

Graduate Studies in Counselling Psychology

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the Canadian Psychological Association Section on Counselling Psychology

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Note: The information provided in this presentation has been update in June 2017. Periodical updates are made to the presentation, so please check the Section on Counselling Psychology's website to ensure that you are working with the latest version: <http://www.cpa.ca/aboutcpa/cpasections/counsellingpsychology/#>

Overview

- Defining Counselling Psychology (CP), what exactly is it?
- How does CP compare to others psychology related professions/and counselling streams?
- What sets CP apart?
- Research vs. Non-research degrees
- Difference between Master's and Doctoral Degrees
- CPA Standards of practice (e.g., Licensure)
- Job Titles and Career Options
- Common Misconceptions of CP
- Training Programs in Canada
- Some Helpful Resources



What is Counselling Psychology?

“Counselling psychology is a broad specialization within professional psychology concerned with *using psychological principles to enhance and promote the positive growth, well-being, and mental health* of individuals, families, groups, and the broader community. Counselling psychologists bring a collaborative, developmental, multicultural, and wellness perspective to their research and practice. They *work with many types of individuals*, including those experiencing distress and difficulties associated with life events and transitions, decision-making, work/career/education, family and social relationships, and mental health and physical health concerns. In addition to remediation, counselling psychologists *engage in prevention, psycho-education and advocacy.*”

(Canadian Psychological Association, CPA, 2009)

What is Counselling Psychology compared to Other Psychological/Health Professions

“A counselling psychologist studies how we think, feel, and behave from a scientific viewpoint and applies this knowledge to help people understand, explain, and change their behaviour.”

- Increase in industrialization and enrollment in secondary school
- After WWII = enormous demand to aid returned soldiers transition back to civilians

Their work more emphasizes:

- A variety of evidence-based therapeutic strategies to assist clients with diverse challenges (personal, vocational, emotional, interpersonal);
- A holistic, collaborative, multicultural perspective to prevent and redress mental health issues;
- Evidence to inform the selection and implementation of assessment and intervention strategies, while tailoring services to meet the specific needs and values of clients.



“Visualize yourself not falling off the wall.”

(CPA, 2016; Morgan & Cohen, 2008; Whiteley, 1984)

... compared to Psychiatry

“Psychiatrists are medical doctors who go on to specialize in mental health and mental disorders.”

Their work more emphasizes:

- Use of the medical model to help in the diagnosis and treatment of various mental health disorders;
- Prescription of medications to assist with mental health symptom reduction;
- Provision of evidence-based therapeutic approaches to supplement pharmacological treatment.



(CPA, 2016)

...compared to Clinical Psychology

There is significant overlap across training programs in clinical and counselling psychology, so much so in that “combined” programs have been in existence since the 1970s.

Their work more emphasizes:

- ❑ Use of the medical model to help in the diagnosis and treatment of various mental health disorders;
- ❑ Assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health disorders. (Programs typically require more standardized, formal assessment training than do Counselling Psychology programs);
- ❑ Focus on psychopathology compared to counselling psychology training programs;
- ❑ Numerous evidence-based therapeutic approaches, however Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Psychodynamic therapies dominate;
- ❑ Professional training/practicums in inpatient and medical settings.



(Beutler et al., 2004; Cobb et al., 2004; Kuther & Morgan, 2004; Morgan & Cohen, 2008; Ogunfowora & Drapeau, 2008)

...compared to School Psychology

School psychologists apply expertise in mental health, learning, and behaviour, to help children, youth and families succeed academically, socially, behaviourally, and emotionally.

History: School psychology emerged from interest in child study and clinical psychology. Starting as a response to compulsory schooling, it aimed to provide opportunity for separate special educational programs for 'atypical' children.

Their work more emphasizes:

- ❑ Work with children and youth, primarily within academic settings;
- ❑ Assessment of cognitive, academic, and social-emotional skills in youth and children;
- ❑ Collaboration with parents, teachers, and mental health professionals through program planning and consultation;
- ❑ A strong focus on standardized assessment, with less time spent on therapeutic intervention.



