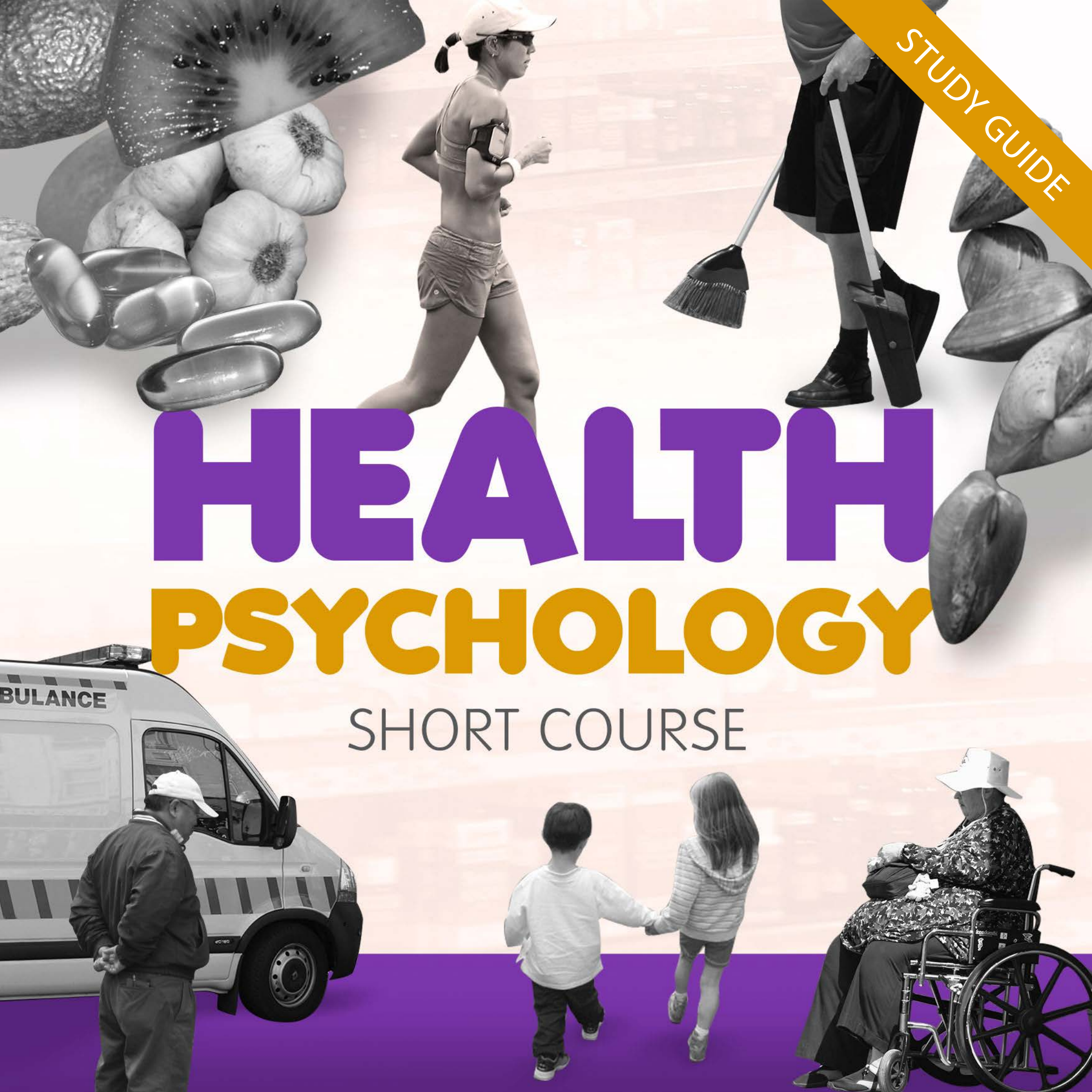


STUDY GUIDE

HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

SHORT COURSE



HOW TO WORK THROUGH THIS COURSE

Over the following pages, you will move through a logical, self-paced learning experience that can enlighten and educate you on the psychology of health.

