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10th Edition



Understanding Human Behavior

A Guide for Health Care Professionals



Alyson Honeycutt

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A Guide for Health Care Professionals

Alyson Honeycutt, M.A., N.C.C.



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***Understanding Human Behavior: A Guide for
Health Care Professionals, Tenth Edition***

Alyson Honeycutt

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Preface

Introduction

Understanding Human Behavior: A Guide for Health Care Professionals is designed to assist students in health care education programs to learn basic principles of human behavior. These principles provide a basis for increased self-understanding and improved interpersonal relationships. With technological advances in diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, it is easy for a health care professional to focus on procedures and routines. Patients, however, want personalized care that conveys respect for the patient as a person.

Patients' expectations are more likely to be met when health care professionals aim for effective interaction with each patient. By consciously attending to each interaction with patients, the health care professional will experience greater job satisfaction.

Organization

Understanding Human Behavior: A Guide for Health Care Professionals, Tenth Edition, is organized to proceed from relatively simple information to more complex concepts, from the known to the unknown, and from application to self to application in a variety of interpersonal situations. For that reason, Chapters 1 through 18 are designed for *sequential study*.

Chapters 19-21 do not follow the sequential pattern. Chapter 19 describes historical content and current developments in health care; Chapter 20 explores the nature of healing and suggests guidelines for evaluating the legitimacy of various therapies. Each of these chapters can be studied independently at any point in the course. Chapter 21 introduces the importance of managing stress and can potentially be assigned early in the program, so students can start practicing stress management. Undertaking the role of a student, introduction to the clinical setting, and care of the sick all include stressful experiences. Preparing to become a health care professional includes learning the importance of self-care, and stress management is an essential component of self-care.

Section I (chapters 1-3) provides an orientation to the role of health care professional, the importance of accepting each patient as a worthwhile human being, the challenge of striving for self-understanding, and guidelines for personal and professional growth. Section II (chapters 4-8) presents information about various influences on human behavior: the role of heredity, basic physical and psychological needs, developmental factors, role of the social environment, emotions and their power to influence behavior, and adjustment as a composite of all these factors. Section III (chapters 9-12) presents more complex concepts related to human behavior: stressful events that occur in the lives of most people, domestic violence and bullying, and the mental and emotional effects of traumatic experiences. Many victims of a traumatic event subsequently require health care. For both personal and professional reasons, health care professionals need to be aware of the mental/emotional and physical effects of these traumatic experiences, as well as the potential for long-term adverse effects on the victim. The remainder of Section III covers other factors related to one's adjustment: common defense mechanisms, inner conflict, and frustration.

Section IV (chapters 13-15) explores the components of effective communication. Practice exercises are designed to help students become better communicators by improving their skills in sending, receiving, and observing verbal and nonverbal exchanges. These exercises can involve all students and be accommodated readily within a class period. Section V (chapters 16-18) provides an overview of practices in relation to death and dying and legislation related to the rights of patients to participate in health care decisions, especially those related to end-of-life care. The grief process is discussed in detail, with guidelines for assisting the bereaved.

Section VI (chapters 19-22) is designed to encourage students to accept the changes that inevitably will occur in the dynamic health care system. Chapter 19 provides a historical overview that reflects the roots of current practices, including holistic health care. Chapter 20 describes the emergence of the holistic emphasis and spotlights several complementary healing modalities that have gained widespread acceptance with the public. The reader is encouraged to maintain an open mind in conjunction with a healthy skepticism in evaluating various treatment modalities. Chapter 21 addresses stress management.

Changes to the Tenth Edition

Understanding Human Behavior, Tenth Edition, includes the following updates and additions:

- In Section I: Becoming a Health Care Professional, Chapter 3 includes an expanded discussion of growth mindset.
- In Section II, Understanding Human Behavior, Chapter 5 describes the connection between nutrition and resistance to illness, and Chapter 6 contains an exploration of the need for balance between independence and interdependence. Chapter 8 provides an expanded discussion of positive emotions, including gratitude and joy, and addresses the influence of culture on the expression of emotion. Chapter 8 includes a discussion of how social media can impact adjustment, and Chapter 9 addresses the influence of national and world events, including the COVID-19 pandemic, on adjustment.
- In Section III: Behavior and Problems in Living, Chapter 10 describes the traumatic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter 11 includes updated information about substance use in the US, and Chapter 12 now includes a discussion of discrimination can be a source of frustration.
- In Section IV: Effective Human Relations and Communication, Chapter 13 now includes a discussion of how financial concerns and cultural background impact behavior of patients and their families. Chapter 14 provides practical strategies for setting personal matters aside while at work. Chapter 16 discusses cultural differences in how individuals express grief.
- In Section V: Death and Loss, Chapter 18 discusses how financial concerns impact family decisions about end-of-life care.
- Section VI: Trends in Health Care, Chapter 20 is streamlined, providing guidelines for evaluating the validity of alternative and complementary treatments. Chapter 21 explores the connection between stress and health.

