



Consultation on Education for Community Psychology Practice
Community Psychology Practice Council (CPPC) & Council of Education Programs (CEP)
January 21, 2011

Mission: To facilitate articulation by community psychology training programs of practice competencies, refinement and/or development of new curricula, field studies, community partnerships, university partnerships, and community-university partnerships that will directly benefit student development of practice skills in community psychology.

Goals: The ultimate goal of this initiative is for Community Psychology practitioners to be equipped with key community practice skill set upon graduation. This proposal purports to bring us to such a goal through a consultative process and has two sub-goals: 1) to consult with graduate programs to develop context-specific training opportunities for students, and 2) learn, document and disseminate what is learned about the education of practitioners from this consultation process to share with all community psychology graduate programs.

Objectives:

1. CPPC and CEP will develop a pilot consultative process that engages participating faculty and students in articulating current and desired practice competencies; and in identifying curricular, program, university, community, and national resources that can be utilized to support and strengthen student preparation for community psychology practice
2. Among the graduate programs that apply, those selected will complete the pilot consultative process to enhance training in community psychology practice skills (*Note: Selection criteria needs to be further developed but involves the input of a joint committee between the CEP and CPPC*).
3. By the end of the consultative process participating programs will articulate the practice competencies they have chosen to develop, the activities they plan to implement in order to promote community psychology practice opportunities specific to those competencies, and a plan to evaluate progress and troubleshoot barriers that arise.
4. The graduate psychology programs that participate in the consultation will implement preferred changes along with an internal evaluation process to help determine whether changes enhance their students' community practice skills.
5. Participating programs and CPPC-CEP Joint Task Group will collaborate to report results to the SCRA Executive Committee and to disseminate the results of their efforts to the field as a whole.

History:

In the last several years, there has been a growing recognition of the role that community psychology practice can play in generating, implementing, and managing community and system improvements. This is evidenced by a developing body of information about community psychology practice, and by the formation of the Community Psychology Practice Group in 2006.

Members of the Practice Group have developed a definition of community psychology practice:

”The aim of community psychology practice is to ‘strengthen the capacity of communities to meet the needs of constituents and help them realize their dreams in order to promote well-being, social justice, economic equity and self-determination through systems, organizational and/or individual change.’” (Julian D. (2006) The Community Psychologist vol 39 No. 4.)

In addition, Raymond Scott with the support of the Practice Group has hypothesized that a number of skill sets or practice competencies may provide a basis for future efforts to better prepare students intent on practice-oriented careers. (Scott, R. (2007). Establishing core competencies for students in community psychology training. The Community Psychologist, 40(1), 38-41. [Commentaries, pp. 41-46.]

The recent launch of the Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice is representative of the commitment to practice as a significant part of the field of Community Psychology.

The current elevation of the Practice Group into the Community Psychology Practice Council (CPPC) also reflects recognition of the importance of practice within the field.

At the 2009 Biennial Conference, members of the Community Psychology Practice Group and the Council of Education Programs (CEP) developed a joint CEP-Practice joint Task Force to work toward strengthening the education of practice in graduate training programs. That task force is now active, and submits this proposal for SCRA Executive Committee consideration.

Needs Assessment:

Members of the CPPC have conducted two surveys regarding training for practice.

The first was a survey of community psychology training programs, conducted in 2008 and reported by Dziadkowiec & Jimenez (2009). Fifty six training programs responded to that survey. Only nineteen programs (34%) reported having specified definitions of Community Psychology Practice (CPP). Twenty-five programs either provided a statement of how they define CPP, or commented on their lack of definition. Of this 25, 19 programs stated that say they have an articulated statement of CPP that guides their curriculum and pedagogy. Interestingly, some of these 19 statements were not definitions but descriptions of training practices.

The authors reported how responding programs provided training in a number of Scott’s key skills:

The authors concluded that quantitative results suggested training programs at that time placed a high emphasis on program development and applied/community research, and lower emphasis on training in

collaboration, consultation, and advocacy, and related skills. They also compared these results with those from a 2005 graduate program survey (Gatlin, Rushenberg, & Hazel, 2009). They reported:

“CPP skills with the highest average intensity scores in 2005 included: community based interventions, working with diverse communities, community-based research, program evaluation, quantitative methods, ecological/community systems theory, prevention science, oral presentations, and professional writing. Again, there is an emphasis on interventions and applied research. Working with diverse communities may be similar to the collaboration skills that received intermediate emphasis in our 2008 survey findings.

