

## Assignment 1: Social Perspectives Paper

**Weighting:** 40% of overall course grade

**1200 words, excluding reference list.** Word limit includes all other text (e.g. headings, title, tables and figures). In-text citations are also included in the word count.

Learning outcomes:

- Examine contemporary social perspectives of health and their implicit or explicit use in public health and health promotion;
- Distinguish between and critically evaluate individualistic and social concepts or assumptions employed in public health research and practice;

### **Background question to have in mind as you think about this assignment:**

When a public health unit is trying to promote or support social change, is the best conceptual approach to take one that focuses on 1) attributes, knowledge or the behaviour of individuals or 2) one that focuses on social practices and collective meaning-making?

*Note, this is not a question about research methods or methodologies. It's a question that asks you to identify what the "object" or focus of inquiry is. For example, are you conceptualising social change as a matter of individual beliefs/behaviours, or of social practice. The conceptual approach you use to ask a question about social change will inform the answer you get. So for a public health unit, which kind of answer is most useful and when?*

### **Specific question:**

You are part of a MOH/Public Health unit\* working to [choose 1: promote public mask-wearing to prevent covid-19 transmission/respond to the uptake of vaping]. You already have data on patterns in mask-wearing/vaping. For example, you have data on age, gender, ethnicity and migrant status, postcode, occupation, income/tax, education, details about household (including who people are living with, and if the home is rented, mortgaged or owned) and [Option 1] covid vaccination status and details of whether a person is known to have had covid-19 or [Option 2] whether or not a person has ever vaped or vapes regularly. Analysis of this data suggests some marked differences in mask-wearing/vaping not only across time but between different social groups in the population you are responsible for. Rather than make assumptions, you want to better understand what is shaping these

**differences between social groups in patterns of mask-wearing/vaping** so that this knowledge can inform the development of your intervention.

You have a limited budget to commission research to help you better understand this question. The team discussion about what research to commission includes mention of the need for

- 1) research that elucidates individual knowledge, beliefs and behaviour, and
- 2) research that seeks to understand the social practices and collective meaning-making involved.

There are 2 challenges for the team so far:

- The team's discussion often wanders between these 2 conceptual approaches without clearly distinguishing between them;

- You can only fund one project. You think that the decision about what research to commission should be informed (in part) by clarity over whether focusing on 1) individuals' beliefs, behaviour or decisions, or 2) on social practices and collective meaning-making, is most likely to prove useful for your team.

Write a short paper (1200 words plus references) to present to your team, drawing on the course resources and readings from weeks 1-4, that:

- clarifies the differences between explanations of the social change that draw on 1) individualistic concepts and 2) concepts pertaining to social practice and collective meaning-making;
- advances your own position on whether better understanding 1) individuals' attributes, beliefs or behaviours *or* 2) social practices is most needed by the team now.

*\* You need to decide which MOH/Public Health unit you are in, e.g. which national, state or local unit (note, in this example, the extensive data that this team have timely access to is likely rare, but for the purposes of this assessment you may assume your team have this data).*

In addition to the Required Readings for weeks 1-4, some of the **Background Reading for Weeks 1 and 2** will be useful in helping you to compare research on mask-wearing/vaping that draws on individualistic concepts with research that draws on concepts pertaining to social practice.

### **Suggested structure:**

- Introduction: Orientate the reader to the context you are discussing:
  - o Describe where your team is located
  - o Describe what your team is seeking to understand better via the research
  - o Explain why this is important for your team's work to support, promote or understand social change
- Two conceptual approaches to explaining social change:
  - o Explain what they are
  - o Explain the most significant differences between them
  - o Analyse and explain their potential strengths/weaknesses for your teams' specific needs
- Your position:
  - o Clearly state your own position and
  - o Explain your rationale with reference to course material and – if relevant – course discussions

