

Community Psychology

Waikato University, which offers programmes in community psychology notes that community psychology “*is a context-sensitive, applied social science which attempts to promote social justice and enhance the life circumstances of groups of people, especially those who are oppressed, stigmatised or marginalised.*”

Although its origins lie in psychology, community psychology favours inter-disciplinary approaches. It has permeable boundaries, owing as much to sociology, community development, education and the policy sciences as it does to the “parent” discipline.

Community psychology favours critical perspectives on knowledge creation and truth claims, recognising that what is regarded as legitimate knowledge is often context-specific and inevitably coloured by the social and cultural position of the “knower”. Experiential knowledge is valued, along with knowledge derived from empirical studies. Thus community psychology research employs a wide range of methodologies, the choice of method being determined by the particular context and issue being addressed.

Community psychology is multilevel in that it recognises the limitations and potentially victim-blaming nature of individually-focused interventions, favouring instead group, community and societal interventions which address the structural factors maintaining oppression and sub-optimal health.

Community psychology pays particular attention to process, valuing bottom-up, inclusive and collaborative ways of working over top-down solutions to problems imposed by political elites”.

Community psychologists are applied social scientists who need to be registered with the Psychologists Board. They work in a range of roles including project managers, community advisers and advocates, health promoters, policy analysts and organisational trainers.

Community psychologists require a minimum of a Masters degree in psychology from an accredited educational organisation, or an equivalent qualification. Eligibility for the psychologist scope of practice requires a Board approved practicum or internship involving 1500 hours of supervised practice.

To find out more about study opportunities in community psychology click below.

University of Waikato

<http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects/psychology/commpsych/>

The University of Auckland

<http://www.psych.auckland.ac.nz/ua/home/about/our-courses/postgraduate-courses/#s2c9>

To find out more about registering in the general scope of practice go to

<http://www.psychologistsboard.org.nz/scopes-of-practice2>