Skills that received “intermediate” training intensity scores in 2005 included: participatory action research, qualitative methods, health promotion, prevention program implementation, community consultation, and social action. These data converge with the 2008 survey findings in the areas of consultation and implementation of programs.

Skills with the lowest intensity scores included: grant-writing, advocacy, policy change/development/implementation, coalition-building, community organizing, and socio-political development. These match well with 2008 survey low-intensity areas such as advocacy, group processes, resource development, leadership/supervision, and program/service management.”

| CPP Skills | Number of respondents | “Not readily available” per 2008 program survey | Available outside the program | Available in optional coursework | Available in required coursework | Integrated in multiple aspects of the program | “Not Readily Available” per respondents in 2009 VP survey |
|--|-----------------------|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Advocacy | 55 | 5% | 26% | 34% | 20% | 15% | 62.8% |
| Community Assessment/Program Evaluation | 54 | 0% | 9% | 25% | 39% | 27% | 4.2% |
| Organizational Assessment | 54 | 3% | 18% | 32% | 27% | 20% | 31.2% |
| Capacity Building | 54 | 6% | 14% | 32% | 25% | 24% | 42.7% |
| Collaboration/Consultation | 54 | 3% | 20% | 25% | 28% | 24% | 51.4% |
| Communication | 54 | 4% | 12% | 27% | 27% | 30% | 41.3% |
| Group Processes | 54 | 4% | 29% | 25% | 23% | 17% | 36.4% |
| Research | 54 | 0% | 5% | 18% | 35% | 42% | 5.0% |
| Interventions | 54 | 0% | 6% | 25% | 40% | 29% | 13.5% |
| Leadership Supervisory and Mentoring Skills | 53 | 8% | 25% | 30% | 15% | 22% | 60.3% |
| Resource Development | 54 | 6% | 16% | 37% | 23% | 18% | 56.6% |
| Professional Judgment | 54 | 3% | 13% | 15% | 28% | 41% | 36.2% |
| Service, Delivery, Planning, and Management | 54 | 24% | 24% | 33% | 8% | 11% | 66.2% |

In 2009, the Practice Group undertook the development of a “Community Psychology Value Proposition” and initiated that process with a survey distributed to participants on the SCRA listserv (see attached). One hundred forty-six individuals responded. On average, they had received their highest degree ten years earlier. They were asked to indicate how their own training in key skill sets had occurred within their training program, how often they use those skills in practice, and to rate their current proficiency in each skill set:

Value Proposition Survey Results: Percentage of Responses

| Skill Set | Academic Training Occurred Within Department | Used Frequently to Always in Practice | Current Proficiency Rated Average to Expert/Instructor |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Ethical Professional Practice | 80 % | 78.2 % | 92.1 % |
| Locate, Evaluate and Apply Information | 80 % | 90.1 % | 96.4 % |
| Community-based Applied Research | 87.1 % | 90 % | 85.1 % |
| Assessment and Program Evaluation | 84.7 % | 88.2 % | 79 % |
| Ecological, Systems, and Community Level Understanding | 83.4 % | 86.1 % | 93 % |
| Intervention and Program Planning and Development | 81.6 % | 71.6 % | 88.6 % |
| Disseminating Information, Communication Skills | 51.1 % | 79.2 % | 90.1 % |
| Resource Development | 32.2 % | 56 % | 70.5 % |
| Political Advocacy Skills | 27.7 % | 34.1 % | 57 % |
| Capacity Building | 50.4 % | 59.8 % | 74.6 % |
| Organizational Assessment, Development and Consultation | 60.3 % | 63.1 % | 71.7 % |
| Small and Large Group Processes | 53.6 % | 70.7 % | 80.7 % |
| Build and Maintain Collaborations | 40.1 % | 80.5 % | 82.4 % |
| Community Organizing Skills | 35.4 % | 27.8 % | 54.3 % |
| Leadership, Supervisory and Mentoring Skills | 31.5 % | 71.4 % | 85 % |
| Service Delivery Planning and Management | 20.9 % | 35.2 % | 62 % |
| Professional Judgment | 90.6% | 90.6% | 90.6% |

The findings presented in the table above suggest that a core curriculum may have emerged among graduate training programs, represented by the first six skill sets listed above. Those skill sets seem to focus more upon the description and evaluation of community needs/issues. However, other skill sets equipping community psychologists to help implement collaborative community change efforts at “street level” appear to have been taught much less consistently in graduate community psychology programs.

