BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

A second-year medical resident can treat 80 percent of people with a heart condition by giving simple guidance: Eat better, get more exercise and sleep, and stop smoking. Easy, right? The problem is, knowing what to do is much easier than knowing how to do it. Lifestyle habits are engrained from years of subtle abuse to our bodies. In that way, these aren’t issues for medicine; they’re issues for psychology.

Many cutting-edge topics in health today involve behavioral health—lifestyle choices. Medical doctors aren’t trained to tackle these, but Illinois Tech Behavioral Health and Wellness graduates are.

In this program you will learn how lifestyle choices impact health over time, and how to design and implement behavior change programs to promote healthy living, most often related to nutrition, exercise, and tobacco and alcohol use.

Our department’s position within a tech-focused university allows you to study behavioral health and wellness while taking advantage of Illinois Tech’s technology-focused, scientific, and innovative environment.

B.S. IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS AT ILLINOIS TECH

Illinois Tech’s distinctive Behavioral Health and Wellness undergraduate program is interdisciplinary and combines coursework in psychology, sociology, political science, and nutritional science. You also have the option to customize your degree with an elective specialty track in health psychology, public health, or nutrition.

As a student in Lewis College of Human Sciences, you can also apply for a special program that allows you to complete your B.S. in Behavioral Health and Wellness and receive your J.D. from Chicago-Kent College of Law in six years.

RESEARCH—EVEN AS AN UNDERGRAD!

Behavioral Health and Wellness undergraduates at Illinois Tech have the opportunity to work on major research right from the start. In addition to your capstone project, you can get involved with faculty research projects, conduct your own independent research, or pursue an external research opportunity.

LEARN TO INNOVATE IN IPROS

In Illinois Tech’s signature Interprofessional Projects (IPRO) Program, you’ll work with students from various majors to solve real-world problems. Recent IPROs with a behavioral health and wellness angle include:

- Applying mobile technology to enhance psychological research on depressive symptoms
- Social innovation for community wealth building
- Revitalizing an existing downtown through an urban agriculture redevelopment
- Developing a plan to address a food desert in a Chicago neighborhood

RESEARCH ON THE EDGE

Our faculty are pushing the boundaries of what we know in many areas of health, behavior, and psychology.

Arlen Moller is working on projects related to creating games for health, using principles from psychology and the video game industry to make exercise more fun. One project is related to creating a version of online fantasy sports that rewards participants after weeks when they’ve completed physical activities and penalizes their fantasy sports teams when they haven’t exercised during the week.

Patrick Corrigan has several research projects related to addressing health disparities in minority populations. One project, Inspiring Change, a community-based participatory research project, is focused on improving health disparities among African Americans with severe mental illness. Another project, which received a five-year, $2.5 million grant, is focused on addressing obesity in African Americans with severe mental illness.

Alissa Haedt-Matt studies eating disorders. She is currently working on a project related to overeating and overweight children.
Our graduates are far from ordinary.  
But we expect them to be extraordinary.

With a Behavioral Health and Wellness degree from Illinois Tech, you will be prepared to innovate and lead in a variety of fields where relevant skills, scientific thinking, and tech experience will give you an advantage. You'll also be prepared to study in a wide range of graduate training programs at the master's and doctoral levels, including health psychology/behavioral medicine, clinical psychology, counseling, rehabilitation psychology, social psychology, public health administration, public policy, social work, nursing, nutrition, epidemiology, and others.

- Behavioral health and wellness coaching
- Hospital administration, health insurance, and health tech startups
- Policy analysis
- Advocacy
- Design firms, think tanks, and other businesses that do work in the behavioral health and wellness arena
- City and national departments of public health

Our graduates are working at companies such as Benecure and Epic, and have been accepted to graduate schools including Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine and Northwestern’s counseling program.

Meg Murphy (Psychology ’16, M.S. Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling ’17) — Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor at Helping Hand Center

Tomí Sobayo (Psychology ’16) — Employed at Epic, which develops electronic medical records software used worldwide

Lorenzo Washington (Psychology ’18) — Master’s student in rehabilitation and mental health counseling at Illinois Tech

Customize Your Educational Path

“I started as a biomedical engineering major, but I wanted a major that was tailored to me rather than trying to fit the mold of my major. Sustainability is my passion and where I know I can make the most change in the world, and the more classes I took in Behavioral Health and Wellness, the more I realized it’s where I wanted to be.

At Illinois Tech the professors aren’t conventional. They teach using state-of-the-art course materials, and share their research and experience. My specialization, Nutrition, has amazing professors. In all the classes my professors shared everything they were presenting at research conferences. It was great because I felt like I was part of something new.

Illinois Tech provides students a lot of opportunities to succeed—contests, special programs, research. One of my favorite things about Illinois Tech is the IPRO Program. In IPRO, my team worked with a local school to create a nutrition curriculum that involved incorporating cooking into the math classes. IPRO is an amazing program that gives you experience and exposure to different levels of management, and the opportunity to do real-time, real-world work. You’re not just writing papers about something—you’re doing it.

Attending Illinois Tech was the best decision of my life. I was able to make connections and build a network. The opportunities at Illinois Tech made it all worth it.”

— Diana Cimino-Cordon (Behavioral Health and Wellness ’16)

Diana works as the coordinator for Greencorps Chicago, a youth program that promotes environmental stewardship of the city’s natural spaces by training and employing Chicago’s youth in horticulture, urban forestry, and bicycle safety and repair. During her senior year at Illinois Tech she interned for Plant Chicago, assisting the local nonprofit in aligning its youth education program to meet Next Generation Science Standards.

Kaysha Henry (Psychology ’15) — Graduate student in public health at Saint Louis University