

# **FACULTY OF ARTS, EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

**School of Psychology**

**Unit Code: APA 4015**

**Unit Title: Community Psychology**

**Unit Guide (REVISED)  
2007**

**Associate Professor Adrian Fisher**

We acknowledge the Elders, families and forebears of the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung tribes of the Kulin Nation who were the custodians of University land for many centuries. We acknowledge that the land on which we meet was the place of age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal and that the Kulin Nation people's living culture had and has a unique role in the life of this region.

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## UNIT CALENDAR

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<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Lecturer</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1. 26/02/07	Introduction, history and theories	Adrian Fisher	
2. 5/03/07	Values in Community Psychology and levels of analysis	Adrian Fisher	
3. 12/03/07	Issues in Community Research – including levels of analysis	Adrian Fisher	
4. 19/03/07	Critiques of psychology and psychological practice	Adrian Fisher	
5. 26/03/07	Psychological sense of community	Adrian Fisher	
6. 2/04/07	Sense of Community and Social Capital	Adrian Fisher	
7. 23/04/07	Social support and self-help groups in health	Adrian Fisher	
8. 30/04/07 9. 07/05/07	Prevention and wellness in Community Psychology	Adrian Fisher	
10. 07/05/07	Empowerment philosophy and political nature	Adrian Fisher	
11. 14/05/07	Resilience	Adrian Fisher	
12. 21/05/07	Social Change	Adrian Fisher	

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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### Website

The Faculty of Arts, Education and Human Development hosts a website which contains a number of documents which you will find useful.

### On this site you will find:

**How to select your units and work out your timetable** – this offers an overview of degree structures.

**The timetable** – here you will find the times of classes and the rooms where they are held. It is worth checking these details close to the start of semester in case anything has changed.

**Useful web addresses** – this shows you how to access your VU email address. You will find that the faculty, your lecturers and tutors will send you important emails during the semester and it is crucial that you are able to access this information.

**Assignment cover sheets** – you can download these sheets here.

**Students rights and responsibilities** – this is a list of what you can expect from studying at university, and what the university expects from you.

**Plagiarism** – there is a student's guide to plagiarism, how to avoid it and the penalties involved in engaging in plagiarism or academic dishonesty available here.

**Essay guide online** – here you will find a guide to the writing and presenting of essays. It contains an overview of structuring essays, of providing comprehensive references (Oxford, Harvard and APA) and of compiling a reference list.

**Enrolling as a non-award student** – this is an overview of enrolling in single units rather than in a whole degree.

### Other useful information:

**Teaching and Learning Support** – there are a number of academic support services offered to students which include:

- Study skills workshops
- Transitional issues for students new to higher education
- FAQs - the questions often asked by students
- Skills needed for your studies e.g. oral presentations
- General study skills - What is a lecture? What is a tutorial?
- Exam techniques
- Writing academic essays
- Information specific to particular units or courses
- Postgraduate and international students
- Mentoring
- Plagiarism

### Handing in assignments

The unit coordinator specifies the procedure

### Penalties for late assignments

The unit coordinator specifies the procedure

### Special consideration

If you feel that illness or personal difficulties have impaired your performance you may ask for Special Consideration which can facilitate late submission, and alternative arrangements for assignments. This can cover both emotional and physical difficulties. You need to contact a student counsellor to arrange this.

### Arrangements for disabled students

The unit coordinator specifies the procedure

## INTRODUCTION

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Community Psychology explores the fit between groups and their wider community, attempting to understand where and why problems may be occurring. More importantly, Community Psychology examines the ways in which these problems may be alleviated, or even prevented.

Community Psychology has its foundations in community mental health as well as in applied social, organisational, environmental and ecological psychology. Its unique identity is defined through its focus on communities as the primary unit for understanding and action, and its recognition that the psychological well being of individuals cannot be understood in isolation from broader social contexts.

