



Introduction to Community Psychology

Instructor Manual

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This instructor's manual is designed to help you craft a lesson about Community Psychology. The module upon which this manual is based defines key features of the field and discusses a variety of factors, such as prevention, a social justice orientation, and an ecological perspective, influencing community psychologists. This instructor's manual provides guidance for creating a one- or two-class lesson on Community Psychology. The supplied PowerPoint presentation, which includes activities, videos, and discussion questions, is designed to accompany and correspond to this lesson. The manual also contains additional outside resources that you may find useful for this module introducing students to the field of Community Psychology.

Learning Objectives

- **Relevant APA Learning Objectives (Version 2.0)**
 - Develop a working knowledge of psychology's content domains (1.2)
 - Describe applications of psychology (1.3)
 - Engage in innovative and integrative thinking and problem solving (2.3)
 - Incorporate sociocultural factors in scientific inquiry (2.5)
 - Apply ethical standards to evaluate psychological science and practice (3.1)
 - Adopt values that build community at local, national, and global levels (3.3)

- Interact effectively with others (4.3)
- **Content Specific Learning Objectives**
 - Understand the differences between prevention and treatment.
 - Differentiate interventions that bring about short-term change versus long term change.
 - Appreciate the many layers of community interventions.
 - Identify critical elements of the Community Psychology approach.

Abstract

This module explores core themes within the field of Community Psychology, which include an emphasis on prevention, a social justice orientation, and an ecological understanding of how people are affected by their environments. Community psychologists comprehensively analyze, investigate, and address problems such as economic inequality, violence, substance abuse, homelessness, poverty, and racism. This unique discipline encourages active collaboration with community partners and organizations to promote a fair and equitable allocation of resources and opportunities. Finally, this module reviews the methods used by community psychologists as well as provides resources for learning more about and getting involved within this field.

Class Design Recommendations

This topic may be taught in one long class period (75-90 minutes) or two short class periods (50-60 minutes each). The Noba PowerPoint slides will also assist you in determining what schedule works best for your class.

- Defining Community Psychology
 - Approach
 - Themes and principles
- Role of Prevention

- Focus on prevention
 - First-order change
 - Individualistic perspective
 - Second-order change
 - Preventive approach
- A Social Justice Orientation
 - Social Justice
 - Orientation of action and research
 - Social Justice Orientation
 - Application
- A Shift in Perspective: The Ecological Model
 - The Ecological Theory
 - Individual level/personal
 - Social level
 - Community level
 - Societal level
 - Ecological Theory Principles
 - Adaptation and interdependence
- The Science of Community Psychology
 - Research methods
 - Types of research
 - Action-oriented research

- Community-based participatory research

Module Outline

- Defining Community Psychology
 - The branch of psychology that approaches individual- and community-level problems by examining the relationship between individual and context/environment.
 - Community Psychology Approach
 - Community Psychology is the study of the reciprocal relationship between individuals and their context and/or environments. This field seeks to alleviate and prevent societal issues (e.g., poverty, homelessness, addiction) by shifting the focus beyond an individual and integrates social, cultural, economic, political, environmental, and international influences to promote positive change, health, and empowerment at individual and systemic levels (SCRA27.org).
 - One distinguishing feature of Community Psychology is that it is a value driven science and it seeks to balance objectivity with guiding principles.
 - Important Themes and Principles
 - Important themes include prevention, social justice, and ecological understanding.
 - Important principles include respecting diversity, encouraging collaboration, promoting a sense of community, focusing on policy change, and bringing about empowerment.
- Role of Prevention
 - Prevention is one of the primary characteristics of the field. Community psychologists can intervene with certain actions that aim stop problems from occurring in the first place.
 - Focus on prevention

- By examining the root of an issue, we have a more holistic understanding of why something happens. These actions can include boosting a person's skillset, or engaging in environmental change.
 - Boosting individual skills: For example, providing prevention training for youth to help them resist the urge to vape and use tobacco products.
 - Engaging in environmental change: Concentrating on systems and structures involved in the problem to modify the person-setting fit. For example, one could address policies regarding providing safe housing and jobs to those exiting from jails and prison.
- First-Order Change
 - Surface Changes: Interventions which frequently create only short-term improvements of psychological problems
 - First-order change occurs when actions (i.e., interventions) are directed only at a person. For example, allowing a traumatized student who is homeless to stay on one's couch and encouraging to a consider psychotherapy session.
 - Efforts are not made to make changes in the environment, which could involve affordable housing.
 - Individualistic Perspective: A focus on the individual where the influence of larger environmental or societal factors is not attended to.
 - Second-Order Change
 - System change (i.e., working with systems and structures) to create long-term improvements.
 - Second-order change occurs when there are improvements in a larger system or structure.
 - Second-order change strategies aim to target social factors (e.g., family; peers), community factors (e.g., local policing policies; health services), and societal factors (e.g., healthcare policies; federal regulation; taxation). In this case, the