Note also, the major differences between reported unavailability of training in these skill sets reported by graduate programs in the first survey and by respondents in the most recent survey. Note also, because it was only asked on the VP survey, that 54 percent of respondents reported no training in Community Organizing skills had been available to them in academic settings.

Taken together, it continues to appear that key community psychology implementation skills are taught less frequently and less consistently than are research and evaluation skills. It also appears that graduate

programs' belief that they train consistently in key practice skills is not shared by many of those who have graduated from training programs and responded to the Value Proposition survey.

Summary of the Problem and Points for Consideration:

These results also suggest serious concerns about the ways in which training programs prepare graduate students in community psychology for practice. We estimate that at least half of all community psychology graduates work in practice positions. We can assume that most graduate programs see around 50% of their graduates go into practice rather than academia. Here are some main points of concern we have learned from graduate program surveys that should be taken seriously:

- Few graduate programs have a clear definition of community psychology practice for their program.
- Graduate programs over-emphasize some CP skills and down play others, which poses problems for the field. For example, how do we claim the capacity to create social change when policy, advocacy, and community organizing are not offered consistently in training programs?
- Without the clarification of these above points, graduate students and applicants do not understand which graduate programs offer what specialization areas for practice.
- To date, many graduate programs have seemingly not felt much pressure to address the practice needs of their graduate students; and many students have reported feeling intimidated in their program when they raise those needs. The results of our graduate program surveys suggest a clear lack of accountability for training in effective practice skills.
- SCRA, as the professional association for community psychology, needs to feel some obligation to ensure that those large numbers of graduates who go into practice are well prepared and associate their practice skills with the field of community psychology.
- The EC should also be concerned that across graduate programs community psychology graduates are being trained inconsistently in the skills we purport to be critical to the field. If the field is to become recognized as a real player in systems improvement and community development, rather than wish we were recognized as such, more consistent and effective practice skill training is important across the field as a whole. Adequate preparation for practice must be consistent with our core mission and values.

Rationale for Proposed Consultation Pilot:

The CPPC believes that the core of community psychology practice is the ability to collaborate with neighborhoods, communities, and participants in social systems and to help implement social systems improvements.

We understand that every graduate program is different, and that training students for practice will vary from department to department. There is not yet a clear consensus within the profession about which skill sets are “core” and should be taught in graduate training programs.

We understand further that no human being will graduate fully prepared to practice all of the hypothesized Community Psychology skill sets. Development of comprehensive practice competence is an ongoing learning process that will evolve further as a result of subsequent experience and continuing professional education after graduation. SCRA is therefore presented with an important continuing professional education opportunity for community psychologists, and for collaborating with other professions and community members.

We also understand from an organizational development perspective that implementation of the types of organizational changes participating graduate programs may choose will likely necessitate a more intensive consultative process with faculty and students, rather than a purely educational approach. The proposed consultation process provides one means of addressing these issues.

Overview of Proposed Consultative Process:

This proposed consultation process will involve eight phases:

- Self-Evaluation
- Needs assessment
- Resource Identification
- Program planning
- Implementation
- Evaluation
- Follow-Up
- Dissemination

Phase one will occur during the application process. Phases two, three, and four will occur during on-site consultation visits. Phases five, six, seven, and eight will occur after the on-site consultation visit but in collaboration with the consultation team. Status reports to the EC will be provided throughout the process.

PHASE 1: Self Evaluation (as part of the application process prior to a consultative visit).

Graduate education programs interested in participating in this innovative consultation process will be invited to submit applications. Their application will include a preliminary assessment of the issues as seen by community psychology faculty and students, and a commitment by them to the consultation process. Applicant programs able to demonstrate that they can assemble and sustain a sufficient number of faculty and students over the course of the change process and/or can contribute a portion of the consultation expenses will be given priority for consultation. The CEP-CPPC Practice Joint Task Force will choose the successful applicant(s) each year. Working with the selected graduate program, a match between the needs of the program and the competencies of the consultation team will be made .