For many, Community Psychology is an explicitly political approach to Psychology. It looks at power structures within communities and how these serve some groups and exclude others. Community Psychology looks at the practice of Psychology and examines how the definition of problems may lead to looking for causes within each individual who presents, rather than finding out if there are broader causes at work. In this way, Community Psychology challenges some of the ideas of the 'professional' as the distributor of knowledge and favours collaborative partnership approaches.

### **Format:**

This class will be in seminar format.

### **Class Materials:**

Textbook: Dalton, J.H., Elias, M.J., & Wandersman, A. (2007). *Community psychology: Linking individuals and communities (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Under each week there will be additional readings to be completed

### **Staff:**

Associate Professor Adrian Fisher

### **Learning Outcomes:**

At the end of this unit the student should be able to:

1. Define fundamental terms in Community Psychology and show their historical development within the discipline
2. Explain multiple levels of impact and intervention
3. Apply your understanding of the above points in analysing the psycho-political bases of Community Psychology.
4. Critically evaluate theories underpinning the aetiology and interventions in mental health

## UNIT OUTLINE

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### Week 1

**Topic: Introduction to Community Psychology – Historical developments**

**Introductions. Course outline, requirements and expectations. Exercises. Background stuff.**

This is where we get to know each other, why we are in the course, what we plan to do with it, etc. Also, all those things about the work you have to do, and when work is due.

### **History and development of Community Psychology - USA, Australia and New Zealand**

2005 represents the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of a key event in the foundation and development of community psychology – The Swampscott Conference. This was a special conference designed to examine new ways of training psychologists to meet community demands. For those interested, the full report of the conference is available: <http://www.conferences.uiuc.edu/scra/Community%20Psych.pdf>

#### **Essential Reading:**

Dalton et al., Chapter 1, 2

#### **Further Reading:**

1. Gridley, H., Fisher, A. T., Thomas, D. R., & Bishop, B. (2007). The development of Community psychology in Australia and New Zealand. *Australian Psychologist*, 42, 15-22
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### Week 2

**Topic: Values in community psychology**

A key feature of Community Psychology is the importance placed on explicit values within research and practice. Key elements of these will be explored – including the value placed on multiple levels of analysis and intervention.

#### **Essential Reading:**

Dalton et al., Chapter 1, 2

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### Week 3

**Topic: Issues in Community Research – including levels of analysis**

In this session we will discuss some of the underpinning philosophies of more traditional psychological research, implicit value assumptions and limitations. We will then cover alternative approaches to research – especially considering the inherent political uses to which it can be put.

#### **Essential Reading:**

Dalton et al. Chapters 3, 4.

#### **Further Reading:**

1. <http://www.photovoice.com/>
2. Lykes, M.B., TerreBlanche, M. & Hamber, B. (2003). Narrating survival and change in Guatemala and South Africa: The politics of representation and a liberatory community psychology. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 31(1/2), 79-90.
3. Tolan, P., Keys, C., Chertok, F & Jason, L. (1990). (Eds.). Researching community psychology: Issues of theory and methods. Washington: APS. **362.2042072 RES**

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## Week 4

### Topic: Critiques of psychology and psychological practice.

There are those who have analysed the ways in which psychology has been researched, taught and practised. In this session we will consider some of these to see what we can learn.

#### Essential Reading:

1. Cotton, P. (1998). The framing of knowledge and practice in psychology: A response to John. *The Australian Psychologist* 33, 31-37.
2. John, I.D. (1998). Some reflections on Cotton's response. *Australian Psychologist* 33, 38-39.
3. John, I.D. (1998). The scientist-practitioner model: A critical examination. *Australian Psychologist*, 33, 24-30.
4. Prilleltensky, I. (1989). Psychology and the status quo. *American Psychologist*, 44, 795-802.

