



Introduction to mental health conditions

Start date	21 April 2023	End date	23 April 2023
Venue	Madingley Hall Madingley Cambridge CB23 8AQ		
Tutor	Dr Johnny Lawson	Course code	2223NRX029

For further information contact inteng@ice.cam.ac.uk

Tutor biography

Johnny Lawson is a Research Associate at the Autism Research Centre, Department of Psychiatry, University of Cambridge; He is also Director of Studies in Human, Social and Political Science and Director of Studies in Psychological and Behavioural Sciences, Girton College; and Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Oxford Brookes University.

Johnny's previous research was centred on the autism spectrum. He developed a new cognitive model to conceptualise the spectrum that managed to synthesise the three dominant models in the area. The new model gives rise to a host of implications and issues that encompass three main areas 1) the autism spectrum 2) sex differences in the general population 3) the effect of a male bias towards a particular kind of cognitive style on the development of social structures and value systems. More recently he has been working in the area of the 'Dark Triad'. This involves an examination of three key traits (sub-clinical psychopathy, narcissism and Machiavellianism) in the general population. As a 'social psychologist' his primary interests are on those social environments and institutions that reward or promote these traits and also whether in some situations they can bring unexpected advantages.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the Terrace Bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
20:30 – 22:00	Introduction to Mental Health
22:00	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
09:00 – 10:30	Conceptualisation and Intervention
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Mood Disorders
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free time
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	The Autism Spectrum
18:00 – 18:30	Free time
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Schizophrenia - Part 1
21:30	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
09:00 – 10:30	Schizophrenia - Part 2
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Summary and Reflections
12:45	Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

The course will allow you to:

1. Gain an understanding of key terms such as 'mental health' and 'mental illness'.
2. Appreciate the complexity involved with issues such as conceptualisation (how we define specific mental health conditions and understand their causal factors) and intervention (how we 'treat', manage or support those with specific conditions).
3. Gain a better understanding how conceptualisation and treatment issues apply to the specific conditions covered in the course.

Content:

Mental health. Mental illness. Conceptualising mental health/illness. Intervention. Mood Disorders. The Autism Spectrum. Schizophrenia.

Over the last few decades, the way in which 'mental health' and mental health conditions / disorders are viewed has changed radically. Once upon a time, 'mental illness' was regarded in a very negative way and bound up with high levels of stigma. This has changed in many parts of the world and people generally have a better understanding of mental health issues. At the same time, there is a growing awareness that mental health is a broader issue that relates to everyone. For example, just because a person is free from any major physical illness, it does not mean that they are 'physically fit'. The same idea applies to mental illness. This growing awareness has become much more acute in recent years with the advent of COVID and the various measures that have been put in place. Arguably, COVID has been responsible for one of the most widespread challenges to global mental health that we have seen in decades. As a result, the issue of mental is perhaps more relevant now than it has ever been. Given this situation, it is more important than ever for people to gain a better understanding of mental health and mental illness and the key aim of this course is to achieve this understanding for all of the students attending. The first two sessions will be spent exploring the concepts of mental health and mental conditions and also looking at how such conditions are best conceptualised. This will also involve the issue of intervention / treatment. The remaining sessions will then apply this knowledge onto three specific mental health areas; mood disorders, the autism spectrum and schizophrenia.

Presentation of the course:

Seminar style talks with PowerPoint presentation. The Tutor will at every stage be engaging with course members, to encourage participation, discussion and reflection.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

1. **Understand more fully the complexities of mental health / illness.**
2. **Gain an appreciation of the challenges related to developing interventions.**
3. **Understand three key mental health conditions and apply knowledge from earlier in the course to these.**

Reading and resources list

None required.

Hewstone, Miles, Fincham, Frank, Foster Johnathan, *Psychology*, British Psychology Society (2005), chapter 15 'Abnormal Psychology'

Online resources:

Psychology textbook, chapter 15 'Abnormal Psychology'

<https://www.blackwellpublishing.com/intropsych/pdf/chapter15.pdf>