

Health Psychology Activities: Menu and Due Dates Spring 2026

Those you do not have to be present for are in blue font. Those that take more than a single day to complete are marked with an asterisk *

There are 32 activities	Start date & due date	Choose at least 15	Start date & due date
Sitting rising	Jan 7-10	Vagus nerve stim.	Feb 20-23
SARA search sprint	Jan 9-12	Into the Wild	Feb 20-Mar 2
Who am I (part 1 & 2) *	Jan 12-17	Hassles & uplifts *	Feb 23- Mar 5
Facial Feedback	Jan 14-17	Finger prick pain	Feb 27-Mar 2
Framed messages	Jan 16-26	Health app exploration & experiment *	Mar 4-14
Health belief model & infectious disease	Jan 21-24	Binder clip pain	Mar 6-9
Peer review of slides	Jan 26-29	Group sharing	Mar 16-19
7- minute workout challenge*	Jan 26-Feb 5	Pre-Fed-up activities	Mar 18-21
Top 3 stressors	Jan 28-31	Movie time activities*	Mar 20-26
Experiment: find the flaws	Jan 30-Feb 2	Post Fed-up activities	Mar 30-Apr 2
BP & HR biofeedback	Feb 6-16	Sugar tracking activity	Mar 30-Apr 9
Walk 1 and 2 + mindfulness*	Feb 9-14	CPR activity	Apr 1-4
Spiderweb of s. networks	Feb 11-14	Self-esteem booster *	Apr 3-13
Diaphragmatic breathing	Feb 13-16	Spirituality booster *	Apr 6-16
PMR	Feb 13-16	Environmental connect & protect *	Apr 10-17
Guided imagery	Feb 18-21	Soothing forces of nature	Apr 15-18

You can use this sheet to track which ones you've done and the score you earned. You only need to complete 15 on Canvas. However, if you do more, I will count your best 15.



Sitting Rising

You must be physically present for this one.

Can you *safely* sit down and stand back up without using any appendages (e.g. hand, elbow, knee...)? What variables do you think determine your ability to do this? Does this "test" tell us anything about your wellbeing?



SARA Search Sprint

You must be physically present for this one.

After learning about how we can use AI in combination with search engines such as EbscoHost to find peer-reviewed articles, you will seek out 3 articles that are relevant to your SARA question and cite them in APA 7th ed format.



Facial Feedback

You must be physically present for this one.

This activity is a hands-on demonstration of the mind-body connection. Yes, it involves your face and it's a lot of fun!



Who am I?

You must be physically present for this one.

Which variables affect how we define ourselves and why? What relevance does this have for our wellbeing?



Gain vs Loss Framed Messages

This is an at-home activity

Pick a health behavior you've seen health messages for. Some examples include drinking, smoking, drug abuse, exercise etc... Find two health messages that target this behavior. One must be gain framed and one must be loss framed. They do not need to be in the same format. That is, one could be a video clip and the other could be a billboard. It is possible that both frames could be used in the same message.

Which frame affected you the most, or were they both equal? Why do you think this is?

You are going to have to upload a document that provides a description of each message. Provide enough detail so that we can clearly verify whether it was gain or loss framed. If you can provide a picture or a link to the message - this would be awesome! **Please do not upload a HEIC file - we cannot open these.**



7-minute workout challenge

This is an at-home activity

The 7-minute workout (many different ones are on YouTube) is getting a lot of hype. Pick one that is appropriate for your sex, age, and level of physical fitness. Then, watch and do the workout 5 out of 7 consecutive days.

Before you start - record at least one objective measure of wellbeing and at least one subjective measure daily for 3 days. For example, weight (objective) and mood (subjective). Another idea - use a sleep app for your objective measure. Another subjective measure might be perceived level of alertness throughout the day. You decide. You might want to try using one of the behavior change techniques from module 2 to see if they help you succeed at this challenge - this is just a suggestion :)

Be sure to record the URL for the 7-minute workout you followed and your measures of wellness. You will be asked to report on these.

Important: do not do this activity unless you are in good physical health. Do not over-exert yourself either. "No pain, no gain" is a myth!



Health Belief Model & Infectious Disease

You must be physically present for this one.

