

**ASU Department of Psychology
Clinical Program**

The Health Psychology Area of Emphasis

Clinical students with interests centering on the interface of psychology and medicine may select Health Psychology as an area of emphasis. In our program, health psychology is broadly interpreted to encompass the theoretical, methodological, and/or procedural (treatment and prevention) contributions from contemporary psychology that bear upon the existing and emerging problems of modern medicine.

Such areas of study include (but are not limited to): patient noncompliance, chronic illness management, analysis and modification of lifestyle and thinking patterns that place individuals at risk for serious illness, physiological correlates of maladaptive behavior patterns, psychosocial assessment and/or screening of medical patients, assessment and treatment of acute and chronic pain, the analysis of life stress in disease, psychosocial factors in immunologic functioning, and the role of psychosocial moderators/ mediators in stress-illness relations (including such factors as social support, temperament, goal systems, etc.). These topics and others represent the current interests of full- time and adjunct faculty in clinical psychology as well as those in graduate programs in social psychology and behavioral neurosciences.

Some features of the health psychology area include:

- (1) training students to develop skills and knowledge in dealing with life-span biopsychosocial issues. Active research on health-relevant topics currently exists with children, adults, and aging populations as target groups;
- (2) a strong commitment to a preventive focus. Early identification of groups at risk constitutes an important domain of research for a number of our faculty;
- (3) excellent support from the local Phoenix community in terms of the availability of hospitals, clinics, and private medical practitioners willing to assist ASU faculty and students in their research pursuits.

Students electing to emphasize health psychology are advised to take the graduate course offering Introduction to Health Psychology and to select from a number of topical seminars (e.g., Emotions, Stress & Health) or advanced treatment method courses (e.g., Mindfulness) as dictated by their own interests and course availability. It is advisable to pursue both MA and Ph.D. research in the domain of health psychology, as well as to complete the one-year, APA-approved internship at a site permitting further development of intervention/diagnostic skills with medical populations. Over the years, graduates of our program who have emphasized health psychology have found employment both in academic and in health-care settings.