

## How Does One Become a Counseling Psychologist?

Counseling psychologists are trained at the doctoral level (usually Ph.D., but also Psy.D. or Ed.D.) in programs that typically require 4-6 years of doctoral study (depending on highest degree at admission and its congruence with program requirements), involving coursework and integrated training experiences in a variety of topical areas and professional skills. These include (a) core areas of psychology (b) theories of counseling, vocational psychology, development, assessment, psychopathology, statistics, research design, professional ethics, supervision, and consultation (c) supervised practica focused on the development of counseling-related skills (d) the equivalent of a one year full-time pre-doctoral internship in professional psychology and (e) completion of an original dissertation.

## Considering Counseling Psychology?

If considering a career in Counseling Psychology you may wish to gain additional information (see the back of this brochure), discuss the option with people who know you well, and interview professionals in the field to further assess the fit between you and the specialty of Counseling Psychology!

## Want to Know More?

*See the back of this brochure for useful  
Counseling Psychology resources!*

### Resource

### Web Address

**Student Affiliates of  
Seventeen (SAS) of  
APA's Division of  
Counseling Psychology**

[http://www.div17.org/  
SAS/index.html](http://www.div17.org/SAS/index.html)

**Society of Counseling  
Psychology, Division 17**

<http://www.div17.org/>

**Council of Counseling  
Psychology Training Pro-  
grams**

[http://www.lehigh.edu/  
ccptp/](http://www.lehigh.edu/ccptp/)

**Listing of APA-accredited  
training programs**

[http://www.apa.org/ed/  
doctoral.html](http://www.apa.org/ed/doctoral.html)

### PowerPoint Presentations

**What is  
Counseling Psychology?**

A Brief Description of the  
Discipline and Compari-  
son to Other Psychology  
Professions

[http://div17.org/SAS/  
counselingpsych.pdf](http://div17.org/SAS/counselingpsych.pdf)

**Becoming a  
Counseling or Clinical  
Psychologist:**

Tips for Admission to  
Graduate School

[http://div17.org/SAS/  
becoming.pdf](http://div17.org/SAS/becoming.pdf)

# What Is Counseling Psychology?



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# What is Counseling Psychology?



## Counseling Psychology Overview

Counseling psychology as a psychological specialty facilitates personal and interpersonal functioning across the lifespan with a focus on emotional, social, vocational, educational, health-related, developmental, and organizational concerns. Through the integration of theory, research, and practice, and with a sensitivity to multicultural issues, this specialty encompasses a broad range of practices that help people improve their well-being, alleviate distress and maladjustment, resolve crises, and increase their ability to live more highly functioning lives. Counseling psychology is unique in its attention both to normal developmental issues and to problems associated with physical, emotional, and mental disorders!

Populations served by counseling psychologists include persons of all ages and cultural backgrounds. Examples of those populations would include late adolescents or adults with career/educational concerns and children or adults facing severe personal difficulties. Counseling psychologists also consult with organizations seeking to enhance their effectiveness or the well-being of their members.

## What Do Counseling Psychologists Do?

Counseling psychologists are employed in a variety of settings depending on the services they provide and the client populations they serve. Some are employed in colleges and universities as teachers, supervisors, researchers, and service providers. Others are employed in independent practice providing counseling, psychotherapy, assessment, and consultation services to individuals, families, groups, and organizations. Additional settings in which counseling psychologists practice include community mental health centers, Veterans Administration Medical Centers and other facilities, family services, health maintenance organizations, rehabilitation agencies, business and industrial organizations and consulting firms.

## Where do Counseling Psychologists Work?

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## What is the difference between Clinical and Counseling Psychology?

Counseling and clinical psychologists often perform similar work as researchers and/or practitioners and may work side by side in any number of settings where they may have overlapping roles and functions. Both counseling and clinical psychologists are licensed in all 50 states as psychologists, and as such are all able to practice independently as health care providers. Both counseling and clinical psychologists are trained to provide counseling and psychotherapy.

The differences between counseling and clinical psychologists are rooted in the history of each specialty, which has influenced the focus and emphasis of the training they receive. Traditionally, **Counseling Psychology** has taken a more “whole-person” approach valuing *strengths, development and vocational work within individual cultural context*, whereas **Clinical Psychology** has taken more of a psychopathology approach focusing on *diagnosis and abnormal functioning*.