It is important from the outset to understand that learning about something is not the same as just reading about it. Learning implies a permanent change in what you know and can do.

Anyone can read a book and understand it; but for most people the detail of what you read is largely forgotten.

Reading something once only puts information into short-term memory. It is soon lost if you don't 'work' on it. Studying the same information takes longer, but by thinking about it and processing it you can transfer that information to long-term memory. This way, you will enhance your ability to recall and apply that information for years to come. If you take your time to work through the 7 lessons that follow, you will learn.

Read, Reflect, Research, Revise

Throughout the following pages, you will find not only things to read about, but also things to do:

1. Throughout each lesson, there are suggestions of things to do under the headings "Learn More". These are all sorts of ideas about things you can do in order to explore the subject further.
2. At the end of each lesson, there is an interactive self assessment test (assignment), for you to undertake. When you click on this, your computer needs to be online. You will be taken to our cloud-based online school. The answers you choose will be evaluated immediately, and your results can be seen on completion of each test. You can return and repeat tests if you wish.

Undertaking these tasks will involve reflection, research and revision of the topics you read about. By repeatedly encountering each topic in different ways, your perspective on each subject will broaden, and the commitment of information to longer term memory will strengthen.

You don't need to undertake all of the suggested tasks if you don't want to; but we strongly recommend that you do some in each lesson, and that you take all of the self-assessment tests.

The more time you spend doing these things, the stronger your learning will be.

Completing the Course

After completing all 7 lessons you will be presented with a final assessment which can also be undertaken online.

Do not attempt to do this until you have worked through all 7 lessons, and feel like you have learnt the subject well.

Upon finishing this final assessment you will immediately see your final results, and you can save a pdf copy of those results as a "Certificate of Completion".

Welcome Audio

Click the button below to listen to the welcome audio for this course. This feature is supported by most computers and some mobile devices.



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LESSON 1 HOW A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE CAN IMPACT ON PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Health is more than just the absence of disease or illness. Both physical health and mental health underlie our overall sense of wellbeing. Health is all aspects of our being including the social, emotional, psychological, spiritual, mental and physical parts.