As part of the evaluation we will ask groups of faculty and independently groups of students to address the following questions:

- Does your program have an explicit definition of community psychology practice? If so what is it? If not what would you say the implicit definition is?
- What community psychology practice competencies (see attached list for ideas but do not be limited by this list) does your program offer as your special emphasis?
- How do students get these competencies?
 - In classes offered by your department
 - In classes offered in other departments

- In practicum and internships
- In exposure to practicing community psychologists as role models and mentors/supervisors
- Other
- How would you rate your program on its ability to prepare students for community psychology practice (as defined by your program?)
- What are your hopes, goals, and questions regarding the consultation? If your program is selected, what do you feel would be some specific community psychology practice issues to focus on through the consultative process?

Consultants will work closely with the host site(s) prior to on-site activities, to develop a process that accommodates the special needs, interests, and issues important to participating faculty and students. Subsequently, consultation teams consisting of a representative from the CEP-CPPC Task Force and one from an academic institution will travel to the graduate education program, be on-site for two days, working with a mixed group of faculty and students (no limit to the number) and will provide the following distinct activities summarized below:

PHASE 2: Need & Asset Assessment on site (2-3 hrs)

- Timeline process with an appreciative inquiry emphasis to review historically what the program has done well when at its very best and to allow an appreciation of the past while considering the contemporary strengths and needs of the program.
- Summary and group reflection on the issues described in the application.
- SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis of the state of the program's training of students for community psychology practice.
- Connections the program has with non-academic CP practitioners (e.g. alumni, SCRA members).

PHASE 3: Creating a Vision – helping the program articulate what its vision and goals are for the future (1 hr). Use of small mixed groups of faculty and students sharing and reaching universal vision. If they could successfully transform their program:

- What would they like their definition of practice to be?
- What competencies would they like to focus on?
- How would they like to deliver those competencies?

PHASE 4: Program Planning (2-3 hrs)

- Based on the SWOT and the Vision – small groups do a force field analysis to see what are the forces keeping them where they are and then what actions might reduce barriers or strengthen supports to move the program forward.
- Small groups of faculty and students brainstorm top ideas that could really help make a change
- As a large group prioritize the brainstormed items (priority dots)

PHASE 5: Implementation (1-2 hrs)

- The group forms 2-3 workgroups based on the identified priorities with students and faculty picking which item they want to work on.
- Work groups meet separately develop an action plan for moving forward and chose interim leadership and schedule next meeting
- Sub groups re-convene and report out.

PHASE 6: Evaluation of visit and clarification of next steps

- Evaluation instrument may include:

- Evaluation of consultant by program.
- Evaluate consultative process.
- Evaluate extent to which new initiatives are implemented.
- Evaluate the extent to which initiatives result in new opportunities for students to develop competencies.

PHASE 7: Follow up

- Four two hour follow up phone calls with leaders of the work groups and consultants and any other who want to join to (at one month, two month, three months and six months):
- Summarize progress
- Raise issues and questions where they need help
- Identify and problem solve barriers to progress
- The consultation team will provide up to 4 two-hour phone consultations in the 12-month period following the on-site consultation to evaluate longer term effects and outcomes.

PHASE 8: Dissemination of Information

- There will be a strong focus on the development of information, educational materials, tools and the documentation of the process for later dissemination
- Contributions and lessons learned for the field regarding practitioner training will be documented.
- A joint effort between consultants and the graduate program requires commitment by faculty and students to work together to write up accomplishments and lessons learned.
- Information will be disseminated to the host university including administrators
- Consultant team will facilitate a session with the program and the CEP-CPPC Joint Task Group to address several questions related to enhancing opportunities for CP practice training for the field.
- Summarize content generated from facilitated session where the product will be provided to the graduate program as well as taken to the CEP-CPPC Joint Task Group for consideration of what can be learned about CP training for the field of CP.
 - Products serve as a tool for advertising the field and recruiting students who aspire to practice-oriented careers
 - Products serve as a set of recommendations for enhanced training for practice within the host graduate program and other graduate training programs
 - Products identify important resources within the SCRA membership and elsewhere that may serve as sustainable resources for CP practitioners and graduate training programs
 - Working with host sites, the products will be developed into articles for publication in TCP, GJCPP, AJCP, Idealist.com, and/or Community Toolbox.

Attachment: Community Psychology Value Proposition

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 combine psychological science with knowledge of community and social systems, and with an ecological approach as our distinct value added. 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.scr27.org/resources/practiceco>
or The Community Toolbox at <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/>; a free resource developed by Community Psychologists