

Career Paths For Students In Psychology

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There are many career paths for students who pursue studies in psychology for both undergraduates and degree holders-post graduates. Psychology is a broad topic that can be defined as the study of the behaviour of human beings and animals (Philip Burnard, 1994). It may not only deal with physical behaviour but also mental behaviour. There are many professions in this field, including medical or clinical researchers, counsellors, and others who can specialize as criminal investigators (Philip Burnard, 1994). As an undergraduate in this field, it is usually difficult as many perceive it, yet there are still good numbers of opportunities where one can easily fall in as an undergraduate. In professional fields such as clinical research, undergraduates can hardly participate as a result of a lack of enough skills and educational certificates, though there are fields such as general counselling where even undergraduates can find opportunities (Philip Burnard, 1994). Here, an undergraduate is provided with an opportunity to build and develop his career through the acquisition of necessary skills and experience.

Substance Abuse Counseling

Substance abuse counselling is a field of psychology that deals with the study of the behaviour and counselling of individuals addicted to some harmful drugs such as cocaine, bang, alcohol, cigarettes, and many others. It majorly deals with addiction to the abuse of substantial drugs, just as the name suggests (Philip Burnard, 1994). This is one of the common career paths for physiologists and counsellors. Substance abuse counselling is a field of psychology where many psychology students who have not graduated from their colleges can be easily absorbed. It is one of the rapidly growing career paths in the United States currently. It is a very interesting field with a lot to learn regarding moral principles and humility since the clients are those people perceived to be outcasts of society (Philip Burnard, 1994). As an undergraduate, I have selected this field as this career path as it is most suitable since it does not require much of a strong academic background. Substance Abuse Counselling would be the best option for me since I am still a student who lacks most academic papers and skills to work in advanced fields of psychology, such as clinical research, which requires more advanced knowledge (Philip Burnard, 1994).

Skills And Experiences

This field requires some skills and experience. Some of the skills that may be taught in class are acquired, while others are purely inborn as they naturally manifest themselves in an individual. Some of the skills in this field include:

Ability to Listen: this is a very important skill needed by everyone who ventures into this area of

substance abuse counselling. This is the aspect of the psychologist giving his client time to express himself (Philip Burnard, 1994). Through listening, a psychologist can draw all the relevant information from the client. Through listening, one can learn the chances that led the client to begin using drugs, how long he has been using the drugs, and the level of addiction. This skill, the ability to listen, is a requirement for every individual who wants to venture into this field.

The ability to ask questions. Many people would view this to be a small aspect of this field. However, it is much more important than listening. Many people cannot ask relevant questions, which would prompt the client to give relevant information that may not be easy to deliver when not asked. Thus, it is a requirement for one to take substance abuse counselling as a career path to pursue.

Communication skills. Communication skills are quite relevant and one of the major and compulsory skills required in this field (Philip Burnard, 1994). One must be able to communicate well with his client. A lack of proper communication skills might ruin the whole process of counselling even if the psychologist possessed the other required skills. The individual can communicate well with his client both in speech and hearing from the client.

Strong academic background. The psychologist must be a well-equipped individual who is well-learned and knowledgeable in analyzing the behavioural characteristics of an individual. The individual must be able to apply the things he learned in class (Philip Burnard, 1994).

Empathy. The practitioner must possess some sense of empathy. Empathy is simply an aspect of an individual assuming the state of the client- being in his shoes. Assuming that he is the one undergoing the problem. Empathy is a skill that can hardly be learned in class; rather, it is an inborn behaviour (Julia McLeod, 2011).

Alongside the above skills, an individual must also be a person who is experienced in handling individuals undergoing depression or mental problems. A regular encounter with individuals to counsel is an experience that is recommended for this purpose.

Personal Strengths And Weaknesses

I have chosen this field because of the skills that I have developed over time, both in class and during the course of my interaction with people (Julia McLeod, 2011). These form part of my strength in this sector. One of the strengths that prompted me to choose this path is my ability to communicate well. This is a skill that I have developed in the course of my studies. Another strength that prompted me to choose this path is my ability to empathize.

Though I have some strengths in this field, I still feel a sense of insufficiency due to some weaknesses. As much as I am well equipped with communication skills and able to speak fluently, I still find it a challenge to ask relevant and appropriate questions that would prompt the user to deliver relevant information (Julia McLeod, 2011).

Another weakness is academics since am still a student, some crucial aspects of this topic I haven't covered well in class, and thus I need that complete them first before I become fully equipped. This weakness, however, can be easily overcome once I graduate with the final degree. I cannot compete in the job market with individuals who have graduated with a degree in this field. They are far better than me in their academic or educational capabilities and experiences that come as a result of education- class work experience (Julia McLeod, 2011).

Skills Gained

I have gained some skills since I joined the study of psychology. Most of the skills I have gained are majorly related to my career path choice. I have gained skills in communication. I have also developed listening skills and interviewing skills (Julia McLeod, 2011). Throughout the study I pursue, I have learned to develop the skills of patience and understanding. I can do extensive research on the effects of most abused drugs in the United States, their effects, and how the body responds to them. This will enable me to develop a clear picture of developing the remedies for those who are addicted. I can easily volunteer to work in areas considered to be in hardship. This is an experience I gained in the course of my study as we used to do fieldwork in various environments with different climate characteristics. (Julia McLeod, 2011).

Outline Plan

Though I still lack some of these skills, I believe that in the course of my development, I will be able to learn almost all the needed skills in this course (Julia McLeod, 2011). I have developed some plans that would enable me to acquire these skills and be a completely successful Substance Abuse Counsellor. I have set two years after my graduation to work for an organization based on voluntary work to achieve my goals of yearning for experiences and skills (Richard Nelson-Jones, 2016). This will not cost me any financial fee. Rather, I will be a volunteer worker. The whole process will roughly take me two years. I plan to attend two different organizations after graduation (Richard Nelson-Jones, 2016). One organization will require me to pay a training fee, while the other will require only free service as I train. I will give the latter option priority in case everything goes well.

I would like to join the American Counselling Association (ACA). The main reason why I would join this organization is because of its facilities and the various programs it offers (Richard Nelson-Jones, 2016). ACA is one of the largest professional counselling organizations in the world (Counselor-Licence.com). If I fail to secure a chance in ACA, then I will apply for the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA). This organization is well-equipped to train individuals who venture into Substance Abuse Counselling. This is the main reason why I may opt to join the above organizations. (Richard Nelson-Jones, 2016)

Personal Development Plan

In my personal and development plan, I will look at and set the very objectives I would like to achieve. One of my set objectives is to be able to exercise the skills and experiences acquired in counselling institutions after my graduation (Harry Tomlinson, 2004). Assessment of my current progress and how far I am with the application of the current skills acquired (Chris Sangster, 2000). For example, I have been through school and obtained some needful skills, to what extent have I applied them before I rushed to obtain more skills from the advanced institutions? I would identify the needs or why I should acquire these skills (Harry Tomlinson, 2004). Finally, in my planning, I would record the outcomes (Chris Sangster, 2000).

Conclusion

Substance Abuse Counselling is a very interesting field where many people should venture to relieve our world of the rapidly growing drug abuse effects. There are a lot of benefits individuals will learn while in this field, which will enable them to solve other mental-related problems for those around them or even themselves.

Reference

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