Instructor & Student Resources

Additional instructor and student resources for this product are available online. Instructor assets include an Instructor's Manual, Educator's Guide, PowerPoint® slides, Solution and Answer Guide, and a test bank powered by Cognero®. Student assets include PowerPoint® slides. Sign up or sign in at **www.cengage.com** to search for and access this product and its online resources.

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Using *Understanding Human Behavior*

The effectiveness of *Understanding Human Behavior* depends on the instructor's choice of activities: class time to clarify various concepts and specific activities to encourage student participation, especially the sharing of experiences, discussion of problem situations, and selection of effective behavior for real and hypothetical situations. The instructor's own creative use of the text material is the key to students' achievement.

No one ever completely masters human relations skills. Those who sincerely want to relate effectively to others must become lifelong students of human behavior. They must consciously practice human relations skills in order to improve their sensitivity to the possible meaning of observed behavior and select appropriate responses. The immediate challenge is to gain as much as possible from this course, as a foundation for the lifelong challenge of developing a high level of skill in human relations.

About the Author

Alyson Honeycutt, M.A., N.C.C., is a National Certified Counselor, holds a License in School Counseling from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and has advanced degrees from North Carolina State University at Raleigh and Appalachian State University. She has taught parenting and literacy classes, has been an instructor in English at the college level, has taught students with emotional and behavioral disabilities, has served as a district-level behavior support coordinator in the public schools, and has worked as a health and wellness coach and yoga instructor.

Reviewers of the Tenth Edition

Brett Brandon, RMA, AA, BS, MPAS
Allied Health Instructor
Sarasota, FL

Elizabeth MacQuillan, PhD, RDN, CHSE
Program Director and Assistant Professor
Grand Rapids, MI

Beverly Marquez, M.S., RHIA
Director
Sedalia, MO

Kat Slusser, PhD, RN
Faculty, Program Coordinator
Santa Rosa, CA

Joshua Snyder, MBA, EMT-P
Clinical Coordinator
McKinney, TX

Section I

Becoming a Health Care Professional

This section introduces some of the challenges, responsibilities, and satisfactions of being a health care professional. People from all walks of life require health care. As a health care professional, you will be challenged to serve each person effectively. Section I is designed to help you become aware of the realities of a health career and to help you learn strategies to succeed as both a student and a health care professional.

Chapter 1



Challenges and Responsibilities of Health Care Professionals

Objectives

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Describe the challenges and satisfactions of working in health care.
- Explain the importance of client-centered care for health care professionals.
- Explain how your study habits as a student relate to your future work habits as a health care professional.
- Explain the meaning of **empowerment** and apply the concept of empowerment to real-life situations.

Key Terms

Client-centered care
Empowerment

Self-confidence
Self-reliance

Standards of
performance

Congratulations! You have decided to become a health care professional. During your educational program, you will have the satisfaction of learning new information and developing new skills. As a health care professional, you will be able to make a significant contribution to your community. This chapter introduces some of the challenges, responsibilities, and satisfactions of being a health care professional.

Challenges and Satisfactions in Health Care

Your career choice indicates that you like people and have a strong desire to help others. Although you could possibly make more money in some other field, a career that provides opportunities to help others may be very rewarding. You will also be part of one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world. As you gain skills and experience, you will have opportunities to work in many different locations and different types of facilities. Qualified health care professionals are expected to be in high demand in the future.

Challenges

Health care providers have always faced challenges, including long work hours, staff shortages, and potential job burnout. In recent years, events such as changes in the health insurance system and the COVID-19 pandemic have increased these challenges. Many health care facilities experience high turnover, and health care professionals often cite stress, burnout, and long hours as factors in their decision to leave their jobs. Yet many health care professionals also report finding great satisfaction in their work. The habits and attitudes you practice now as a student will impact your effectiveness and your satisfaction in your work later.



FIGURE 1-1 Qualified health care professionals are expected to be in high demand in the future.

Approval versus Inner Satisfaction

We all admire those who can do something extremely well; each of us would like to be admired by others. We enjoy receiving approval from others, yet this good feeling is only temporary. Athletes may enjoy hearing the cheers of the crowd, but the deepest satisfaction comes from knowing that they performed with great skill. True satisfaction is an inner feeling of pride in doing something well, regardless of whether the performance is applauded by others.

As a health care professional, you will find your greatest satisfaction in trying to give each patient appropriate care. By meeting each patient's needs to the best of your ability, you will complete the day with an inner feeling of pride. The opposite approach—to view your work as a series of assignments to be completed so that you can get off work or go on break—results in finishing the day by saying, “Whew, I’m glad that’s over!” Stop now and consider this very important question: How will you approach your work? As a challenge that provides satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment? Or as work you must do to get a paycheck?

