WHAT IS SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY?

A Career That Makes a Difference

https://cpa.ca/sections/Educational/

For Undergraduate Students
What we will cover in this presentation...

• Who are School Psychologists?
• What do School Psychologists do?
• What are the characteristics of a great School Psychologist?
• Where do School Psychologists work?
• How can you become a School Psychologist?
• How do I get a job as a School Psychologist?
WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR YOUR CAREER?

- Help create effective schools?
- Assist families and teachers?
- Work with children and/or youth?
- Contribute to supportive communities?
- Make a positive difference in someone’s life?
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN A JOB?

A lot of job openings?

Diverse roles and responsibilities?

Good salary and benefits?

Job flexibility and stability?
School Psychology might be the career for you.
Who are School Psychologists?

- Highly-qualified professionals with a graduate degree
- Work in schools and related settings
- Provide comprehensive psychological and educational services to diverse students
- Promote children’s learning, positive behavior, and development
- Support students’ social, emotional, and mental health
WHAT DO YOU THINK
SCHOOL
PSYCHOLOGISTS DO?
What do School Psychologists do?

• Conduct assessments, counselling, and other mental health and academic interventions
• Work with children and youth individually and in groups
• Collaborate with parents, teachers, administrators, and other professionals
• Help schools, families, and communities provide successful outcomes for children
• Engage in research and program evaluation activities
• Advocacy
• Education
What do School Psychologists do?

- Help ALL students, parents, and teachers
- Learning difficulties
- Behavior and attention concerns
- Problems with peers (isolation, bullying)
- Depression and other mental health issues
- Coping with crisis & trauma (natural disasters, war, school violence, abuse, rape)
- Poverty, violence, homelessness, foster youth, loss, grief
- Family issues (divorce, death, substance abuse, military deployment)
- Promote student well-being (social, emotional, mental and behavioural health)
What do school psychologists do?
School Psychologists…. Link mental health to learning and behavior to promote:

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

POSITIVE SOCIAL SKILLS AND BEHAVIOUR

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTEDNESS
School Psychologists.....
Link mental health to learning and behavior to promote:

ACCEPTANCE AND RESPECT FOR OTHERS

COMPETENCE, SELF-ESTEEM, AND RESILIENCY
Common types of assessments conducted by School Psychologists:

Cognitive Abilities (intellectual abilities, memory, etc.)
Academic Abilities (reading, writing, math)
Adaptive Behaviour (life skills)
Behavioural Functioning (attention, hyperactivity, impulsivity)
Social/Emotional (mood, affect, behaviour)
Consultation & Knowledge Translation

- Help teachers, parents, and administrators understand child development and learning
- Provide positive alternatives for helping children and youth with learning and behavior challenges
- Strengthen working relationships among educators, parents, and community services
- Refer to, consult with outside agencies
- Conduct workshops and trainings for educators and others
Team Work and Collaboration

School teams in school districts are made up of different professionals, such as:

- Speech-Language Pathologists
- Psychologists
- Social Workers
- Teachers
- Psychiatrists
- Audiologists
- Community Workers
Intervention

- Work face-to-face with children, youth and families
- Develop individualized solutions for learning and adjustment
- Plan and implement crisis response
- Provide
  - Counselling/therapy
  - Social skills training
  - Behavior management solutions
EDUCATION
Train teachers and parents in:

- Teaching and learning strategies
- Parenting
- Classroom management support
- Working with students with diverse learning needs
- Strategies to address substance abuse and risky behaviors
- Crisis prevention and crisis response
Mental Health

- Support for mental health and wellness in schools
- Deliver school-linked mental health services
- Coordinate with community resources and health care providers
- Partner with parents/families and teachers to create healthy home and school environments
School Psychologists encourage
- Appropriate education placements
- Education reform
- Mental Health reform
- Legislative involvement
- Community services and programs
- Funding for adequate resources
- Equity & diversity for diverse populations
Characteristics of a great School Psychologist

• Committed to the profession of School Psychology
• Advocacy
• Excellent communication skills
• Understanding/empathy for children and youth
• Values: evidence-based practice, lifelong learning
• Excellent team-building/interpersonal skills
• Excellent academic record
Characteristics of a great School Psychologist

• Takes initiative to achieve goals
• Energetic and excellent work habits
• Willing and able to abide by professional codes of ethics and standards
• Passionate for their work with children, youth, families and educators
• Interested a variety of different ways to provide services
WHAT OTHER CHARACTERISTICS DO YOU THINK ARE NEEDED?
Most School Psychologists work in K-12 public schools
Where do school psychologists work?

Walcott, Charvat, McNamara, & Hyson (2015)
Who are today’s school psychologists?  

Gender

83% women

16% men

Walcott, Charvat, McNamara, & Hyson (2015)
How to become a School Psychologist

01 GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL
02 ATTEND UNIVERSITY
03 PREPARATION FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL
04 GRADUATE SCHOOL COURSEWORK
Preparing for graduate school in School Psychology

• A Bachelor’s degree with a major in:
  ○ Psychology
  ○ Child Development
  ○ Sociology
  ○ Education or related field

• Volunteer or successful work experience with children and youth may be required
  ○ Camp, YMCA, or mentoring program
  ○ Tutoring, after school programs
Preparing for graduate school in School Psychology

- **Masters degree** (M.Sc, M.Ed, M.A.)
  - 2 to 3+ years (some programs and provinces may include a 10 to 12 month internship)
  - Allows for work in schools, hospitals, private clinics
  - Independent practice depends on province
Preparing for graduate school in School Psychology

- **Doctorate** (Ph.D., Psy.D.)
  - >90 graduate semester hours
  - 4 to 6+ years (includes one year internship)
  - Allows for work in schools, academia, clinics, research
  - More options for independent practice
Canadian Graduate Programs in School Psychology

- 10 graduate programs in School Psychology in Canada
- Four Ph.D. program accredited by the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA)
- Some programs offer master’s and doctoral level, others offer master’s level only
- Check out program websites for more details

https://cpa.ca/sections/Educational
Graduate School Coursework

Develop knowledge and skills in **Prevention and Intervention Services for Students and Families** typically including:

- Assessment
- Academic/learning interventions
- Mental and behavioural health interventions
- Counselling
- Consultation
- Instructional support
- Special education services
- Crisis preparedness, response, and recovery
- Family-school-community collaboration
- Cultural responsiveness
Develop knowledge and skills in **Foundations of Services Needed in Schools** typically including

- Data collection and analysis
- Resilience and risk factors
- Consultation and collaboration
- Diversity in development and learning
- Research and program evaluation
- Professional ethics
- Education law
Getting a Job as a School Psychologist

- School Psychologists must hold a current, valid credential for practice
- Licensure/Registration/Certification varies by province
- Independent practice may require an additional credential
The Canadian Psychological Association
Educational & School Psychology Section

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Questions?

For more information about school psychology visit:

https://cpa.ca/sections/Educational/

www.nasponline.org