

Official Program Outline



HERZING
— UNIVERSITY —

Doctor of Behavioral Health – Clinical

Program Description

The Doctor of Behavioral Health – Clinical program prepares advanced practitioners and leaders to integrate behavioral health, mental health, and wellbeing initiatives within healthcare and community systems. The program combines clinical expertise with leadership and systems training to improve population health outcomes, address chronic medical and behavioral conditions, and advance innovative, integrated models of care. This program prepares doctoral-level professionals who can think clinically, lead strategically, and innovate systemically, positioning them to shape a future where mental health and wellbeing are fully integrated into comprehensive behavioral healthcare delivery. Graduates are equipped to promote prevention, early intervention, care coordination, and stigma reduction while leveraging emerging tools, such as AI-supported insights and decision-making, to lead sustainable change that supports both acute and long-term behavioral health needs across diverse populations.

Program Outcomes

Upon completion of this program, the student should be able to:

1. Design initiatives that effectively integrate behavioral health, mental health, and wellbeing within healthcare and community systems to improve overall health outcomes.
2. Utilize current research, behavioral science, and interdisciplinary knowledge to support effective assessment, intervention, and care coordination for chronic medical and behavioral conditions across diverse populations and settings.
3. Demonstrate advanced leadership skills to guide teams, manage programs, influence organizational culture, and drive sustainable change within complex, integrated healthcare systems.
4. Develop prevention, early intervention, and resilience-building strategies that address disparities and promote behavioral health, mental health, and wellbeing across communities.
5. Apply research methods, program evaluation, AI-enabled analytics, digital health solutions, telehealth, and emerging technologies to inform decision-making, strengthen service delivery, and expand access to care.
6. Demonstrate ethical leadership by integrating knowledge of behavioral health, mental health, healthcare policy, and professional standards to ensure culturally responsive, equitable practice.

Program Content

All courses, 54.00 semester credit hours, are required.

Required Courses

All courses, 54.00 semester credit hours, are required.

Course Number and Name	Prerequisites/Corequisites	Semester Credit Hours
BH 700 Foundations of Integrated Behavioral Health	None	3.00
BH 710 Policy and Value-Based Care in Behavioral Health	None	3.00
BH 720 Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues in Integrated Healthcare	None	3.00
BH 730 Integrated Behavioral Health and Primary Care	None	3.00
BH 740 Medical Literacy and Clinical Communication	BH 700, BH 710, BH 720	3.00

Course Number and Name	Prerequisites/Corequisites	Semester Credit Hours
BH 750 Research Design and Applied Methods in Behavioral Health	BH 700, BH 710, BH 720	3.00
BH 760 Health Equity and Stigma Reduction in Behavioral Healthcare	BH 700, BH 710, BH 720	3.00
BH 770 Population-Based Community Behavioral Health	BH 700, BH 710, BH 720	3.00
BH 780 Artificial Intelligence and Technology in Healthcare Innovation	BH 700, BH 710, BH 720	3.00
BH 790 Telehealth and Digital Behavioral Health	BH 700, BH 710, BH 720	3.00
BH 800 Behavioral Health Leadership and Operations	BH 700, BH 710, BH 720	3.00
BH 810 Healthcare Entrepreneurship and Program Development	BH 800	3.00
BH 820 Clinical Pathophysiology for Behavioral Health Professionals	BH 700, BH 710, BH 720	3.00
BH 822 Evidence-Based Interventions for Complex Conditions	BH 700, BH 710, BH 720	3.00
BH 824 Psychopharmacology in Integrated Care	BH 700, BH 710, BH 720	3.00
BH 826 Addictive Behaviors and Neurophysiology	BH 700, BH 710, BH 720	3.00
BH 880 DBH Capstone I: Project Design and Implementation	BH 750	3.00
BH 890 DBH Capstone II: Data Analysis and Dissemination	BH 880, Final course	3.00

