

Career Spotlight



CDC NERD Academy



Behavioral Scientist

A behavioral scientist studies why people behave the way they do and what factors influence decisions and encourage or discourage changes in behaviors. They use what they learn and know about human behavior to develop effective science-based interventions and programs to help people make positive changes.



**Meet Brandon,
a behavioral scientist**

Who do they work with?

Behavioral scientists work with individuals and groups. They can work with research or intervention teams, including doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals. They also work with health educators to encourage healthy lifestyles through behavior change techniques (e.g., incentives, positive encouragement, behavioral prompts) and educational outreach.

Where do they work?

Behavioral scientists work in many settings, such as schools, universities, treatment centers, prisons, and health care facilities. They also work in local and state health departments, and in federal and international public health agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

What skills do they use?

Behavioral scientists have strong research, observation, and analytical skills. They also have strong communication, problem solving, and interpersonal skills.

What qualifications do they need?

Behavioral scientists often have a bachelor's degree in behavioral science, behavioral psychology, or related fields, such as clinical psychology, social research, or sociology. To strengthen their background, most behavioral scientists get a master's or doctoral degree. Some master's and doctoral degree programs in public health focus on behavioral health science.

