BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL HEALTH SCIENCES TRAINING AT BROWN

Students of Behavioral and Social Health Sciences employ behavioral and social science theory and methods to understanding contemporary health problems. Research and scholarly activity in the Behavioral and Social Health Sciences uses the scientific method, drawing from traditions in the behavioral sciences (such as psychology and social neuroscience) that focus on individual, dyadic, and small group levels of analysis, as well as those of the social sciences that focus on the influences of social systems on human behavior (e.g., sociology, anthropology, demography, economics, and cultural studies). Thus, scholarship in Behavioral and Social Health Sciences is inherently multidisciplinary, as health behaviors are conceptualized within a social ecological context that considers cultural, social, organizational, psychological, and biological determinants. Furthermore, both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies may be used to understand the causes, characteristics, and consequences of behaviors that impact the health of individuals and society. Faculty and students engage in research that seeks to identify social, psychological, and behavioral risk factors for disease and illness; understand the psychosocial determinants of use of health care; understand health protective behaviors, relationships, and institutions; and develop and evaluate health-promoting interventions that are grounded in behavioral and social science theory.

The signatures of Behavioral and Social Health Sciences doctoral training at Brown University include health behavior interventions development and evaluation, and collaboration across disciplines and between researchers and communities. The program puts substantive focus on behavioral health issues such as diet, physical activity and obesity; alcohol and other drug abuse; smoking and tobacco use; HIV risk behaviors; and behavioral medicine.

TRAINING GOALS

The BSHS Doctoral program aims to train health behavior scientists to (a) understand the social and behavioral factors that influence health-related behavior across multiple levels, including individual, community, environmental, sociocultural, and policy levels; and (b) ameliorate public health problems by designing, implementing, and evaluating interventions that influence health-related behaviors. Students of Behavioral and Social Health Sciences aim to understand and modify health-related behaviors with the goal of improving the health of individuals and groups. Training emphasizes an integrative understanding of the bases of health behavior and health behavior change from an interdisciplinary perspective, integrating perspectives from traditional behavioral sciences (e.g., psychology, psychiatry) and social sciences (e.g., sociology, anthropology, communications). Our students learn to recognize and apply both quantitative and qualitative methods, and are able to design, implement, analyze, and interpret health behavior research. Graduates are prepared for careers in basic and applied research settings such as academia, government and non-governmental organizations, and health care.
COMPETENCIES

The PhD program in Behavioral and Social Health Sciences is designed to enable students to:

- Identify and understand social and behavioral factors that affect the health and health-related behavior of individuals and populations, considering individual, community, environmental, sociocultural and policy influences, and their interactions, on health and health behaviors.
- Draw from a variety of theories, concepts, and models from relevant social and behavioral disciplines to inform health behavior research.
- Critically evaluate quantitative and qualitative research methods and appropriately draw inferences from research findings.
- Design, implement, and evaluate interventions that influence health behaviors.
- Conduct and disseminate research on health behaviors and outcomes, using appropriate methods and analyses.
- Demonstrate a depth of knowledge within a substantive area of health behavior.
- Develop competency in communicating research ideas and findings orally and in writing to students and the scientific community.