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Week 6: Behavioral Health: Physiology, Choices, & Community Impact

Module 5: Careers in Behavioral Health

Lesson: Exploring Careers in Behavioral Health

Lesson Overview	
Students explore behavioral health careers by examining the responsibilities, training, and daily work of different professionals. They use evidence from the module to evaluate which careers align with different interests, strengths, and goals. Students apply their understanding to determine which behavioral health career may be a strong fit for them and why.	
Learning Targets	Vocabulary
Compare behavioral health careers based on roles and training. Match patients to the correct professional using evidence. Explain when multiple professionals are needed for care.	Behavioral Health care for mental, emotional, and behavioral needs RBT (Registered Behavior Technician) teaches skills and behaviors under the supervision of a behavior analyst Mental Health Counselor provides therapy and emotional support Psychiatrist medical doctor who can diagnose conditions, provide treatment, and prescribe medication
Materials	Instructional Notes
Module Student response sheets Whiteboard or chart paper	This lesson builds on students' prior learning about behavioral health by shifting the focus from understanding behavioral health concepts to understanding the professionals who support people experiencing behavioral, emotional, and mental health challenges. The conceptual focus is helping students understand that behavioral health careers are not interchangeable. Each profession serves a different role, requires different training, and contributes differently to patient care. Students move from thinking about helping professions in general to evaluating how specific career responsibilities align with individual interests and strengths. Students may initially believe that all behavioral health professionals perform similar work or that doctors provide all behavioral health services. Through evidence gathering and discussion, students discover differences in training, responsibilities, and career pathways while recognizing that many patients benefit from a team approach.



Learning Experience

8 min	Opening	The teacher displays the prompt: "Imagine you could spend your future career helping people every day. What kind of helping work sounds most interesting to you?" The teacher then displays the choices: Teaching people new skills; Helping people work through emotions and challenges; Diagnosing problems and creating treatment plans. Students make an independent choice and explain their thinking. The teacher facilitates partner discussion followed by a brief whole-class share-out. Students select the type of helping work that interests them most. They write, "I would most enjoy _____ because _____." Students discuss their thinking with a partner and listen to other perspectives and consider similarities and differences. The teacher presents the prompt: What strengths or interests make this option appealing to you? Students identify a personal strength, interest, or preference connected to their choice and explain their reasoning.
15 min	Module	Focus: Students gather evidence about the responsibilities, training requirements, and work settings of behavioral health professionals in order to evaluate different career pathways. Guiding Questions: • What are the primary responsibilities of an RBT? • What are the primary responsibilities of a mental health counselor? • What are the primary responsibilities of a psychiatrist? • How is the training pathway for each career similar and different? • What types of people or situations does each professional typically work with? • Which career responsibilities seem most interesting to you? Why? • What strengths might help someone be successful in each career? • Why might some people need support from more than one behavioral health professional?
15 min	Application	The teacher tells students they will use evidence from the module to reflect on which behavioral health career currently seems like the best fit for their interests, strengths, and future goals. The teacher reminds students that all reasoning should be supported with evidence from the module. In Step 1: Consider Your Interests, students review the careers of RBT, Mental Health Counselor, and Psychiatrist. They identify which career responsibilities sound most interesting to them and write: "One responsibility that interests me is _____." In Step 2: Consider Your Strengths, students think about a strength, skill, or personal quality that could help them succeed in a helping profession. They write: "One strength I have is _____." In Step 3: Choose a Career Fit, students determine which behavioral health career currently seems like the strongest match for their interests and strengths. They use



		evidence from the module to support their choice and write: “The career that best fits me right now is _____ because _____.” In Step 4: Explain Your Thinking, students describe why this career appeals to them and explain how their strengths connect to the work involved. They write: “I would enjoy this career because _____.” and “I think I would be successful in this career because _____.”
2 min	Reflection	How did your understanding of behavioral health careers change during this lesson?
2 min	Career Connections	Behavioral health professionals help people improve their emotional, mental, and behavioral well-being in many different ways. Some professionals teach skills and behaviors, some provide counseling and emotional support, and others diagnose conditions and manage treatment. Understanding these careers helps students explore possible future pathways while recognizing how healthcare teams work together to meet the needs of patients and communities.