MASTER’S PROGRAM IN BSHS

GRADUATE TRAINING OBJECTIVES

The BSHS Master’s program aims to:

- Develop health behavior specialists experienced in the use of state-of-the-art experimental and non-experimental research methods for the improvement of health in the community, with a focus on the role of behavior change in health promotion as facilitated by complex and potentially multi-level interventions.
- Develop health behavior specialists skilled in the communication and application of scientific knowledge related to health behavior change.
- Train health behavior specialists to contribute as part of multidisciplinary intervention design and evaluation teams in academic institutions; government agencies at the local, state, federal, and international levels; non-governmental organizations; and private industry.
- Develop health behavior specialists equipped with leadership skills for the purpose of improving and delivering health promotion/disease prevention services at the organizational, state, national, and international levels in order to build healthier communities and populations.

CORE COMPETENCIES FOR BSHS MASTER’S STUDENTS

Graduate training for BSHS Master’s students is guided by a competency-based curriculum that provides clarity for learning objectives, stimulates accountability in teaching and learning, and confers a framework for evaluation of learning. We define competencies as knowledge, skills, and abilities, and believe that graduates of the BSHS Master’s program should possess competencies in the following domains:

BASIC BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

- Understand and apply principles of basic behavioral science to intervention research, including principles of learning, emotion, cognition, motivation, lifespan development, and social-contextual determinants of behavior and health.
- Understand the production of health from a multi-level perspective; examine the role of biological, individual, social, community, and structural factors that affect the health of individuals and populations.
- Identify theoretical or conceptual models and guidelines to design and evaluate interventions at multiple levels.

PROGRAM PLANNING, INTERVENTION, AND EVALUATION

- Describe the merits of social and behavioral science interventions and policies.
- Specify multiple targets and levels of intervention for social and behavioral science programs and/or policies.
Apply a variety of empirical strategies to assess concerns, assets, resources, and needs for conceptualizing and developing behavioral and social interventions within a particular context and community.

Discuss important principles related to coordination and management of behavior change interventions and programs.

Apply appropriate research principles and methods to the development of community health promotion/intervention programs.

Apply rigorous evaluation methods to assess efficacy of behavior change interventions and programs.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

- Recognize differences in beliefs, values, and norms within and across communities, and learn to work with diverse groups of collaborators, stakeholders, and colleagues.
- Recognize personal or social biases and assumptions that might affect interactions with people of diverse backgrounds.
- Demonstrate ability to incorporate knowledge of diverse beliefs, values, and norms into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of public health programs.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATICS

- Use the public health information infrastructure to access and apply data for public health purposes.
- Accurately comprehend and interpret data sources when reading the published literature.
- Recognize and use appropriate verbal, non-verbal, and visual forms of communication for conveying/disseminating public health messages.

ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM

- Understand principles underpinning the appropriate treatment of human participants in research and adhere to principles of confidentiality of information and/or client data.
- Identify ethical issues and institutional review board requirements relevant to behavioral and social science research in public health.
- Demonstrate professional behavior toward researchers, key stakeholders, community organizations, and their clients/constituents.

TRANSLATION AND DISSEMINATION

- Understand how to adapt interventions so that language, style, delivery modalities, and communication channels are appropriate to specific populations and settings.
- Explore approaches to improve the translation and dissemination of effective behavior change interventions/programs in diverse communities.

EPIDEMIOLOGY

- Develop a strong foundation in contemporary approaches to epidemiologic methods, major epidemiologic study designs, their advantages and limitations.