(Fagan, 1992)

...compared to Other Counselling Professionals

The terms “Counsellor”, and “Therapist” is not a protected title, and therefore some people register their services through different credentialing bodies that have different requirements in order to practice. May include titles such as Counselling Therapist, Vocational Guidance Counsellor, Mental Health Therapist, Psychotherapist, among others.

Their work more emphasizes:

- ❑ Wellness, relationships, personal growth, career development, personal growth, and coping with crisis;
- ❑ Application of recognized cognitive, affective, expressive, somatic, spiritual, developmental, behavioural, learning, and systemic principles;
- ❑ Work performed within a variety of settings such as hospitals, schools, and private practice.



* Important to note that many Canadian provinces do not regulate “counselling” and “psychotherapy”

(Canadian Counselling Psychotherapy Association, 2016)

So What Makes Counselling Psychology Really THAT Different?

Specifically, Counselling Psychology Values:

- Recognizing client assets and strengths;
- Attending to diversity and multicultural issues;
- Focusing on person-environment interactions, including a holistic view of clients;
- Maintaining a life-span, developmental approach;
- Incorporating a social justice framework;
- Using research to inform practice;
- Relying on short and long term models of treatment;
- Focusing on prevention;
- Addressing career issues.

(Bedi, Sinacore, & Christiani, 2016; Goodyear et al., 2016; Morgan & Cohen, 2008; Ogunfowora & Drapeau, 2008; Whiteley, 1984)

Some Differences Between Counselling Psychology and Clinical Psychology Programs

Counselling Psychology	Clinical Psychology
Terminal master's degree or doctoral degree options – not integrated.	Integrated/streamlined Master's and PhD programs
More coursework and practicum experience in clinical supervision	Frequently require assessment practicums
Some programs require GRE for admission	Most programs require GRE for admission
Preference that students complete APA/CPA accredited internship	Strong preference for students to complete APA/CPA accredited internship, with this being a requirement of some programs
Preference for students to have volunteer/work experience prior to admittance	

(Bedi, Kubben, & Barker, 2012)

Research vs. Non-Research Streams (Master's)

Research Based Degree

- Is thesis-based; focus on research, coursework, and practical.
- Allows students the ability to apply to PhD programs (PhD is the minimum standard to become licensed as a psychologist in most Canadian provinces).

Non-Research Based Degree

- Is not thesis-based; focus on coursework and practical.
- May seek licensure as a psychologist.

Note: Licensure to practice is granted by regulatory bodies in each Canadian jurisdiction.



What's the difference?

Master in Counselling Psychology

Takes roughly 2-3 years of study to complete

Registration Designation:

- Registered Clinical Counsellor
- Canadian Certified Counsellor
- Conseiller d'orientation
- Registered Psychologist*

*Some Canadian jurisdictions license psychologists at the master's level



PhD in Counselling Psychology

After a Master's degree (2-3 years), it takes roughly 4-6 years of study to complete

All CPA Accredited programs have terminal Master's Degrees to which you must reapply to PhD programs

Registration Designation:

- Registered Psychologist
- Psychologists with a doctoral degree can use the title 'Dr.'

CPA Standard to Practice

To practice psychology in Canada, like other health care professionals, psychologists must be licensed. When considering the services of any professional, it is always wise to seek the services of someone who is licensed. Licensure helps to protect the public by ensuring that the professional has met, and is accountable to, rigorous standards of practice.

Licensure to practice is granted by regulatory bodies in each Canadian jurisdiction.

Check out a List of Canadian Regulatory Bodies at:

<http://www.cpa.ca/public/whatisapsychologist/regulatorybodies/>

Requirements for Licensure

The requirements for licensure vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. In most jurisdictions, the doctorate degree is required for registration, and in others it is the master's degree.