#### Further Reading:

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## Week 5

### Topic: Psychological sense of community

In this session we will explore the theoretical and practical applications to the idea of sense of community. It will cover lay use of the concept as well as the research based ideas

#### Essential Reading:

Dalton et al. Chapter 6

#### Further Reading:

1. Bess, K. D., Fisher, A. T., Sonn, C. C., & Bishop, B. J. (2002). Psychological sense of community: Theory, research, and application. In A. T. Fisher, C. C. Sonn and B. J. Bishop (Eds.), *Psychological sense of community: Research, applications and implications* (pp. 3 – 22). New York: Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers.
2. McMillan, D. W. (1996). Sense of community. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 24, 315-325.
3. McMillan, D.W. & Chavis, D.M. (1986). Sense of community: A definition and theory. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 14, 6-23.
4. Sarason, S.B. (1974). *The psychological sense of community: Prospects for a community psychology*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass. (Read Chapter 6).

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## Week 6

### Topic: Sense of community and social capital

A concept that is closely related to sense of community is that of social capital. It is also a concept that has a lot of influence with policy makers and politicians around the world. But what does it really mean?

#### Essential Reading:

Dalton et al. Chapter 6

#### Further Reading:

1. Campbell, C., & Gillies, P. (2001) Conceptualising 'social capital' for health promotion in small local communities in England: A micro-qualitative study. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 11, 329-346.

2. DeFilippis, J. (2001). The myth of social capital in community development. *Housing Policy Debate*, 12, 781-806. [http://www.fanniemaefoundation.org/programs/hpd/pdf/HPD\\_1204\\_defilippis.pdf](http://www.fanniemaefoundation.org/programs/hpd/pdf/HPD_1204_defilippis.pdf)
  3. Perkins, D.D., Hughey, J., & Speer, P.W. (2002). Community psychology perspectives on social capital theory and community development practice. *Journal of the Community Development Society*, 33, 33-52. <http://www.people.vanderbilt.edu/~douglas.d.perkins/JCDS.02.pdf>
  4. Putnam, R. D. (1993). The prosperous community: Social capital and public life. *The American Prospect*, 4(13): <http://www.prospect.org/web/page.ww?section=root&name=ViewPrint&articleId=5175>
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## Week 7

### Topic: Social support and self-help groups

While much of medicine and psychology emphasises the role of the professional in the delivery of services, there are many functions served by people who share a common problem coming together to provide support and information to each other.

#### Essential Reading:

Dalton et al. Chapter 8 (especially pp. 264—278).

#### Further Reading:

1. Chinman, M., Kloos, B., O'Connell, M. & Davidson, I. (2002). Service providers' views about psychiatric mutual support groups. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 30, 349-366.
  2. Heller, K., & Swindle, R. W. (1983). Social networks, perceived social support, and coping with stress. In R. D. Felner, L. A. Jason, J. N. Moritsugu, and S. S. Farber (Eds.), *Preventive psychology: Theory, research and practice* (pp.87 – 103). New York: Pergamon Press.
  3. [http://www.aa.org.au/factfile/fact\\_file\\_twelve\\_steps.php?nav=nc](http://www.aa.org.au/factfile/fact_file_twelve_steps.php?nav=nc)
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## Week 8 and 9

### Topic: Prevention and health promotion in community psychology

The tradition of psychology has been one of treatment. With community psychology this has moved on in order to understand ways of preventing mental health problems, or at least ameliorating their impacts on individuals and communities.

#### Essential Reading:

Dalton et al. Chapters 9, 10, 11

#### Further Reading:

1. Albee, G. (1996). Revolutions and Counterrevolutions in Prevention. *American Psychologist* 51, 1130-1133.
  2. Cowen, E. L. (1977). Baby-steps towards primary prevention. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 5, 1-22.
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## Week 10

### Topic: Empowerment philosophy and political nature

While prevention was seen as a major step forward in thinking and practise in psychology, most of the models used employed an inherent power differential replicating the medical model. Rappaport proposed a model of empowerment to redress the issue.