### **A1 Marking Criteria and Rubric**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Fail</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>Credit</b>	<b>Distinction</b>	<b>High Distinction</b>
<p><b>Your position:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are you presenting a clear and well reasoned position,</li> <li>is your rationale clearly substantiated</li> <li>are you making insightful use of course material [16]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You do not articulate a clear position</li> <li>the rationale for your thinking is not well explained</li> <li>You are not drawing on appropriate course material or alternatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The position you take is plausible and there is evidence of a developing rationale, but it is sometimes argued unclearly</li> <li>it is only partially evident how your rationale is informed by a sound understanding of course material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your position is relatively clear</li> <li>the rationale is articulated with sound use of course material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition to “credit”, your position and its rationale indicate insightful use of course material</li> <li>Evidence of a high level of understanding of the 2 conceptual approaches and their potential uses and limitations for your team’s purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition to “distinction”, your explication of the rationale for your position shows well considered implications for public health actors’ engagement with social change beyond the team’s immediate concerns</li> </ul>
<p><b>Two conceptual approaches:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are you giving a clear account of each of the 2 conceptual approaches and</li> <li>identifying significant differences [8]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your paper does not clearly describe the 2 conceptual approaches or</li> <li>identify significant differences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your description of the 2 conceptual approaches and their significant differences evidences a developing understanding</li> <li>Your articulation is unclear or incorrect in places and misses some relevant nuances in the approaches or their differences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your paper offers a clear and sound account of the 2 conceptual approaches and their significant differences, and</li> <li>your account and judgement on what points to raise here allows you to make appropriate connections to your team’s specific concern</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition to “credit”: Your selection of points to focus on in describing the 2 conceptual approaches evidences a deep understanding of the concepts;</li> <li>your account of their significant differences is clearly informed by your thinking about social change as it pertains to your team’s work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition to “distinction”, your account and analysis of the 2 conceptual approaches and their significant differences draws out some apt and nuanced implications for public health actors’ attempts to understanding social change beyond your team’s immediate interests.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strengths/weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you offer a sound analysis of the potential strengths/limitations of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your paper does not clearly describe the strengths and limitations of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your paper makes some good points about the strengths and limitations of each approach, but it is unclear or</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your paper offers a clear and sound account of the strengths and limitations of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition to “credit”: Your focus on the strengths and limitations of the 2 conceptual approaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition to “distinction”, your account and analysis of strengths/weaknesses draws out some apt and nuanced</li> </ul>

each approach for your team's purposes [8]	each approach	incorrect in places,  · the connections you make to your teams' specific purposes are weak	each conceptual approach,  · your evaluations are clearly and aptly connected to your team's specific concern	evidences a deep understanding of the concepts and how they can inform your team's work;  · your account is insightfully informed by your thinking about social change as it pertains to your team's work	implications for public health actors' attempts to understanding social change beyond your team's immediate interests.
<b>Writing:</b> Does the paper include full bibliographic information (Vancouver or APA). Is it well structured, succinct and written lucidly? [8]	· Significant problems with referencing. References are missing or incomplete.  · Significant problems with written expression, structure and clarity	· Inconsistencies with (APA or Vancouver) referencing.  · Some problems with written expression, structure and clarity.	· Correct (APA or Vancouver) referencing.  · Sound written expression, logical structure.	· Correct (APA or Vancouver) referencing.  · As per "credit". In addition, the paper is structured in a way that advances a well-informed position.	· Correct (APA or Vancouver) referencing.  · As per "distinction". In addition, the paper is structured to advance an apt and nuanced position that illustrates deep engagement with concepts, ideas and research being covered in week 1-4.
<b>Overall</b>	Your work has not met the requirements of this task. You have misunderstood the point of the assignment, or failed to address the most important aspects of	<b>Pass (20-25 marks).</b>  You have demonstrated understanding of the task, but your work could have been further developed with better use of literature. Some important elements of the	<b>Credit (26-29 marks)</b>  The assignment comes together to make a logical coherent whole. The piece addresses the key criteria, advances a sound position, draws on appropriate	<b>Distinction (30-33 marks)</b>  In addition to "Credit" your paper also evidences a depth of thought and understanding. Specific assessment criteria relevant to this	<b>High Distinction (34-40 marks)</b>  This paper involves all of the characteristics of a Distinction paper but also a level of excellence that makes it outstanding. The level of originality, creativity, or depth

	<p>writing this paper, or failed to meet standards of formatting and referencing. In other words, it requires additional work before it can be passed.</p>	<p>assignment may have been treated superficially. Assessment criteria relevant to the assignment are sufficiently addressed to warrant a PS however the overall standard is no more than satisfactory.</p>	<p>literature, and shows some selectivity and judgment in deciding what is important and what is not. Communication is clear and effective. Specific assessment criteria relevant to this assignment are adequately addressed. (One or two aspects may be done to only a PS level but the overall result is still better than PS level).</p>	<p>assignment are adequately addressed and ALL aspects well done. Communication is very clear and effective. It demonstrates a higher order of critical thinking and reflection than that demonstrated at the level of CR.</p>	<p>of thought and understanding shown would be higher than normally expected for postgraduate students. It demonstrates a higher order of critical thinking and reflection than that demonstrated at the level of DN.</p>
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