So, you might want to be a therapist?
(or psych-related clinical practitioner…)

A guide to educational pathways
Professor Hanley
Union College

10/13/2010

Terminology: Clinical Practitioners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Typical Emphasis</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Yrs until Practiced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>Assessment &amp; Therapy</td>
<td>PhD/PsyD</td>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Pract.</td>
<td>Talk Therapy</td>
<td>MA/MS/MPCC</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>Systems Approaches</td>
<td>MSW</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician/Psychiatrist</td>
<td>Medication Management (not trained for therapy)</td>
<td>MD</td>
<td>5-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Psychologist School/Guid Couns</td>
<td>Assessment &amp; Therapy Career Counseling</td>
<td>MA/MS/CAS</td>
<td>2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor/Psychotherapist</td>
<td>“unprotected terms” could mean no training</td>
<td>not even BA/BS</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: all degrees do NOT “transfer” - check your desired state of residence for info on certification/licensure – NY: http://www.op.nysed.gov/

Clinical vs. Counseling Psychology: Traditional Distinctives & Overlap

Clinical Psychologist

- Ph.D. or Psy.D.
- Focus on "Abnormal" Disorders:
  - Major Depression
  - Bipolar Disorders
  - Psychotic Disorders
  - Post-traumatic Stress Disorders
  - etc...
- Graduate training
  - in Psychology Dept
- Typical workplaces:
  - Inpatient Hospitals
  - Private Practice
- sometimes research > clinical focus
- research may focus on treating clin dis
- some programs very competitive

Counseling Psychologist

- Ph.D. or Psy.D.
- Focus on "Normative" issues:
  - "adjustment" issues
  - careers/relationships/divorce
  - grief/coping with illness
  - mild dep/ anxiety/eating dis
  - etc...
- Graduate training
  - in Education Dept
- Typical workplaces:
  - University Counseling Center
  - Private Practice
- sometimes clinical > research focus
- research may focus on therapy change
- some programs less competitive

Alphabet Soup...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PhD</th>
<th>PsyD</th>
<th>MD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy</td>
<td>Doctor of Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis</td>
<td>Theory and research behind treatments</td>
<td>The how-to of talk therapy treatments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate coursework &amp; brief practicums</td>
<td>3-4 yrs</td>
<td>3-4 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation</td>
<td>1-2 yrs independent research</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Training (supervised practice)</td>
<td>1 yr</td>
<td>2 yrs internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervised practice for state licensure</td>
<td>1-2 yrs (post-PhD) Postdoctoral work</td>
<td>1-2 yrs (post-PsyD) Postdoctoral work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME to indep practice</td>
<td>6-10 yrs</td>
<td>6-9 yrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pros/Cons
- versatile: good for clinical work, academia, and research
- more competitive
- fewer statistics
- limited opportunities: mostly clinical
- dramatic impacts in severe disorders
- 5-15 min sessions
- not fully trained to do "talk therapy"

Note: there are important differences between "professional schools of psychology" and traditional academic institutions – esp: cost, available funding, class size, training, etc

What can you do to sort out career options?

1. talk to professionals in those careers
2. read books on careers in psych (see library, psych dept office, web…)
   - Career Paths in Psychology
   - Graduate Study in Psychology (yearly)
   - Insiders Guide to Graduate School in Clinical/Counseling Psychology
   - more at: www.apa.org/books/students.html
3. get experience
   - classes, internships, research assistant – volunteer on breaks
   - see http://minerva.union.edu/andesco/ for lists of internships
4. join a national organization
   - become a student member (APA '10=$27) lots of benefits...
   - receive student newsletters info on internships, jobs, grad schools
   - join email listserve (APA: http://apa.org/apage/resources/listservs)
   - examples:
     - American Psychological Association (www.apa.org) – join Division too
     - American Psychological Society (www.psychologicalscience.org)
     - American School Counselor Association (www.schookounselor.org)