



uBEATS Teacher's Guide:

Careers in Behavioral Health

This teacher guide is a supplementary text to support the use of the uBEATS “Careers in Behavioral Health” module for grades 6-12.

To help students develop the knowledge necessary for an incredible future in health care, we created UNMC Building Excellence in Academics Through STEM (uBEATS), an online health science resource for Nebraska students.

UNMC uBEATS modules are short (15 minutes or less), interactive online health science modules to supplement curriculum taught in grades 6 – 12. These do not replace curriculum, but they are a supplement for teachers and students incorporating evidence-based information and UNMC expert guided material. Each module is chunked into sections with formative and summative assessments with immediate feedback provided.

Tips on how to utilize uBEATS modules:

- Internet access is required to view uBEATS modules.
 - For those who have access to one-to-one technology, modules can be used in or outside of the classroom as a topic introduction, extension, or review. For classrooms without individual student devices, modules can be used in whole group instruction. Formative assessment questions can use the teacher's preferred call-and-response method and summative assessment questions can be displayed on the board and answered individually by students or printed and distributed to students after viewing the module.

Objectives

1. Identify several careers in behavioral health.
2. Explore pathways to different certifications and credentials within behavioral health.
3. Assess the salary range, duties, education level, and completion time for certain programs in the behavioral health field.

Introduction

In the United States, 59 million adults, or nearly 1 in 4 adults, and 8 million children, or 1 in 7 children, live with a mental or behavioral health condition. About 1 in 20 adults have been diagnosed with a serious mental health disorder, like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depressive disorder. And 1 in 31 children have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. And many more people without a mental health disorder have trouble managing stress or adjusting to changes in their lives and benefit from counseling services. In 2021, two-thirds of people with a mental health condition weren't able to access mental health treatment, creating a substantial unmet need. In Nebraska, 88 out of 93 counties are designated "mental health shortage areas", meaning there are not enough providers to meet the needs of the people in that county. As a whole, the behavioral health professional population is aging rapidly, meaning the shortage will continue to expand. Behavioral health providers work with individuals, families, and groups, providing a range of therapeutic services. Mental health counseling, diagnostic assessment, and managing psychotropic medications are a few of the responsibilities of mental health providers.

Prior Knowledge

Before beginning this module, the teacher should understand the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) featuring [Three-Dimensional Learning](#).

Disciplinary Core Ideas—Life Sciences. [A Framework for K-12 Science Education](#)

Rapid advances in life sciences are helping to provide biological solutions to societal problems related to food, energy, health, and environment.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2012. A Framework for K-12 Science Education: Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Core Ideas. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/13165>.

Science and Engineering Practices [NGSS](#)

1. Asking questions (for science) and defining problems (for engineering)
4. Analyzing and interpreting data
6. Constructing explanations (for science) and designing solutions (for engineering)
8. Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information

Crosscutting Concepts [NGSS](#)

1. Patterns
2. Cause and Effect

Key Terms/Vocabulary

Behavior health, certification, credentials, salary range, Registered Behavior Technician (RBT), paraprofessional, Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB), behavioral health team, Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP), naturalist teaching, discrete trial training, autism, traumatic brain injury, ADHD, dementia, clinical mental health counselor, substance abuse counselor, college counselor, marriage & family counselor, Licensed Mental Health Practitioner (LMHP), Doctor of Medicine (MD), Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO), psychiatrist, psychologist, psychiatric nurse practitioner, physician assistant, primary care provider, psychotherapy, talk therapy, brain stimulation, electroconvulsive therapy, deep brain stimulation, addiction, substance use disorder, dual diagnosis, perinatal, geriatric.

Science Standards

Nebraska College and Career Ready Science Standards 2024 [Nebraska Science Standards](#)

- SC.HSP.6.5. Gather, analyze, and communicate evidence of the relationship between structures and physiological processes of the nervous system.

National Consortium for Health Science Education [NCHSE](#)

- 1.1 Human anatomy and physiology
- 1.2 Diseases and disorders
- 2.1 Concepts of effective communication
- 3.1 Healthcare delivery systems
- 4.1 Personal traits of the health professional
- 4.2 Employability skills
- 4.3 Career decision-making
- 4.4 Employability preparation
- 8.1 Healthcare teams
- 9.1 Healthy Behaviors
- 9.2 Healthcare Across the Lifespan

Nebraska Health Science Standards

- HS.HS.1.3.b. Describe the professional roles and responsibilities of behavioral health providers: psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric physician assistants, psychiatric nurses, counselors and licensed mental health practitioners, licensed drug and alcohol counselors, marriage and family counselors, direct care professionals, school psychologists, and social workers.
- HS.HS.2.3.a. Describe a behavioral health career path.
- HS.HS.2.3.b. Explain a personal career interest area, employment outlook, salary scale, and Nebraska licensing requirements.
- HS.HS.2.3.c. Describe the challenges and opportunities for behavioral health careers in Nebraska.
- HS.HS.2.3.e. Describe the educational path to a career in behavioral health.

- HS.HS.7.1.a. Compare various careers from multiple pathways.

Nebraska Family and Consumer Education Standards

- HSE.HS.27.1. Apply career-readiness skills and identify potential career opportunities
- HSE.MS.8.3 Explain the connections between education, career, and lifetime earnings.
- HSE.MS.8.12 Use the Nebraska Career Education Model, Nebraska Career Connections and related resources to investigate and learn about the world of work.
- HSE.HS.35.1.a. Identify careers and roles within the educational system.
- HSE.HS.35.1.c. Investigate the educational and experience requirements for each profession.

Extensions of the lesson

To help students become more familiar with the Key Terms of this module, the teacher can use the vocabulary list for a classroom Word Wall or integrate the vocabulary into review sessions.

Encourage students to check current events for the latest news involving mental health.

As student misconceptions become apparent, the teacher may need to reinforce these concepts:

- There are many different careers in the field of behavioral health, involving a wide range of education requirements and salaries.
 - Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) requires a high school diploma plus a 40-hour educational course to prepare for certification. In 2024, the average pay was \$18 per hour.
 - Mental Health Counselor requires 2-4 years in a Master's Degree program before becoming a Licensed Mental Health Practitioner (LMHP). The average annual salary was \$60,080.
 - Psychiatrist requires 12 years of education, including bachelor's degree, medical doctorate, residency, and fellowship. The average annual salary was \$256,930.
- At all of these levels, pay varies depending on years of experience, geographic location, and practice setting.
- Psychologists, like psychiatrists, earn doctoral degrees. However, they are not physicians—so they don't prescribe medications.
- Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants can diagnose and prescribe, often working closely with psychiatrists to deliver care.
- Primary Care Providers are called “de facto mental health providers” because they frequently manage common mental health concerns in everyday practice.

Enrichment

- Take some time to explore UNMC's [Careers in Healthcare](#) to find out which career possibilities in Behavioral Health Professions catch your attention.
- Search the [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics to find additional information about Behavioral Health Professions.
- Study the [Pathways Brochure](#) from the Behavior Health Education Center of Nebraska (BHECN—pronounced “beacon”, like a beacon of light).
- [Inseparable.us](#) presents a 2023 Access Report: [Improving Mental Health Care](#). This report describes the state-by-state status of access to mental health care in America today.