Distribution of Contact Hours by Course					
Course	Lecture Hours	Lab Hours	Project Hours	Total Contact Hours	Credits
BH 700	45.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	3.00
BH 710	45.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	3.00
BH 720	45.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	3.00
BH 730	45.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	3.00
BH 740	45.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	3.00
BH 750	45.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	3.00
BH 760	45.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	3.00
BH 770	45.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	3.00
BH 780	45.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	3.00
BH 790	45.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	3.00
BH 800	45.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	3.00
BH 810	45.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	3.00
BH 820	45.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	3.00
BH 822	45.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	3.00
BH 824	45.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	3.00
BH 826	45.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	3.00
BH 880	30.00	0.00	45.00	75.00	3.00
BH 890	15.00	0.00	90.00	105.00	3.00
Totals	765.00	0.00	135.00	900.00	54.00

New Course Descriptions

<p>BH 700 Foundations of Integrated Behavioral Health</p>	<p>This course introduces doctoral learners to the core concepts, models, and systems that support the integration of behavioral health within healthcare settings. It examines the historical development of integrated care, interprofessional roles, biopsychosocial and population health frameworks, and key ethical, cultural, policy, and regulatory considerations. The course establishes a foundational understanding of evidence-based integrated behavioral health practices to support advanced doctoral study and leadership in healthcare systems.</p>
<p>BH 710 Policy and Value-Based Care in Behavioral Health</p>	<p>This course explores the U.S. healthcare system with a focus on behavioral health integration, reimbursement, and policy. Students will examine public and private payment models, compare fee-for-service and value-based care, and assess how federal and state regulations shape ethical, sustainable practice. The course also builds practical skills in billing, documentation, and healthcare technology to support effective system-level decision-making.</p>
<p>BH 720 Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues in Integrated Healthcare</p>	<p>This course addresses ethics, law, and professional issues for behavioral health professionals, comparing ethical codes across disciplines and reviewing HIPAA, privacy, and state confidentiality laws. Students will learn about licensing/regulatory roles, mandatory reporting, capacity, informed consent, substituted decision-making, and end-of-life planning with attention to older adults and vulnerable populations. The course also examines legal and ethical implications of telehealth, EHRs, and AI, teaching risk-management and culturally responsive protocols through case analysis, statutory review, and applied policy development.</p>
<p>BH 730 Integrated Behavioral Health and Primary Care</p>	<p>This course examines interprofessional practice and the integration of behavioral health into primary care, focusing on team-based, whole-person approaches to improve patient outcomes. Students will evaluate models of integrated care, collaborative documentation and communication strategies, and impacts on patient satisfaction, health equity, and workforce well-being. The course also covers billing and reimbursement, productivity and cost-management, and teaches workflow design, implementation planning, outcome measurement, and change management through case studies, simulations, and evidence reviews.</p>
<p>BH 740 Medical Literacy and Clinical Communication</p>	<p>This course bridges the gap between medical knowledge and patient-centered care by teaching students how to translate complex clinical terminology into accessible language. Students will demonstrate the fundamentals of health literacy and practice essential communication strategies to improve patient safety, adherence, and trust. Students will learn to navigate difficult conversations and ensure that diverse populations can clearly understand and act on health information.</p>
<p>BH 750 Research Design and Applied Methods in Behavioral Health</p>	<p>This course focuses on advanced research design and applied methods in behavioral health and integrated healthcare settings. Students will evaluate research methodologies, analyze principles of translational science and implementation research, and design an applied behavioral health research project. Emphasis is placed on developing research questions, theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches, ethical standards, cultural responsiveness, and stakeholder engagement. Students will produce a comprehensive research proposal including research design, data collection strategies, evaluation measures, and a dissemination plan for translating findings into practice.</p>
<p>BH 760 Health Equity and Stigma Reduction in Behavioral Healthcare</p>	<p>This course prepares students to apply advanced leadership and organizational strategies to promote equity, inclusion, and high-quality care in behavioral healthcare settings. Students will examine multilevel determinants of health inequities, including policy, organizational structures, provider practices, and patient factors, to understand how disparities emerge and persist across populations. Students will examine equity-informed screening tools, assessments, and care coordination models; analyze organizational data to identify disparities in access, utilization, and outcomes; and apply communication frameworks to reduce stigma and strengthen interprofessional collaboration.</p>
<p>BH 770 Population-Based Community Behavioral Health</p>	<p>This course examines advanced strategies for improving behavioral health outcomes at the population level through data-informed planning, policy development, and integrated care models. Students will explore epidemiological trends in behavioral health, social determinants of health and substance use disorders, and evidence-based interventions designed to improve outcomes across diverse populations. Emphasis is placed on the use of population health analytics, risk stratification, and prevention frameworks. Students will learn about coordinated systems of care to design, implement, and evaluate large-scale behavioral health initiatives.</p>

