and facilitate further investigation in preparation for assessment.

### **Outcome 2**

Sociology should be defined as a field of scientific study that aims to examine and explain the social world. The 'sociological imagination' (Mills 1959) should be introduced as a means of

studying the structure of society at the same time as the lives of individuals. This can help us to understand 'private troubles' in terms of 'public issues'.

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Behavioural Science in Health Care

An overview of the theoretical perspectives listed below will provide candidates with an understanding of the different views on how society is constructed and the factors within society that relate to health issues.

Consensus Theory: the concept of people in society as functional or dysfunctional, values and role, loss of role and sick role could be examined, as could anomie. Suicide rates in society could be discussed in relation to unemployment or educational achievement.

Conflict theory: the economic structure of society could be discussed and inequalities in health can be examined to demonstrate health outcomes for people of different status in our society. The role of multi-national pharmaceutical companies can be considered in relation to power and ownership of health promoting products which are not available to everyone.

Symbolic Interactionism: the importance of labels in relation to health can be considered. The reasons why Myalgic Encephalitis acquired the label of 'yuppie flu' could be discussed. Candidates should be aware of the importance of labels to access services and the danger of stereotyping and discrimination through the use of labels.

Feminist approach: differences between men and women in terms of patterns of medical consultation and diagnosis could be considered as well as life expectancy. Candidates should give consideration to both sociology and medicine as disciplines, which have developed with a male bias.

In order to form an understanding of health as an issue in society candidates should be introduced to the following topics:

Epidemiology  
Health Targets

Candidates should be encouraged to use web sites to investigate the current health issues, for example candidates could be directed to the Scottish Executive web site. This would also provide an opportunity for candidates to explore whether there were particular issues concerning a geographical or biographical population that they would wish to investigate further.

Discussion of the following factors should be detailed and wide ranging to provide candidates with an insight into the ways in which personal health issues can be understood in terms of wider social issues.

Socio-economic factors  
Culture  
Lifestyle



## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Behavioural Science in Health Care

Health Outcomes should then be examined, eg socio-economic status and life expectancy. The concept of culture and sub-culture should be discussed in terms of defining norms of behaviour. Candidates should then consider lifestyle factors and the impact of these on the health of a society. Local or national health issues can be compared and contrasted with the issues that affect other areas or parts of the world.

This will enable the candidate to select theoretical perspectives that are of particular interest and facilitate further investigation. Candidates should apply their understanding of social factors and demonstrate how health is affected.

### **Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit**

This Unit is likely to form part of a group award, which is primarily designed to provide candidates with knowledge and skills to work with people in need of health care. It is intended that this Unit will facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of issues that affect health. In delivering the Unit it will be important to emphasise the benefits to the individual and to society of examining health from a range of perspectives. Topical examples from media sources can be used as case studies for discussion. This will provide opportunities for informal formative assessment and enable candidates to understand the requirements of summative assessment.

Discussion can be facilitated to enable candidates to examine case studies from both psychological and sociological perspectives using a range of theoretical approaches.

Assessment will be by two instruments of assessment, which will be undertaken following the investigation of relevant perspectives. The assessment will be carried out under controlled conditions. Candidates may bring with them personal notes as specified by the instrument of assessment. Candidates may not use text books but should compile a list of resources used in their research. The list of resources and notes used should be submitted with the completed assessment.

### **Open learning**

This Unit could be delivered by distance learning. However, it would require planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate's evidence. Arrangements would have to be made to ensure that assessments are carried out in a supervised environment under controlled conditions.

### **Special needs**

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering special alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment and Certification Arrangements for Candidates with Special Needs and Candidates for whom English is an additional language* (SQA, 2000).

## **General information for candidates**

**Unit title:** Behavioural Science in Health Care

### **Merit Statement**

A pass with merit will be awarded to a candidate who consistently demonstrates superior performance in the following:

- (i) a knowledge of psychological and sociological theory as applied to the health care needs of an individual;
- (ii) presentation of work.