Setting Goals for Inner Satisfaction

Performing your work well can provide **self-confidence** and a deep sense of satisfaction that is not dependent on praise from others. By working to improve your performance each day, you will increase your level of skill. Excellence lies in that little bit of extra effort given to achieve a superior performance. *In the health field, that little bit of extra effort may make the difference between safe and unsafe practice.*

The habits you form as a student carry over into your performance as a health care professional. Now is the time to develop habits that will lead to skillful performance, self-confidence, and pride in your work.

Setting Standards of Performance

Only you can set the standards that will guide your performance over the coming years. At times, you may be tempted to take a shortcut. Sometimes a piece of equipment will be contaminated and obtaining sterile materials to complete the procedure will require extra effort and time. Only you will know whether or not sterile technique was violated and the contaminated equipment was used—unless, of course, the patient develops an infection as a result. Your own standards should include accuracy in measurements, observations, and reporting. Your **standards of performance** determine whether you experience the inner satisfaction that comes from knowing the job was well done.

One key skill that will serve you well as a student and as a professional is the ability to focus your full attention on the task at hand. Modern life is full of distractions, and most of us are accustomed to multitasking. Many students complete assignments while having a conversation, watching a video, or texting a friend. Consider this now: Would an effective health care provider be distracted while checking a patient's vital signs or administering medication? If you make it a habit to set study goals and give each task your full attention, you will be better equipped to perform your job duties effectively in the future.

For Discussion and Reflection

Do you often multitask, for example, by completing assignments while checking social media or texting friends? In the future, what types of tasks might need your full attention, without distractions?

When making that little bit of extra effort to do tasks well has become a habit, it becomes an essential part of your performance. Thus, excellence as a health care professional will depend upon setting high standards of performance for yourself now.

Excellence and Patient Safety

In the health field, all professionals should strive for excellence. *Anything less than excellence can endanger the patient.* The nurse should give the correct medicine to each patient. The medical assistant should use correct technique in all situations that require asepsis. The laboratory assistant should report test results correctly; the dental assistant should sterilize instruments correctly; the ambulance attendant should move the accident victim correctly. *Careless or incorrect performance can have disastrous effects for the patient.*

Providing Client-Centered Care

As a health care professional, you will work with many different people, each of whom is a unique individual—a physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual being. Each has a history of experiences, a life within the context of a specific family and community, beliefs and values, and a unique genetic makeup. To provide the best possible care, you will need to show concern about the patient as a person rather than as someone for whom a specified procedure must be carried out (“the knee replacement”).

As a Student

Your commitment to providing quality, **client-centered care** begins now, while you are a student. Your first responsibility as a student is to take full advantage of every opportunity to learn. Try to see the purpose in each assignment; look at it as an *opportunity to learn*, rather than as a chore to complete. With this attitude toward learning, you will not be tempted to skip class without good reason.

Your second responsibility is to decide what standards will guide your performance as a student. Imagine that your school has set a certain grade, such as 70, as passing in your program. Now imagine yourself saying, “I’ll study this material until I know it well enough to make 75.” In many courses of study, a grade of 75 is acceptable; a deficiency in the student’s knowledge of subject matter is unlikely to cause harm to someone else.

In an allied health course, however, the implications of “just passing” are much more serious. Any gaps in your knowledge and performance of skills can affect every patient served. Do you want your future services to patients to be of “just passing” quality? Or do you wish to give the very best service you can give? If your educational program is preparing you to provide health services, can you be content to learn only 70 percent of what your teachers expect you to learn? Can you be content to develop your skills just enough to get a passing grade in a laboratory course?

For Discussion and Reflection

1. Explain the importance of setting high standards for yourself as a student and as a health care professional.
2. Tell about a time you felt proud of something you worked hard to accomplish. What made your accomplishment so satisfying?

Of course, you won't earn perfect scores on every assignment or test, nor should you expect to. Grades can be viewed as feedback from your instructor about what material you have mastered and what you need to review. Make it a habit to look back over your graded tests and assignments to see which topics you need to revisit. If you are uncertain, ask your instructor to discuss the test or assignment with you, not in an effort to raise your grade, but in order to increase your understanding and skills. The mark of a good student is not someone who receives a high score every time, but rather someone who uses each assignment, especially difficult ones, as an opportunity to learn more.