context or environment around an individual is altered in an attempt to create a long-term difference in the individual-environment relationship. Actions are directed at the ecological factors that influence a person's feelings, thoughts, and behavior, in order to create more sustainable and long-term improvements. One example comes from community psychologists Zimmerman and colleagues, who investigated what factors cultivate a safe and healthy environment. They found that improving physical features of neighborhoods (e.g., fixing abandoned housing, cutting long grass, picking up trash, and planting a garden) resulted in roughly 40% fewer assaults and violent crimes compared to street segments with vacant and abandoned lots (Heinze et al., 2018).

- Preventive Approach: Second-order change is considered a preventive approach. This approach consists of strategies that may get to the root of the problem by affecting the larger context that the individual is a part of. These types of changes are typically sustained for longer periods of time and can result in preventing the problem completely.
- A Social Justice Orientation
 - Social Justice: Involves the fair distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges that provide equal opportunities for education, health care, work, and housing.
 - Many social problems are made worse when resources are disproportionately allocated throughout society.
 - Orientation of action and research: Community psychologists and groups/communities can then direct their actions and research around specific ideas in order to increase a more fair society.
 - Equal distribution of resources: Everyone receives the equitable amounts of resources or services.
 - Reduction of barriers to resources: Challenges or obstacles that obstruct communities from accessing a good or service are lessened in size or degree, or even eliminated.
 - Fair and equal treatment: Communities and groups are treated fairly and equal.
 - Promotion of self-determination: People are provided opportunities where they have

a right to control their own destiny.

- Social Justice Orientation: This is a way of perceiving an issue that examines how oppressive social systems preserve classism, sexism, racism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination and domination that perpetuate social injustice (Kagan et al., 2011).
- Application
 - Collaborative partnerships can be created to bring more resources to the school as well as support community-based efforts to reduce community gang activity and violence. This strategy would address the income resource inequalities and stressful environmental factors that influence the children's behavior and mental health.
 - Recognizes that millions of people have been locked up in US prisons due to more restrictive and punishing laws (e.g., mandatory minimum sentences and three-strikes that requires lifetime prison sentences).
 - Materials and/or interventions based on white upper-class norms would not be applicable or suitable for minority students and their experiences.
- A Shift in Perspective: The Ecological Model
 - Ecological perspective: An approach that goes beyond the traditional model of treatment, and provides a more holistic lens for observation, examination, and action.
 - James Kelly developed Ecological Theory (1966), which provides opportunities to consider how individuals and their environments (e.g., communities, societies) are interconnected, in order to understand how behaviors are shaped and changed.
 - Ecological Theory: The purpose of his theory is to provide a framework for understanding the structure and function of community (Kelly, 1966). It helps to understand the relationships between people and their social environments (e.g., families, groups, communities, and societies).
 - The levels of influence can be thought of as three systems that a person interacts with, each of them nested within one another. Each level is a step closer to, or further from, the individual.
 - Individual/personal factors: These include personal factors such as personality traits.

- Social factors: These include social factors such as family upbringing.
- Community factors: These include community factors such as cultural or gender norms.
- Societal factors: These include societal factors such as public policies.
- Ecological theory principles: Each principle helps promote understanding of how social environments affect and influence people (Kelly, 2006).
 - Interdependence: Everything is connected, changing one aspect of an environment will have many ripple effects.
 - Adaptation: Focuses on interactions between persons and their environments to better understand why behavior that is effective in one setting may not be useful in others.
- The Science of Community Psychology
 - Research Methods
 - Quantitative methods involving collecting data in the form of numbers using standardized measures in an attempt to produce generalizable findings.
 - Qualitative methods involving collecting data that typically consists of words that provide comprehensive descriptions of participants' experiences.
 - Mixed-methods is the thoughtful combining of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods.
 - Types of Research: It is important for community psychologists to critically reflect on their actions and their methodology in this research in order to examine themselves and the research's impact on the population of interest, making corrections as needed to achieve the best, most ethical outcomes.
 - Action-oriented research: An approach and type of research methodology that aims to bring about social change.
 - Community-based participatory research: A type of research methodology that involves collaboration between researchers and the community members as issues for action are defined and change interventions are launched. All partners are involved instrumentally in the research process.

