

RDS NW health psychology video transcript

Welcome to one of a series of short videos highlighting the advice expertise of the NIHR Research Design Service North West.

Health psychology researchers are interested in how psychology can be used to enhance health and well-being and in supporting people with health conditions that tend to be thought of as physical illnesses.

We are interested in how we help people to change their behaviour to improve their health – e.g. by becoming more physically active or by stopping smoking.

We help people to cope with illness, for example by helping them to prepare for medical procedures or helping them to manage their illness, or by helping them to cope with emotional aspects of the illness.

We are also interested in improving the healthcare system and supporting health professionals.

For example, we might advise doctors on communication with patients or identify and address barriers health professionals face in carrying out recommended behaviours (for example handwashing, antibiotic prescription)

A key advice area for advisers with health psychology expertise is behaviour change.

Many interventions depend on particular behaviours being carried out.

For example, medication only works if a) the health professional prescribes the appropriate medication, and b) the patient takes the medication at the right time, in the right way.

Education alone is rarely enough to help people to change their behaviour. We all struggle to carry out behaviours that we know we ought to do, so advisers can help with:

- 1) identifying what behaviours need to change
- 2) understanding the barriers and facilitators to carrying out that behaviour, and
- 3) in designing evidence and theory-based interventions to change that behaviour.

Advisers who are experts in health psychology also provide general research design advice. Health Psychology advisers typically have expertise in both quantitative and qualitative research methods as well as in the measurement of health outcomes.

If you would like to apply for free advice from the Research Design Service North West or would like further information then please visit the Research Design Service North West website.