

Public Description for Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology

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Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology is a SPECIALTY in professional psychology that reflects an experimental-clinical approach distinguished by use of principles of human learning and development and theories of cognitive processing to promote meaningful change in maladaptive human behavior and thinking.

Specialized knowledge

Specialized knowledge in applied behavior analysis, behavior therapy, and cognitive therapy is key to the specialty of Cognitive and Behavioral Psychology.

Problems addressed

The empirically supported behavioral and cognitive approaches used in this specialty apply to a wide range of problems: anxiety disorders, personality disorders, depression, substance abuse, health-related problems, childhood behavioral and emotion regulation problems, developmental disorders, academic problems, couple and family problems, serious mental illness, and public health problems.

Populations served

The specialty of behavioral and Cognitive Psychology addresses human problems from infancy/toddlerhood to older adults and serves individuals, couples, families, classrooms, groups, and organizations/agencies; techniques used are applicable to most settings.

Skills and procedures utilized

- Measurement of overt behavior and cognitions
- Case conceptualization based on learning principles and cognitive processing
- Use of empirically supported treatments
- Ongoing assessment of effectiveness and modification of treatment as needed

Commonly used treatments with empirical support include behavior modification, classical conditioning, social learning, cognitive therapy, behavioral skills training, relaxation therapy, mindfulness strategies, acceptance and commitment therapy, and management of behavioral contingencies in the therapy relationship.