

Name

Class

Date

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Chapter 01: Essay

Essay

1. What is the basic premise of health psychology?

ANSWER: A good answer to this question will:

- Describe the premise of health psychology to apply psychological principles and research to the enhancement of health and the treatment and prevention of illness.
- Mention the importance of biological factors, social conditions, and personality traits within the context of health.

2. The report entitled *Healthy People 2020* outlines a number of specific goals to improve access to health services, eliminate health disparities, reduce chronic diseases, improve health in people of all ages, and prevent injuries and violence in the United States. Think of one or more of the goals from the textbook and write what steps you can personally take to work toward this goal. For the same target goal, think of steps your local community could take. Write a persuasive letter to your mayor about a specific initiative you want to implement in your city to meet your chosen target goal.

ANSWER: A good answer to this question will:

- Focus on one or more of the target goals from Table 1.1 or Table 1.2.
- Articulate specific examples of personal behavioral changes that align with the target goals.
- Persuasively argue for the implementation of a city-wide initiative that aligns with the target goals.

3. Outline the central historical views of illness and health, with specific examples spanning from the prehistoric period to the present day, including both key theorists and medical developments.

ANSWER: A good answer to this question will include:

- The points covered in Figure 1.1.
- The beliefs that illness was caused by evil spirits (prehistoric period), was seen as punishment by the gods or divine forces (ancient Egyptians and Middle Ages), was due to an imbalance of bodily humors and/or disruption of natural forces (ancient Greeks and Chinese), and the development of the pathogenic theory of the ancient Romans.
- The concept of disease as a physical condition of the body (Renaissance) and as caused by microscopic organisms (1800s); and the ideas that health states could be influenced by the mind and emotions (1920s) as well as the influence of the social environment in health and wellness (twenty-first century).
- The contributions of theorists and researchers, including Hippocrates, Andreas Vesalius, René Descartes, John Fothergill, John Hunter, William Morton, Wilhelm Roentgen, Franz Alexander, and Sigmund Freud.
- Theories that were contributed by and built upon from Chinese, Indian, and Native American cultures.

4. Explain how Descartes's concept of dualism influenced medical science and current views of health and wellness in Western and non-Western medical practice and theory.

ANSWER: A good answer to this question will include:

- The development of dualism as a theory that separates the mind and body for treatment.
- The theoretical and disciplinary separation of psychology and medicine as fields of study.
- How treatment of mind and body (psychosomatic medicine) encompasses and encourages a holistic (multifaceted) approach to health.

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- How psychosomatic medical practice ushered in and embraced a view of health and illness as multifactorial in nature.

5. Compare and contrast the biomedical and biopsychosocial models of health and illness. Discuss the implications of accepting and adopting one model over the other in regard to understanding health and illness.

ANSWER: A good answer to this question will address the:

- Basic tenets and assumptions of the biomedical model and the biopsychosocial model of health and wellness, using appropriate terminology.
- Reductionistic nature of health and wellness and how the models address the limitations of a reductionistic or mechanistic view of health and wellness.
- Additional benefits of considering the social environment in diagnosis and/or treatment of health disorders.

6. How did the rise of certain major epidemiological, theoretical, and philosophical trends lead to the emergence of the first four goals in the field of health psychology?

ANSWER: A good answer to this question will include:

- Information contained in Table 1.3.
- Specific mention of increased life expectancy, the rise in lifestyle disorders, the dramatic increases in health care costs, and the rethinking of the application of the biomedical model.
- How these trends contributed to the goals of health psychology at its inception—specifically, to scientifically study the etiology of specific diseases, promote health, prevent and treat illness, and promote public health policy and the improvement of the health care system.

7. Describe in detail the different contexts considered by health psychologists. Give a specific example for each context, and ground your example in one particular perspective as mentioned in the text.

ANSWER: A good answer to this question will:

- Describe the biological, psychological, and social contexts that health psychologists consider in their work.
- Use clear, unambiguous, and appropriate examples that demonstrate a thorough understanding of each context, with critical consideration of at least one specific perspective (e.g., life-course, gender) theoretically grounded within the identified context.

8. Describe how the ecological-systems approach emphasizes the mutual influences among the biological, psychological, and social contexts of health.

ANSWER: A good answer to this question will:

- Describe the ecological-systems approach as based on the idea that our well-being is best understood as a hierarchy of systems in which each system is composed of smaller subsystems and simultaneously is part of larger, more encompassing systems.
- Mention how the individual is at the center of concentric rings that represent different interacting systems.
- Give examples of personal characteristics, biological influences (the endocrine system, the cardiovascular system, the nervous system, and the immune system), and larger systems (families, schools and workplaces, neighborhoods, communities, societies, and cultures) and how these relate to facets of well-being.

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9. Your friend Kara is interested in pursuing a career in health psychology. Outline the different educational trajectories available to Kara. Considering the different fields, what will she learn and what will each degree enable her to do? Which path would you recommend to her? Why?

ANSWER: A good answer to this question will:

- Mention at least three of the following: the medical or nursing field, clinical or counseling psychology, nutrition, physical therapy, social work, occupational therapy, and public health.
- Describe the requirements needed to pursue each field, the main tenets of the field, and the professional role of each.
- Persuasively advocate for one particular occupation or field of study, taking into consideration the benefits and drawbacks of the available options.

10. The textbook outlines several specific reasons why attending college is associated with higher levels of health. Given the information presented in the chapter, consider whether the populations who experience health disparities are linked with populations who lack access to higher education. Are people healthier because they have gone to college, or are healthier people more likely to attend college? How can someone who doesn't attend college reap the same health benefits as someone who does?

ANSWER: A good answer to this question will:

- Analyze the health benefits of attending college, drawing examples from "Your Health Assets" on page 28 (thinking skills, health literacy, higher income, healthier lifestyle).
- Discuss the many factors that influence health (gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, culture, socioeconomic status, genetics, personality traits) and how these are associated with college attendance and the health disparities mentioned on page 5 of the textbook.
- Provide at least one example that aligns with one of the health benefits associated with attending college as mentioned on page 28 of the textbook.