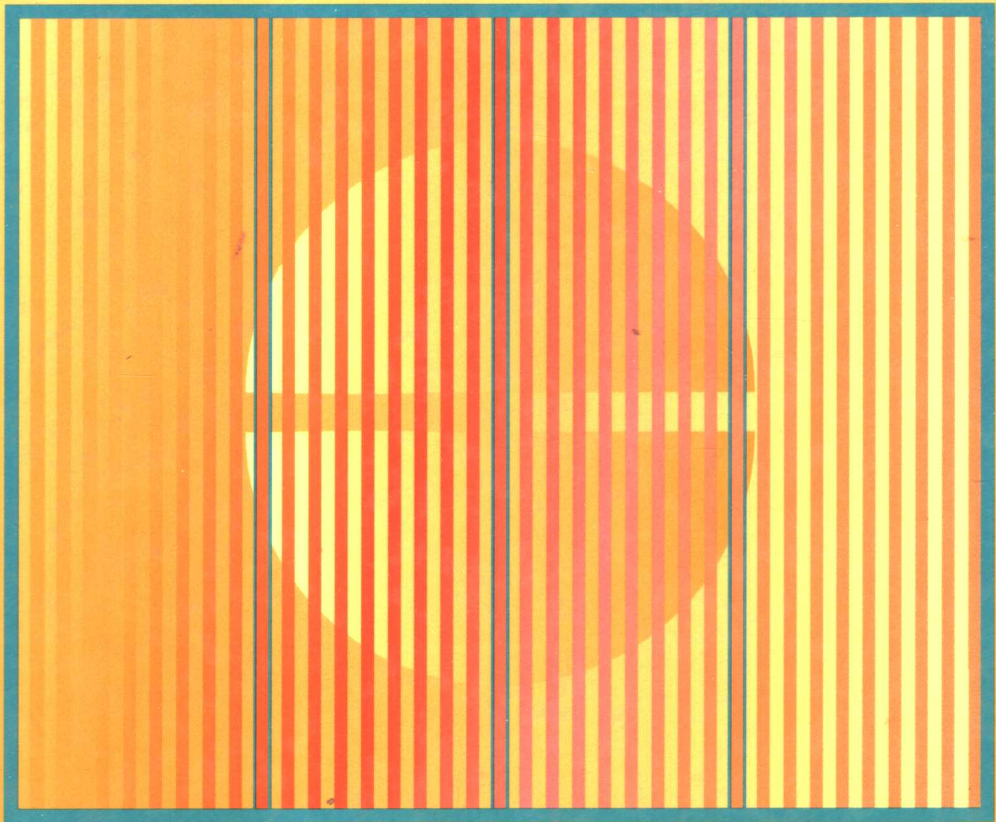


HEALTH Psychology



THIRD EDITION

Shelley E. Taylor

HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

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Shelley E. Taylor

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HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

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PREFACE

When I wrote the first edition of *Health Psychology* nearly ten years ago, the task was much simpler than is now the case. Health psychology was new and relatively small. In the last decade, the field has mushroomed, and great research advances have been made. Chief among these developments has been the increasing use and refinement of the biopsychosocial model: the study of health issues from the standpoint of biological, psychological, and social factors acting together. Increasingly, research has attempted to identify the physiological pathways by which such psychosocial factors as stress may exert an adverse effect on health, and by which such potentially protective factors as social support may buffer the impact of stress. My goal in the second edition of this text is to convey the increasing sophistication and complexity of the field in a manner that makes it accessible, comprehensible, and exciting to undergraduates, without compromising the scientific nature of the field.

My goals guiding the preparation of this edition were several. The first concerns the nature of the content. Like any science, health psychology is cumulative, building on past research advances to develop new ones. Accordingly, I have tried to present not only the fundamental contributions to the field, but the current form research on these issues takes. Because health psychology is developing and changing so rapidly, it is essential that a text be current. Therefore, I have reviewed not only the recent research in health psychology, but sought to obtain information about many research projects that will not be available in the general literature

for several years. In so doing, I believe this edition is both up to date and oriented toward the future.

A second goal is to portray health psychology appropriately as intimately involved with the problems of our times. AIDS is now a major medical reality, having become one of the leading causes of death among young adults in the United States. The need for such health measures as condom use is readily apparent if we are to stop the spread of this disease. The aging of the population and the shift in numbers toward the later years create unprecedented health needs to which health psychology must respond. Such efforts include the need for a campaign of health promotion for these aging cohorts and an understanding of the psychosocial issues that arise in response to chronic disorders. Research that increasingly implicates health habits in the development of the most prevalent disorders in this country underscores more than ever the importance of modifying problematic health behaviors such as smoking and alcohol consumption. Increasingly, research documents the importance of a healthy diet, regular exercise, and breast self-examination, among other positive health habits for maintaining good health. By expanding the coverage of health promotion issues and integrating them more fully into the later chapters on seeking treatment and managing illness, this edition highlights these developments, forging an integrated presentation of the complex relations among health habits, psychosocial resources, stress and coping, and health and illness outcomes.