Practicing Habits That Lead to Success

In setting standards for achievement, plan to *do your best*, rather than trying to be the best student in the class. How can you do your best? Develop a study routine and establish the habits that work best for you. To get started, consider the following guidelines:

- Tell family and friends that you have set aside a certain time of day as your study period. Do not allow them to violate your schedule by interrupting you unless there is an emergency.
- At the beginning of each study period, write out a list of specific things you need to complete; then rank the items in order of importance. Complete task #1 (most important) first, and then move on to task #2. If one of the tasks is something you dislike but must get done, let it be task #1 so that you get it out of the way.
- If your list of study assignments is too long to complete today, set up tomorrow's list so today's remaining assignments come first; then put the items on that list out of your mind until tomorrow and give your full attention to today's list.
- Set up a calendar or special notebook for assignments, due dates for projects or reports, and test dates. Note on your calendar the dates/times you will work on specific assignments or study for a test. By planning, you can avoid last-minute rushes to meet a deadline.

For Discussion and Reflection

What study techniques have been most effective for you in the past? What challenges do you foresee in creating a study routine?

Practicing Empowerment

Adults should control most aspects of their lives. During adolescence, learning to make decisions is an important developmental task. If you entered adulthood with a tendency to let your parents, spouse, friends, or anyone else make decisions for you, it is time to recognize that you are giving away your power—the power to be a **self-reliant**, responsible adult.

When you are planning to eat out with a friend, who decides which restaurant? Do you usually say, “Oh, I don't care—you choose”? Does your significant other give you a choice? If you do not participate in small decisions that affect you, how can you expect others to include you in big decisions?

How does empowerment affect you? Suppose you have informed the family that your study hour will begin at 9:00 each evening. During the second day of this plan, your

teenager calls you to the phone at 9:15; the caller is a relative, who talks about their problems for a full half hour. Two days later, your 10-year-old opens the door at 9:30 and says, “I need a note for my teacher about the field trip next Monday.” Each time you permit these violations of your study hour, you are giving away your power. You gave your two children the power to interrupt your study hour. You gave your relative the power to use 30 minutes of your study time for their own purposes. You probably responded to these requests because you are accustomed to meeting the needs of others, even if doing so interferes with your own needs.

When you take an active role in making decisions, you are *taking responsibility for your life*. If you have not been in the habit of making your own decisions, you can start claiming your power by requiring others to respect your needs. For example, after informing all members of your family that a certain time is your study time, do not permit any violations to occur. Remind those who interrupt you that you are not available during study hour. If you are consistent, the interruptions will eventually stop.

Then you can use the same approach with another of your needs. You may choose to make the next decision about where to eat or which movie to see, instead of allowing someone else to make that decision. You may wish to inform your partner or friend that you want to be involved in any decisions that affect you. This change will not occur rapidly; be content with small changes initially. By persisting, you will eventually gain more control over your life. Do not be surprised if others resist your decision, especially if you are just beginning to participate in making decisions. Give your family and friends time to accept your change in behavior. Ideally, decision making is a give-and-take situation. Sometimes your decision is accepted, whereas at other times another person’s decision prevails.



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FIGURE 1-2 Empowerment contributes to patients’ self-esteem and sense of well-being.

As a health care professional, you should also recognize the importance of empowerment to patients' self-esteem and sense of well-being. Patients who are dependent on others for their personal needs may express anger about their helplessness. Many patients need help in regaining some control over their life situations. By respecting their wishes and involving patients in decisions, *when appropriate*, you contribute to feelings of empowerment.

Choosing to enter this educational program for the health field was an important decision in your life. Now, it is time to make another decision—what kind of health care professional will you be? Excellent? Or “just passing”? Remember, the standards of performance that will characterize you as a health care professional will be influenced by the standards you set for yourself now.

For Discussion and Reflection

Sometimes even a self-reliant person has an experience that gives rise to feelings of helplessness or at least requires asking for help. For each situation below, describe one or more actions that would indicate self-reliance rather than dependence on others.

- a. You have a flat tire on the way to class.
- b. You have locked your keys in the car.
- c. You are going to lunch with two classmates and realize that you left your wallet at home.

Activities

1. Interview someone who works in health care to ask about what challenges they experience in their job and what they find satisfying about their job.
2. Describe the steps you can take as a student to prepare yourself to provide client-centered care in your future work.
- 3a. Complete each of the following using Worksheet A (see page 11) at the end of this chapter.
 - a. List the things you *have to do* each day.
 - b. List the things you *have to do* each week, but not every day.
 - c. List the things you *have to do* occasionally.
 - d. Beside each item in a, b, and c, write the name of someone who could help you complete that task, at least some of the time. For example, could you and a friend rideshare so that you alternate days picking your children up from day care or school?
- 3b. Use Worksheet B (see page 12) at the end of this chapter to develop a tentative study plan. Note times you have class, work, or other commitments. Decide when you will study each day, and when you will devote time to other tasks or hobbies. Try this plan for two weeks. If your plan seems to be effective, continue to use it. If it is not effective:
 - a. List problems that interfered with the effectiveness of the plan.
 - b. Modify the plan by changing the schedule, the place where you study, or other details. If other people are part of the problem, try to involve them in developing the “improved plan” to increase the probability of getting their cooperation.