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Public Health Careers: Behavioral Scientist

CDC Behavioral Scientist Laura Kollar, PhD, shares her story.

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Laura:

I am a behavioral scientist. And what this means in public health is that I look at issues like playing video games and how they can be helpful to people or positive, like building relationships or connections with others, or how they may have negative impacts such as affecting sleep quality. I work in the Division of Violence Prevention, and what this means is that we want to stop or prevent violence before it starts and make the world safe and healthy for everyone.

So I went to Michigan State University, where I received a strong liberal arts education, and from there I really knew that I wanted to make a change and make a difference and look at how I can affect people's lives with applied research and evaluation. And so I earned a Ph.D. in health communication at the University of Georgia specializing in communication and interventions.

And from there, I was able to translate that into a job at CDC. I use communication every single day, whether I'm writing, talking in meetings or other forms of communication, even email. It's just really important that we conduct ourselves and explain what we mean in very concise and clear terms. For me, that means I work with others to really help translate the science and the work that we're doing here at CDC and to messages that may appear on websites and press releases and scientific publications or many other forms so that we can communicate effectively with our public and with everyone else in the United States and across the world.

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