



## Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

*...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland*



# Health Psychology: Behaviour change for health and well-being in adults and children in Northern Ireland

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# Overview of presentation

- What is health psychology
- Health focus in NI /Key targets for health
- Theories of Behaviour Change
- Research at Ulster
- What we need
- The Scottish experience
- Conclusions
- Supporting evidence



# What is health psychology?

British Psychological Society: HP is understanding of :

- the psychological processes of health, illness and health care.
- the application of psychological theory to the promotion and maintenance of health,
- the analysis and improvement of the health care system and health policy formation,
- the prevention of illness and disability and the enhancement of outcomes of those who are ill or disabled.



# Health focus in Northern Ireland

- Reducing health inequalities
- Promoting well-being

Many of the chronic health conditions such as obesity, coronary heart disease and cancers

- Linked to poor lifestyle choices:
  - Smoking
  - Diet
  - Sedentary
  - Alcohol intake

Two thirds of the health budget to treat

A number of health psychology researchers are

working in the area of behaviour change within Northern Ireland.



# Key targets for health:

'Making Life Better' encourages organisation of action around **six themes**:

1. Giving every child the best start:
  - Smoking cessation during pregnancy
  - Increase breast feeding uptake
2. Equipped throughout life
3. Empowering healthy living;
  - Smoking cessation
  - Alcohol intake within a safe level
  - Teenage pregnancy
  - Obesity – adults and children
  - Improved psychological well-being
  - Reduce bp and hypertension
  - Long term chronic health conditions – education/self management
4. Creating the conditions
  - Public health – theory driven health promotion campaigns
5. Empowering communities
  - Social capitol
  - Reducing road deaths – behavioural causes



6. Developing collaboration

# Behaviour change

Processes that shape & regulate behaviour:

- Attitudes and beliefs
- Past behaviour
- Reflection
- Self-regulation
- Social factors:
  - Family/friends
  - Economics

Behaviours linked to mortality and morbidity rates

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# Public Health

Focus on a range of behaviours to change:

- Strategies / interventions

Consider:

- Which one will produce the most cost effective result?
- Who is suitable for?
- What circumstances will promote behaviour change?

Health Psychologists can answer these questions.



# Theories of Behaviour Change

Theoretical models help researchers to understand the factors that influence health behaviour.

Models of health behaviours can also help to identify appropriate methods to change related behaviours.

- Health Beliefs Model
- Theory of Planned Behaviour
- Self Determination Theory
- Health Action Process Approach
- Transtheoretical Model of Behaviour Change
- COM-B model



# Benefits of theoretical models

They provide:

- A description of relevant beliefs
- A framework for research e.g. TPB
  - Elicitation study ( focus groups/interviews)
  - Survey
  - Design & pilot the intervention
- A framework for interventions to change behaviour
  - National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)
    - Behaviour change Wheel
    - Taxonomy of Behaviour Change



# Research at Ulster

## Health Belief Model:

- Predictors of HRT use and supplement use.

## Theory of Planned Behaviour:

- E-cig use in children and adults in NI.
- Breast feeding in adolescents
- Tooth brushing in children
- PA in per, peri and postmenopausal women to meet the DOH Guidelines
- Texting while driving in young adults
- Supplement use – fish oils, soy and iron

## Self Determination Theory:

- Promote PA in older adults that meet the DOH Guidelines

## COM-B:

- “Walk with me”.
- A dietary intervention to promote brain health and cognition



# What we need:

- Greater awareness of health psychology
- Use of health psychology methods to inform policy and practice in Public Health and healthcare services in NI
- Health psychologist posts in NI Health Trusts
  - Funded training for health psychology in NI
  - Placement opportunities for trainees
- Training in Health Psychology for:
  - Nurses
  - Doctors
  - Allied Health Professionals



# The Scottish Model

NHS Education Scotland:

Health Psychologists:

- Helped achieve HEAT targets
- Provision of local plans for health care

Projects:

- Promotion of breast feeding
- Oral health in children
- Sexual health promotion



# The Scottish Model

## Benefits to the NES:

- Sharing best practice
- Linking experts in Health Psychology, Health Boards and Universities
- Networking and stakeholder engagement
- Developing behaviour change research and an evidence base
- Continuity in posts

## Shaping care for older adults

## Developing psychological capacity in care



# Conclusion

- Most chronic illnesses are linked to lifestyle choices
- These are behaviours that can be changed
- Potential to impact on Public Health:
  - Improving NI health
  - Improving health promotion and intervention design
- Health psychologists are experts in:
  - Establishing factors that influencing health behaviours
  - Developing more effective interventions to change behaviour.

# Research evidence, NICE guidance, government directives and National Service Frameworks provide strong arguments for the benefits of providing a health psychology service in clinical areas:

- Cancer (NHS Cancer plan, 2000; NICE Improving Supportive and Palliative Care for Adults with Cancer, 2004)
- Chronic Pain Management (Clinical Standards Advisory Group, 1994)
- Cardiology (NSF Coronary Heart Disease, 2000)
- Diabetes (NSF for Diabetes, 2003)
- Renal Medicine (NSF for Renal Services, 2004; 2005)
- Stroke (NSF for Older People, 2001)
- Chronic fatigue syndrome (MRC, Report of the CFS/ME Working Group, 2002)
- Obesity (NICE Guidelines, 2006)





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