

**American Psychological Association  
2010 Convention Proposal  
Division 18: Psychologists in Public Service**

Overall Symposium, Moderated by Luli Emmons, Ph.D.: A Collaborative Academic, Community, and State Model Training Public Psychologists

A recent 2003 presidential commission on mental health uncovered an abundance of gaps and inadequacies in the US community mental health systems, and proposed a strategy to improve the quality of mental health care. The commission of 2003 called on educational initiatives to target specific audiences, including racial and ethnic minority groups underserved in the current system and communities with limited English proficiency. Particularly lacking are clinical psychologists with the unique skills to provide service and leadership in the public mental health system, especially in underserved minority populations or rural areas.

In an effort to address this public mental health problem, California's Department of Mental Health awarded three contracts under Proposition 63 (the Mental Health Services Act, passed in 2004) to train clinical psychologists to work in public mental health. One awardee employed a unique collaborative model led by 1) an academic institution - Pacific Graduate School of Psychology at Palo Alto University (PGSP), 2) a community-based organization - Asian Americans for Community Involvement, and 3) two California county mental health departments - Santa Clara and El Dorado counties.

Collaboratively, these academic, community, and county constituents developed the Diversity and Community Mental Health (DCMH) proficiency track. Objectives of this track are to recruit, train, and mentor future psychologists to serve the diverse needs of underserved communities and become competent clinicians, researchers, and future leaders in the public mental health sector. Students are awarded an MHSA educational stipend with payback obligations to serve in public mental health.

A symposium will be moderated by the academic institution administrator and presented by the director of the DCMH track, a community organizational partner, and a current student trained and supported in this program. Discussion will include conceptualization of the training model, community placements and training, and the symbiotically evolving relationships between partner constituents.

Speaker 1, Jorge Wong, Ph.D.: Community/Academic Partnerships and State-Funded Stipends: Recruitment Pathways for Public Psychologists

Our community mental health system carries several barriers to the successful recruitment and retention of psychologists who can play important roles in service, research, policy, and leadership. These barriers include limited resources for competitive salary compensation, unclear role definitions for psychologists, and a lack of streamlined training preparing psychologists for careers in public mental health. The salience of these barriers requires that we create innovative and multi-faceted approaches to successfully recruit and train future public psychologists. This presentation illuminates the two essential fiscal and collaborative elements of a model designed to create such a recruitment pathway.

First, a state-funded educational stipend program is provided by California's Department of Mental Health through the Mental Health Services Act Proposition 63. The aim of the

educational scholarship is to support emerging clinical psychologists committed to working in the public mental health system. Recipients receive a tuition stipend up to \$20,772. Upon graduation, scholarship recipients are required to complete one calendar year of full-time postdoctoral employment in the California public mental health sector.

Second, a community/academic partnership creates a foundation for reciprocal hands-on and empirical learning. A community-based organization, Asian Americans for Community Involvement, and Santa Clara and El Dorado county services have formed collaborative relationships with clinical psychology doctoral programs at Pacific Graduate School of Psychology of Palo Alto University. Through this partnership, community partners benefit from knowledgeable trainees more likely to stay as employees post-graduation. Academic partners benefit from hands-on training available only from community providers, and students benefit from decreased education expenses and most importantly, a streamlined education program that increases likelihood of retention in the public sector.

The presentation will include discussion of initial data regarding current program trainees and their public mental health career pathways, and lessons learned from this community/academic partnership and educational stipend program.

Speaker 2, Joyce Chu, Ph.D.: The Diversity Community Mental Health Program: A Public Psychology Curricula

The Diversity and Community Mental Health (DCMH) proficiency track at Palo Alto University provides students the opportunity to develop competency in public psychology through a combination of coursework, research, and clinical training. Training in community mental health (CMH) is typically learned piecemeal and on-the-job; it is the aim of this track to provide an innovative systematic program of education.

Community mental health involves a set of unique curricular competencies in clinical psychology. In particular, community mental health involves perspective of care that addresses challenges on both an individual and systemic level, and revolves around philosophies of wellness, recovery and consultation. CMH services are often atypical of traditional clinical psychology training; community mental health care involves the consumer and family members, and is integrated with the community in collaborative interdisciplinary teams. Not only is CMH work embedded within unique approaches to care, but it is devoted to the service of clients dealing with a unique combination of mental health problems (e.g., co-occurring disorders, chronic and serious mental illness) from diverse underserved and unserved communities (e.g., homeless, disability, LGBT, racial and linguistic ethnic minorities, indigent, elderly, rural). In addition, issues of crisis and risk management are particularly important.

In addressing these unique curricular competencies, the DCMH track provides students with the specialized skills and knowledge to assume a variety of roles – not only as CMH clinicians, but also consultants, researchers, policy advocates, community organizers, and administrators. All students participate in a public mental health clinical community placement, conduct research serving public mental health communities, and participate in a set of coursework addressing theories and practice models of community mental health, vulnerable populations, cultural competence as related to mental health disparities and underserved communities, risk management, program evaluation, organizational research, and organizational, economic, advocacy, and policy issues in the public mental health system.

Speaker 3, Ginny Estupinian, M.A.: A Student's Perspective: Adapting Towards Unique Roles of Public Psychologists

Details of this unique public psychology training program will be illuminated by a brief narrative shared by a student participating in the Diversity and Community Mental Health proficiency track and scholarship program. This student will share her experiences with hands-on learning via community placements at both a community-based organization (Asian Americans for Community Involvement) and a county placement (Barbara Aarons Pavilion in Santa Clara county). Such hands-on learning includes a county program evaluation project, participation at a cultural competency summit, and numerous clinical experiences with cultural minority monolingual individuals and families.

Her academic learning has included critical analysis of community-collaborative and community-based participatory research and clinical approaches via systems and ecological models, empowerment, wellness and recovery approaches, the wraparound process, and strength-based work. Skills-based learning has encompassed administration, fiscal and procurement, policy development, advocacy, consultation and supervision, research, organizational analysis and strategic thinking.

This student will conclude by discussing how the training of the community/academic partnership and the structure of the California Department of Mental Health stipend program have guided her career decisions.