What determines whether people will or won't wear a mask in public or get vaccinated for infectious diseases such as the flu and measles? We will use the Health Belief Model to find out. Half the members of your pod will try and use the model to decrease the perception of threat. They will write down all the variables they come up with. The remaining members of your pod will use the model to decrease the perception of threat. They will write down all the variables they come up with. Now compare the two sets of answers. In what ways are they the same or different? Hopefully, this activity will give you a better idea of how health psychologists use health models to understand health behaviors.

I will provide you with a document for you to use to show the answers that both groups came up with for the 4 perceptions, demographic variables, and psychosocial variables that affect the perception of threat. **Please do not upload a HEIC file. We cannot open these.**

ACTIVITY



Peer review of team presentation slides

You must be physically present for this one.

Before class time, one person on each team will upload their slides for phase 1 of the behavioral health intervention or public health message campaign. The link to a shared folder is on the Canvas homepage. Drop your slides there.

In class, each team will review at least one other team's slides. Take notes: what did you really like? What advice might you give them to make their presentation even better? Look at their color scheme (are their colors vivid or drab), fonts (size, type, and color), do the fonts contrast well against the background, is there too much text on a slide, have they made good use of pictures/clipart, are the photos/clipart well positioned on the slide etc...

Take a picture of the notes you made on the slides and then share this with that team. You will need to upload this photo into the Canvas "quiz" for this activity.

Be kind and respectful. When you receive feedback on your slides, please consider their suggestions. We all want to help each other 😊

ACTIVITY



Top three stressors

You must be physically present for this one.

You will be asked to write down your top three stressors – things that are stressing you out. Don't get "too" personal because you will share this in class. Once we learn what everyone's stressors are, we will learn an important fact about our stressors.



Experiment: Find the flaws

You must be physically present for this one.

You will take part in an experiment to test the effect of scent on mood. The experiment will have many flaws that you and your pod will try and identify. This will help you understand experimental research designs better. This will make you a better consumer of information we are exposed to on a daily basis.



Into the Wild

This is an at-home activity

[Into the wild](#) (long movie but impactful -must rent for about \$3).

As you watch the movie, pay attention to any evidence of the important role social connections play in our well-being. You will be asked to tell us what the message of the story was as it relates to Social Support.



Biofeedback: Heart Rate & Blood Pressure

This is an at-home activity

IMPORTANT: for this activity, you will need to sign out a BP cuff after 4:00 pm one day and return it by 10:00 a.m. the next day. Go to the psych office (GC 308) to sign one out. Also note: if everyone does this on the same day, we will run out of BP cuffs. Plan for a delay of 1-2 days in case this happens.

What affects your Heart Rate (HR) and Blood Pressure (BP)? Think of two “test conditions” to see what effect they have on your HR + BP. Choose one activity because you “think” it will relax you and choose another because you “think” it will arouse you. For example, does eating affect HR + BP? What about petting your dog/cat? Exercise? Watching something funny on TV? Scrolling through social media? Watching a political broadcast or news about the war in Ukraine? Or how about a nice massage from a significant other? :) Perform each activity for at least 5 minutes - preferably 10.

Make sure you take a reading just before and just after each activity because you will want to know if and how the activity *changed* HR + BP. Then you can see if one type of activity affected these measures more than the other - and in which direction.

Be sure to tell us which activities you chose and enter your results using a table - an example is provided for you below. Have fun!!

	HR before	HR after	HR difference	Systolic before	Systolic after	Systolic difference
activity 1						
activity 2						



Walk 1 and 2

You must be physically present for both walks.

Walk 1: You will go on a 5-minute walk at the beginning of class. You can do anything you want on this walk, except you may not talk to each other. You will answer a series of short questions when you return. Record your answers on a piece of paper and upload this to the Walk #1 “quiz” on Canvas.

Walk 2: You will again go on a 5-minute walk at the beginning of class. You can do anything you want on this walk, except you may not talk to each other. You will answer a

series of short questions when you return. I am betting your answers will change – you will need to do both walks to discover why.



Spiderweb of Social Networks

You must be physically present for this one.