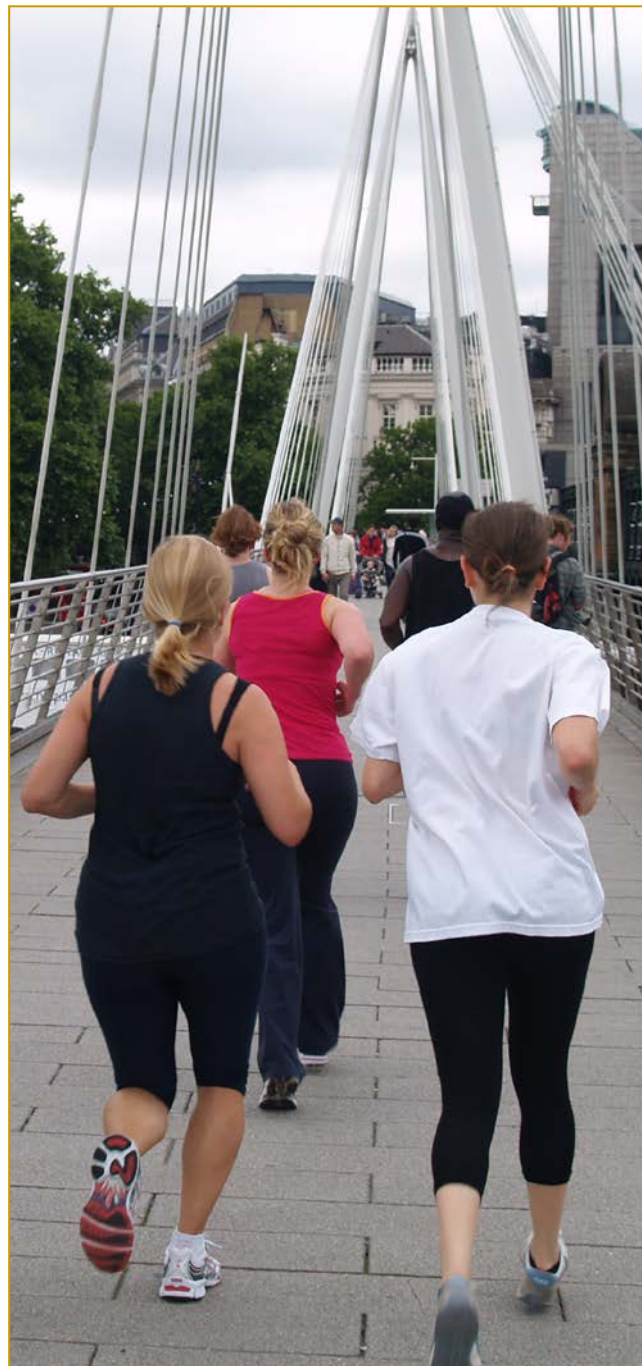
HEALTH

The mind and body are inextricably linked - a decline in one correlates with a decline in the other. If we are mentally stressed, this can affect our physical body. If we are physically tired or feeling ill, this in turn can affect our mind and emotions.

DEFINITIONS OF HEALTH

But what do we mean by health? If we look at a purely physical definition of health, we could say that this when our body is free from injury or illness. But when we also take account of our mental health, we could state that it is our body and mind's condition. The World Health Organisation stresses the importance of the mental aspect of health in their definition.

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”



Suggested Tasks: ▼

Throughout this course you will be provided with suggested tasks and reading to aid with your understanding. These will appear in the right hand column. Remember: these tasks are optional. The more you complete, the more you will learn, but in order to complete the course in 20 hours you will need to manage your time well. We suggest you spend about 10 minutes on each task you attempt, and no more than 20 minutes.

STRESS & HEALTH

A psychologist called Marie Jahoda (1958) identified six characteristics of ideal mental health:

- Having positive self-esteem and a strong sense of identity.
- Personal growth - using our abilities to fulfil potential.
- Having good relationships - giving and receiving affection and warmth.
- Being able to be autonomous, relying on our inner strength and judgements.
- A good perception of reality - being realistic.
- Mastery of our environment – being able to adapt to our environment, use problem solving in different situations.

Jahoda suggested that these things are needed in order for people to live their lives optimally, get the most enjoyment from them and give back to society.

The Mental Health Foundation (UK) state that if you are in good mental health, you can –

“Make the most of your potential, cope with life, play a full part in your family, workplace, community and among friends.”

All of these definitions are quite loose and so they can be adapted to different cultures.

Stress is linked to a range of different physical conditions, such as diabetes, asthma, headaches, infectious diseases, gastric ulcers, and so on.

But firstly, what do we mean by stress? Our bodies are primed to protect themselves. If we perceive a threat, our body reacts. It gets our muscles ready, our heart rate up, our adrenaline up, and so on - we prepare to run away from the threat or to fight the threat. This is known as the ‘fight-or-flight’ response.

The fight-or-flight response, also known as the acute stress response, was first described by Cannon in the 1920s. He was expressing how all animals react to stress. When animals first experience stress, there are specific physiological reactions in the sympathetic nervous system in response to the release of adrenaline and noradrenaline (epinephrine and norepinephrine) from the medulla of the adrenal glands. This is triggered by acetylcholine released from the sympathetic nervous system.

This release leads to physical reactions such as:

- Increased heart rate
- Increased breathing rate
- Constriction of blood vessels
- Tightening muscles

These responses prepare us for action. But we may not be facing situations that we can run away from or fight. If we have had a bad day at the office, it’s probably not a good idea to punch your

LEARN MORE >>>

Suggested Tasks

Write down your own definitions for:

- Health psychology
- Mental health
- Health & wellbeing

Now search online and read several definitions for each of the above. How do your own definitions compare?