**Essential Reading:**

Dalton et al. Chapter 12

**Further Reading:**

1. Kieffer, C. H. (1984). Citizen empowerment: A developmental perspective. *Prevention in Human Services* 3, 9-36.
  2. Rappaport, J. (1981). In praise of paradox: A social policy of empowerment over prevention. *Journal of Community Psychology* 9, 1-25.
  3. Rappaport, J. (1987). Terms of empowerment/exemplars of prevention: Toward a theory for community psychology. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 15, 121- 148.
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**Week 11**

**Topic: Resilience**

**Essential Reading:**

**Further Reading:**

1. Luthar, S. S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). The construct of resilience: Implications for interventions and social policies. *Child Development*, 71, 543-562.  
**Following this article is a number of commentary papers that you may read.**
  2. Fuller, A. (nd). *Programs that promote resilience in communities at key developmental stages.*  
<http://www.andrewfuller.com.au/research/resPrimer.pdf>
  3. Fuller, A. (nd). *A blueprint for the development of social competencies in schools.*  
<http://www.andrewfuller.com.au/resilience/blueprint.pdf>
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**Week 12**

**Topic: Social change**

While much of psychology focuses on the individual or other small group, community psychology recognises that the locus of many problems is within the society and to alleviate problems may require interventions to change society.

**Essential Reading:**

Dalton et al. Chapters 12, 13

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## ASSESSMENT

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The assessment for this unit will have two linked parts. The topic will be **MyVU** to use a term in the computer system. For this assignment, students will use the PHOTOVOICE data collection technique to photograph aspects of VU that have salience for them, they will then write an accompanying piece to explain the photographs and their meanings, and also to talk about those photographs that they wished they could have or should have taken.

There will be 2 components to the project. The first is a research proposal of approximately 10 pages.

The assessment for this unit is as follows:

1.	Proposal	40%
2.	Photo presentation and analysis	60%
		100%

Paragraph on the submission of assignments including:

- The written components are to be submitted to my pigeonhole by 5 pm on the day set.
- The Photovoice display will be presented in class, and handed in then.
- Electronic copies are not required, but may be asked for to check.
- Late submission penalties are in line with the School of Psychology policy

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### 1. ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT 1

#### Proposal.

The proposal will be approximately 10 pages in length and must have the following components:

#### & Introduction

- Introduction to the specific topic
- Why it is important (extent of problem etc)
- A short literature review
- Aims and significance of the research
- Hypotheses or research questions

#### & Method

- Participants – including number, characteristics, and why this particular sample was chosen (just saying a convenience sample is NOT acceptable)
- Materials – what you actually intend to use in your research, including data collection issues
- Procedure – exactly how you are to go about the research

#### & Proposed analyses

- Once you have your data, how do you intend to analyse them – specific data handling and analysis techniques. Why have these been chosen.

**Assessment Criteria:**

A **satisfactory** completion of assignment requires:

- Clear identification of the research question
- Relevant literature critically reviewed
- Link between literature and research question is clear and justified
- Method is clearly and accurately described and justified
- Proposed analyses are in line with the research questions and literature.
- Correct APA formatting, spelling, grammar and punctuation.

The proposal is due at 5 pm 26 March 2007

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**2. ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT 2****Photovoice display and summary**

Each student will mount a poster displaying their VU photographs and give a short description to the class.

Accompanying this display will be a written piece of 15 pages that builds on the literature, interprets the findings from the research, and which provides a critique of the approach used

**Assessment Criteria:**

A **satisfactory** completion of assignment requires:

- Presentation of the Photovoice display
- Clear and concise oral presentation of the photographs and their meanings
- Written analysis provides link between photographs and theory
- Clear and defined link of method to research questions
- Appropriate presentation of data findings
- Critique of research approach
- Correct APA formatting, spelling, grammar and punctuation

Presentation due last class – 28 May 2007

Written assignment due 5 pm 15 June 2007.