Fields that were only just developing when the first edition of this book was prepared now boast substantial and sophisticated research traditions, and these are covered in the new edition. There is now extensive coverage of the developing field of psychoneuroimmunology (Chapter 15). We know more about coping techniques and coping resources for dealing with stressful events than we did a mere five years ago (Chapter 8). Research on the psychosocial factors contributing to the development of coronary artery disease and hypertension has mushroomed (Chapter 14). The third edition of *Health Psychology* especially chronicles and highlights the places where research has advanced the most.

Health psychology is both an applied field and a basic research field. Accordingly, in highlighting the research accomplishments of the field, I have not only tried to present a comprehensive picture of the scientific progress, but also tried to portray the very important applications that have been derived from that body of knowledge. The chapters on health promotion, for example, put particular emphasis on the most promising methods and venues for changing health behaviors in the population. The chapters on chronic diseases highlight how knowledge about the psychosocial causes and consequences of these disorders may be used to intervene with

these populations, first to reduce the likelihood that such disorders will develop, and second to deal effectively with the psychosocial issues that do arise. These applications of the science center around intervention implications for those having difficulty managing the implications of their disorders.

The fact that health psychology has so many direct applications to daily life has led to another important feature of this edition, namely the effort to make the issues addressed in this book relevant to the lives of the student readers. For example, the presentation of stress management is tied directly to how students might manage the stresses associated with college life. The presentation of alcoholism and problem drinking includes sections on college students' alcohol consumption and its modification. Health habits relevant to this age group, such as breast self-examination, testicular self-examination, exercise, and condom use, among others, are highlighted for their relevance to the college population. By providing students with anecdotes, case histories, and specific research examples that are relevant to their own lives, I have attempted to show the students how important this body of knowledge is, not only to their growth as developing students, but also to their lives as young adults. The success of any text depends ultimately upon its ability to communicate clearly to student readers and to spark interest in the field.

Health psychology is a science, and consequently it is important to communicate not only the research itself, but some understanding of how studies were designed and why they were designed that way. The role of research methods and theories to understanding health-related issues is consequently a major theme in the book. Throughout the text, particular studies are singled out and illustrated so that the student may have a sense of how researchers make decisions about how to gather the best data on a problem or how to intervene most effectively.

Throughout the book, I have made an effort to balance general coverage of psychological concepts with coverage of specific health issues. One method of so doing is by presenting groups of chapters, the initial chapters offering general concepts and subsequent chapters applying those concepts to specific health issues. Chapters 3 and 4 discuss general strategies of health promotion, and Chapters 5 and 6 discuss those issues with specific reference to particular health habits, such as alcoholism, smoking, accident prevention, and weight control. Chapters 12 and 13 discuss broad issues that arise in the context of managing chronic and terminal illness. In Chapters 14 and 15, these issues are addressed more concretely with reference to specific disorders, such as heart disease, cancer, and AIDS.

Rather than adopting a particular psychological emphasis

throughout the book, I have attempted to maintain a flexibility in orientation. Because health psychology is taught within all areas of psychology (clinical, social, cognitive, physiological, learning, developmental), material from each of these areas is included in the text, so that it can be accommodated to the orientation of each instructor. Consequently, not all material in the book is relevant for all courses. Successive chapters of the book build on each other but do not depend on each other. Thus, each instructor can accommodate the use of the text to his or her needs, giving some chapters more attention than others and omitting some chapters altogether, without undermining the integrity of the presentation. The book also makes no commitment to a particular theory, but instead reviews a variety of theoretical perspectives as they become relevant to the particular health problems under discussion.

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL AND STUDY GUIDE

The third edition is accompanied by a comprehensive Instructor's Manual with tests, prepared by Cheryl Rickabaugh. The manual outlines each chapter and provides detailed suggestions for lectures. Also included are ideas for classroom discussion, student projects, paper topics, and other activities. There is extensive presentation of the methodologies of health psychology, including epidemiology, experiments, surveys, and the like. There is also a listing of annotated readings and other materials to enrich the course, and an extensive test bank of multiple-choice questions that test students' recall of material as well as their ability to comprehend and apply the concepts in the text.

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Shelley E. Taylor

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