** Alternate terms for licensure are registered and chartered.

Please visit CPA's Provincial and Territorial Licensing Requirements for more Information:

<http://www.cpa.ca/accreditation/PTlicensingrequirements/>

Job Titles & Career Options

Some Settings that Psychologists May Work in:	Some Titles that Psychologists May Hold
Universities/Colleges/Schools	Staff Counselling Psychologist
Health Care Settings	Professor
Departments/Programs for Specific Challenges/ Disorders	Department Head (University, Health Care Programs, Schools etc.)
Veteran Affairs Hospitals/Outpatient Programs	Director of Training and Education
Private Practice	Clinical Counsellor
Consultant for Businesses, Law Firms, Criminal System	Forensic Psychologist* and Experimental Psychologist*
Crisis Response Teams	Consultant/Educational Consultant*
Nonprofit or Social Service Agencies	Vocational Psychologist*
Correctional/Prison Facilities	Neuropsychologist*
Other Civil Services	*Note that some titles/roles require additional training

Common Misconceptions

“Counsellors do the same job as Counselling Psychologists”

While many clinical activities may overlap, Counselling Psychologists receive advanced training in assessment and psychotherapy, and are regulated by a professional regulatory body that ensures accountability and public safety.

“Counselling Psychologists are not trained in assessment and diagnosis”

Counselling Psychologists are trained to use formal, standardized assessment tools and clinical judgment to guide diagnosis. Note, some insurance companies only recognize the title of Psychologist as a reimbursable expense.

“Counselling Psychology does not rely on science as much as Clinical Psychology does”

Counselling Psychologists’ training is based on empirical and scientific research and evidence, and is just as rooted in science as Clinical Psychology.

“Counselling Psychologists do not work in clinical settings or with more serious mental health cases”

Counselling Psychologists work in many clinical settings including Hospitals and Clinical Outpatient programs that specialize in helping people with mild to severe mental health challenges including but not limited to: Depression and Bipolar related disorders, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Illicit drug or Alcohol Addictions, Schizophrenia Spectrum Disorders, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders, Neurodevelopment and Conduct disorder, and other Trauma-Related Disorders

CPA Accredited Counselling Psychology Programs

University of British Columbia - MA and PhD*

University of Calgary – MSc and PhD*

University of Alberta - MEd (thesis and non-thesis based) and PhD*

McGill University - MA and PhD*

University of Toronto (OISE) – MA and PhD*

*** Note the above schools are accredited at the doctoral level, and a master's degree is required prior to commencing a PhD.**

Most programs require pre-requisite courses in order to be considered for application. Please peruse the websites of those schools you are interested in for details about the application process, deadlines and requirements.

For a more detailed comparison of the five Canadian doctoral programs in counselling psychology see Bedi, 2016

Some Helpful Resources

Beatch, R., Bedi, R. P., Cave, D., Domence, F. F., Harris, G. E., Haverkamp, B.E., & Mikhail, A-M. (2009, December). *Counseling psychology in a Canadian context: Final report from the Executive Committee for a Canadian Understanding of Counseling Psychology* (Report). Ottawa, ON: Counseling Psychology Section of the Canadian Psychological Association.

Bedi, R. P. (2016). A descriptive examination of Canadian counselling psychology doctoral programs. *Canadian Psychology, 57*(2), 83-91. doi:10.1037/cap0000047

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For more Information Visit:

CPA Section on Counselling Psychology Webpage:

<http://www.cpa.ca/aboutcpa/cpasections/counsellingpsychology/>

Become a Student Member of the CPA Counselling Psychology Section and Receive the Following Benefits:

- Access to the Counselling Psychology newsletter, Kaleidoscope.
- Contribute to the Counselling Psychology newsletter (Kaleidoscope) and to the Counselling Section blog.
- Opportunity to network with both researchers and professionals in the discipline of counselling psychology.
- Eligible for nomination of Counselling Psychology Section awards, including Award for Best Theses and Doctoral Dissertation.
- Opportunity to be involved at an administrative level - working with the Executive, serving as a Student Representative within a section, or acting as a campus representative for your institution.
- Acquiring a sense of community with other students in psychology and an identification within the discipline.
- Become a part of the conversations that will help shape the future of counselling psychology in Canada!

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