You will be given a sheet of paper on which two spiderwebs have been printed. On the one marked “actual”, you will enter the names of people, groups, and institutions that are having the most impact (positive or negative) on you right now. These are arranged such that the most impactful go in the center of the web. Those with the least impact go out along the outer edge. Those with moderate impact go in between.

You will then do the same thing for the “ideal” spiderweb, only this time you will arrange the location of all the individuals, groups, and institutions where you would LIKE them to be. Finally, we will brainstorm ways of converting your actual web to your ideal web.



Diaphragmatic (Belly) Breathing

You must be physically present for this one.

After learning how to breathe this way, we will practice it together. You might find it harder than you think. 😊



Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

You must be physically present for this one.

We will listen to an audio file that walks us through a session of PMR. We will record HR and BP before and after. The numbers will be entered into a table like the one below. You will use this information and your subjective feelings of arousal vs. relaxation to see whether this technique works for you.

HR BEFORE	HR AFTER	HR DIFFERENCE	SYSTOLIC BEFORE	SYSTOLIC AFTER	SYSTOLIC DIFFERENCE



Vagus Nerve Stimulation

You must be physically present for this one.

We will perform a series of fun activities that are designed to stimulate the vagus nerve and activate the parasympathetic nervous system. I dare you not to laugh!



Guided Imagery: Mountain Lake

You must be physically present for this one.

We will breathe diaphragmatically as we listen to an audio file that walks us along a wooded path to a mountain lake. We will record HR and BP before and after this meditation session. These numbers will be recorded in a table like the one below. You will use this information and your subjective feelings to see if this technique to reduce stress might work for you.

HR BEFORE	HR AFTER	HR DIFFERENCE	SYSTOLIC BEFORE	SYSTOLIC AFTER	SYSTOLIC DIFFERENCE



Hassles & Uplifts: 5-day tracker

This is an at-home activity

Can focusing on uplifts vs. hassles affect your wellbeing?

To find out, you will write down your uplifts and hassles according to the schedule below. You only need one short sentence to describe each hassle or uplift. We will not ask you to share these with us. At the end of the day before going to bed, rate your overall wellbeing for the day using a 1 to 10 scale (1 = absolutely terrible and could not get worse, 10 = super! Could not have been better)

If you do not have severe anxiety or depression, follow the instructions below:

day 1: *consciously* look for **uplifts** and write them down. Ignore any hassles you might experience

day 2: write down all your **hassles**. Ignore any uplifts you might experience

day 3: this is an **uplifts** day - follow day 1 instructions

day 4: this is a **hassles** day - follow day 2 instructions

day 5: this is an **uplifts** day - follow day 1 instructions

If you have severe anxiety or depression, follow the instructions below:

Follow the same instructions as above EXCEPT do not write down your hassles on days 2 and 4. You still need to record your wellbeing, but these will just be considered "neutral" days.

Record your data in a table like the one below.

	wellbeing (1-10)
UPLIFT day	
HASSLE day	
UPLIFT day	
HASSLE day	
UPLIFT day	
mean (average) for the UPLIFT days	
mean (average) for the HASSLE days	



Finger Prick Pain

You must be physically present for this one.

You will be asked to prick your finger using a sterile, one-time use lancing device. You do not have to prick your finger - but it's more fun if you do 😊

You will be asked to compare how much pain you expected to feel and how much you actually felt. We will talk about individual differences in pain perception and the many variables that can affect our perceptions.



Behavioral Intervention Group Sharing

You must be physically present for this one.

Learn from your peers who are trying to change the same or similar behavior as you. You likely have some challenges in common, but not necessarily the same solutions. Offer suggestions to others and learn from theirs.



Binder Clip Pain

You must be physically present for this one.

Which variables influence the expectation and perception of pain? What is your own pain tolerance like? How does pain affect your heart rate and blood pressure? We will find out by placing a 1" binder clip on your finger. You will record your data in a table like the ones you've seen previously. Implications for pain research will be discussed.



Fed Up: Pre-movie activities

You must be physically present for this one.

BEFORE we watch the movie FED-UP, let's learn something about ourselves and what we think we know.

What type of diet do you normally follow? What are heavily processed foods? Do you eat a lot of heavily processed foods?

What is your favorite processed or heavily processed snack? What makes it healthy and/or unhealthy?