BH 780 Artificial Intelligence and Technology in Healthcare Innovation	This course examines the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies in healthcare, with emphasis on clinical innovation and behavioral health applications. Students will critically analyze AI-driven tools to enhance clinical judgment and patient outcomes and propose human-centered AI interventions that address ethical considerations, bias mitigation, data privacy, leadership, and stakeholder collaboration in interdisciplinary settings.
BH 790 Telehealth and Digital Behavioral Health	This course explores the rapidly evolving landscape of telehealth and its specific application within behavioral health services. Students will examine the legal, ethical, and clinical frameworks necessary to deliver effective care through digital platforms and remote monitoring tools. By the end of the course, students will be equipped to navigate virtual patient engagement while maintaining high standards of privacy and therapeutic rapport.
BH 800 Behavioral Health Leadership and Operations	This course examines advanced leadership theories and organizational development strategies in behavioral health settings. Students will explore effective collaboration, communication practices, and approaches to prevent and mitigate burnout while building high-performing interdisciplinary teams. Emphasis is placed on applying leadership principles to improve operational efficiency, foster organizational culture, and drive sustainable improvements in integrated behavioral health systems.
BH 810 Healthcare Entrepreneurship and Program Development	This course examines the application of entrepreneurial principles, innovation theories, and strategic program design to create, launch, and scale transformative healthcare initiatives. Students will critically analyze market dynamics, regulatory environments, and financial models. Students will develop comprehensive, stakeholder-informed plans for integrated healthcare services that emphasize leadership, ethics, and measurable impacts on population health.
BH 820 Clinical Pathophysiology for Behavioral Health Professionals	This course examines the biological foundations of behavioral health, focusing on neurochemical imbalances, HPA axis dysfunction, neuroplasticity, psychoneuroimmunology, stress/trauma physiology, and behavioral genetics. It links these mechanisms to mental health symptoms, chronic conditions in primary care, and behavioral comorbidities. Students will build medical terminology and clinical reasoning while exploring integrated medical and behavioral interventions for prevention and recovery.
BH 822 Evidence-Based Interventions for Complex Conditions	This course examines the design, evaluation, and implementation of evidence-based interventions for individuals with complex, chronic, and co-occurring conditions across clinical, educational, and community settings. Students will critically analyze current research and theoretical frameworks guiding intervention development and delivery for multifaceted conditions that involve biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors. Students will explore strategies for adapting interventions to diverse populations while maintaining scientific rigor.
BH 824 Psychopharmacology in Integrated Care	This course explores the essential role of psychopharmacology within integrated care settings, focusing on how medications complement behavioral health interventions. Students will examine the biological mechanisms of psychotropic medication and learn to collaborate with primary care teams to improve patient outcomes through medication monitoring and adherence. By analyzing evidence-based prescribing practices and the ethical considerations of treatment, students will gain the skills necessary to bridge the gap between behavioral health and physical medicine.
BH 826 Addictive Behaviors and Neurophysiology	This course explores the complex biological and psychological mechanisms underlying substance use and behavioral addictions. Students will examine how addictive behaviors seize the brain's reward system, specifically focusing on the neurophysiology of dopamine pathways and neural plasticity. By integrating clinical perspectives with current research, this course analyzes the transition from recreational use to compulsive patterns and evaluates modern evidence-based treatments.
BH 880 DBH Capstone I: Project Design and Implementation	This course initiates the applied doctoral capstone experience, focusing on the implementation of a behavioral health research project. Students refine their topic, complete a literature review, finalize methodology, and obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Emphasis is placed on ethical research practices and the early stages of data collection addressing clinical, organizational, or population health issues.
BH 890 DBH Capstone II: Data Analysis and Dissemination	This culminating course focuses on data analysis and interpretation of the capstone project. Students apply ethical and culturally responsive practices to develop conclusions and actionable recommendations. The course emphasizes integration, sustainability, and dissemination, culminating in a scholarly presentation and final report addressing implications for behavioral health practice.