

INTRODUCING COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

Community Psychology is a distinctive approach to understanding and solving community, organizational, and societal problems. While others also are concerned with community welfare, what makes community psychologists distinctive is that we apply well-established psychological principles and techniques, tested and proven in practice, to improve well-being and effectiveness at individual, organizational, and community levels. We do so with an explicit concern for social justice, inclusiveness and participation, the value of diversity, collaboration, prevention, and a focus on strengths.

What do Community Psychologists Do?

Community Psychologists work collaboratively with others to help strengthen delivery systems, provide cost-effective services, increase access to resources, and optimize quality for individuals, private and governmental organizations, corporations, and community groups. Community Psychologists build on existing strengths of people, organizations, and communities to create sustainable change.

Community Psychologists work as consultants, educators, grant writers, professors, human service managers, program directors, policy developers, service coordinators, evaluators, planners, trainers, team leaders, and researchers in all sectors including government, for profit and nonprofit organizations.

In addition to a solid grounding in the science of psychology, most Community Psychologists can:

- **Locate, evaluate, and apply information** from diverse information sources to new situations.
- **Incorporate psychological, ecological, and systems level understanding** into community development processes.
- **Contribute to organizational decision-making** as part of a collaborative effort.
- **Evaluate programs/services:** Develop evaluation designs. Collect, analyze, report, and interpret evaluation data.
- **Plan and conduct community-based applied research.**
- **Translate policy into community and organizational plans and programs** with observable outcomes.
- **Provide leadership,** supervisory, and mentoring skills by organizing, directing, and managing services offered.
- **Communicate effectively** in both technical and lay language with diverse stakeholder groups.
- **Build and maintain collaborations** with a network of clients, communities, organizations, and other involved professions. Negotiate and mediate between different stakeholder groups around a particular issue.
- **Demonstrate and teach** cultural competence and other key relationship skills to a wide range of constituencies.
- **Develop social marketing** and other media-based campaigns.

Where do Community Psychologists Work or Consult? (Examples)

Academic settings	Foundations
Health and human service agencies	Community development, architectural, planning, and environmental organizations
Education Systems	Research centers, independent consulting groups, evaluation firms
Corporations, for-profit and non-profit organizations	Public policy and community planning and development organizations
Government systems – legislative and executive branches	
Community-based organizations, advocacy groups, religious institutions, and neighborhood groups	

How Do Community Psychologists Add Distinctive Value?

Community psychologists add value by combining psychological science with knowledge of community and social systems through an ecological approach. We have the implementation skills to put theory, research, policy, and strategy into action in challenging and divergent settings. We bring a unique psychological understanding of margin and mission to your own organization and to the constituencies who are your customers, suppliers, and strategic partners. Most importantly, we are adaptive, values-based professionals who thrive on working well with others in teams and task forces. We are well equipped by training to blend our skill sets with those of other professions, and to work collaboratively toward systems and community improvement.

For More Information about Community Psychology

Visit the Practice Connection website at <http://www.scra27.org/practice>
or The Community Toolbox at <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/>; a free resource developed by Community Psychologists