Fed Up: Movie time activities

You do not have to be physically present for this one, but you get bonus points if you are

Watch the movie "Fed UP" and answer the questions below.

Describe the theories of obesity (causes and cures) that this film addressed. Two-three sentences to describe each is fine.

Which ideas/theories you described above are consistent with health psych's approach to obesity?

What makes these ideas/theories consistent with a health psychology perspective?



Fed Up: Post-movie activities

You must be physically present for this one.

In advance of the activity: go to your local Walmart or grocery store. Take pictures of the food/beverage available at the checkout counter. Save the photos!

You will be asked to do and answer the following questions:

Provide a list of food/beverages that fall under the healthy and unhealthy categories. What is the proportion of healthy vs unhealthy food/drinks are available as impulse buys?

Go online and look up food ads directed toward children.

What kind of food is being advertised? Is it healthy or unhealthy and why? What tactics are being used to “draw kids in”?



Cephalic Phase Responses (CPR)

You must be physically present for this one.

You will be presented with a food stimulus. You will record your HR and BP response to the site and smell of the food. Use a table like the one below.

	HR	systolic BP
Pre-food		
Post-food		
Change in the reading		



Health APP exploration & experimentation*

This is an at-home activity

Go to wherever you normally go to get apps for your phone. Find a health app that interests you and one that you have never tried before. Try it for at least 3 days. Note that the app can address any of the dimensions of wellness we talked about at the beginning of the course.



Sugar Tracking

This is an at-home activity

Select a "normal day" and record how many grams of added sugar you consumed (ate or drank). To do this, we will need to either look at the nutrition label or go to the company's website. **IMPORTANT**. This information is almost always given "per serving". Look and see what they say is a serving size. If you had the equivalent of three servings, then multiply the grams of added sugar by 3. At the end of the day, compare how many grams you consumed with the recommended number of grams. The number of recommended grams of added sugar can be found online.



Self-esteem booster*

This is an at-home activity

Go online and look for suggestions (preferably credible ones) that suggest activities to boost self-esteem. Pick one you like - and one that will not take weeks to execute. Be sure to note the URL where you found the suggestion.

IMPORTANT: before you try to boost your self-esteem - take [this quiz](#) and note your score. After you execute the activity, re-take the quiz and note your score again.

Describe the activity you did to try and boost self-esteem. Include sufficient details so that someone else could try to replicate what you did. Include the URL where you found the activity.

Did your self-esteem increase, decrease, or stay the same from pre-test to post-test? Explain why you believe you got these results.



Spirituality booster*

This is an at-home activity

Go online and look for suggestions (preferably credible ones) that suggest activities to boost spirituality. Pick one you like - and one that will not take weeks to execute. Be sure to note the URL where you found the suggestion.

IMPORTANT: before you try to boost your spirituality - take [this quiz](#) and note your score. After you execute the activity, re-take the quiz and note your score again.

Describe the activity you did to try and boost spirituality. Include sufficient details so that someone else could try to replicate what you did. Include the URL where you found the activity.

Did your spiritual wellbeing increase, decrease, or stay the same from pre-test to post-test? Explain why you believe you got these results.



Environmental connect & protect*

This is an at-home activity

Go online and look for suggestions (preferably credible ones) that suggest activities to enhance environmental wellness. Pick one you like - and one that will not take weeks to execute. Be sure to note the URL where you found the suggestion.

IMPORTANT: before you try to enhance your environmental wellness - take [this quiz](#) and note your score. After you execute the activity, re-take the quiz and note your score again.

Describe the activity you did to try and connect with nature and enhance environmental wellbeing. Include sufficient details so that someone else could try to replicate what you did. Include the URL where you found the activity.

Did your environmental wellness increase, decrease, or stay the same from pre-test to post-test? Explain why you believe you got these results



Soothing forces of nature

You must be physically present for this one.

What effect does your environment have on your ability to connect with nature?

What effect does nature have on your HR and BP?

We will draw a plant in two different environments and record the data in a table like the one below. Note: you will be asked to draw using your emotions and the connection you feel to the plant. The actual drawing does not have to be “realistic”. This is not what’s important.

	human-made environment	nature environment
HR before		
HR after		
HR difference		
systolic before		
systolic after after		
systolic difference		