Difficult Terms

Action-Oriented Research

Adaptation

Community-Based Participatory Research

Contextual/Environmental Factors

Ecological

Ecological Perspective

Equitable Resource Allocation

First-Order Change

Individualistic Perspective

Interdependence

Multiple Layers of Influence (Levels of Analysis)

Prevention

Second-Order Change

Lecture Frameworks

Overview: This lecture framework can be delivered in two 50-60 minute periods, or condensed into one longer lecture period (e.g., 75-90 minutes). Students will start with a warm up to get them to consider and reflect on their communities, and how they might be able to use a Community Psychology framework to create long-term change. This will help students to become familiar with the field of Community Psychology. Next, students will learn about the role of prevention and complete an activity that allows them to consider first- and second-order change on their campus. The first class ends with a classroom assessment technique (CAT) to assess student understanding of the material thus far. The second class begins with a review of the previous day (based on the results of the CAT from day 1). Students will engage with the social justice orientation and the ecological perspective frameworks used by community psychologists. There are two activities for each of the respective frameworks that will allow students to exercise critical thinking skills, and relate the concepts to their everyday life. Students will then be presented with research methods commonly utilized by community psychologists will be presented with real world applications. Finally, this lesson also ends with a CAT.

First Class Session (50-60 Minutes)

- **Warm-Up Activity My Community:** The purpose of this activity is to have students consider and reflect on their communities, and how they might be able to use a Community

Psychology framework to create long-term change.

- See the Activities/Demonstrations section for a full explanation of how to accomplish this warm up activity.
- **Creating Change:** The purpose of this activity is to develop the students' abilities to understand the types of change in Community Psychology.
 - See the Activities/Demonstrations section for a full explanation of how to accomplish this warm up activity.
- **Classroom Assessment Technique (CAT) – The Muddiest Point:** The purpose of this activity is to assess how students are gaining knowledge, or not.
 - Refer to the Activities/Demonstrations section for a complete description

Second Class Session (50-60 Minutes)

- **Review:** Start the class by reviewing student responses from the previous Muddies Point CAT. Clarify any information that was commonly misperceived and use this information as a starting point for this class.
- **SJO (Social Justice Orientation) Activity:** The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to practice innovative and critical thinking skills, while also incorporating sociocultural factors into their methods of problem solving.
 - See the Activities/Demonstrations section for a full explanation of how to accomplish this warm up activity.
- **Advocacy Self-Assessment Tool Activity:** The purpose of this activity is for students to gain familiarity with the different ecological levels in their own lives.
 - See the Activities/Demonstrations section for a full explanation of how to accomplish this warm up activity.
- **CAT—The One-Minute Paper:** The purpose of this CAT is to assess the most important things that students learned, and what questions remain unanswered.
 - Refer to the Activities/Demonstrations section for a complete description on how to conduct this CAT.

Activities & Demonstrations

Warm-Up Activity My Community: The purpose of this activity is to have students consider and reflect on their communities, and how they might be able to use a Community Psychology framework to create long-term change.

- Time: 10-15 minutes
- Materials: PowerPoint Slides. Students need paper and writing utensil.
- Directions:
 1. To begin the class, ask students to reflect on the different communities they are apart of, how they generally felt and what is something they would like to change.
 2. Then, ask students to reflect on which of the listed words jumps out most, or which one speaks to them most. Ask them why they feel this way, and how this word could help them create change.
 3. Have students get into groups of two or three to discuss their thoughts. Give students three to five minutes to discuss how a principle or value could be used to create change in their community.
 4. Once conversations begin to quiet, ask for some groups to share with the class. Ideas can be shared on a chalkboard or whiteboard.
 5. Use this brief discussion as a jumping off point to explain that the field of Community Psychology is guided by these values and that it goes beyond an individual focus (i.e., how can I change) and integrates factors (e.g., social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental) to promote long-term change.

Creating Change: The purpose of this activity is to develop the students' abilities to understand the types of change in Community Psychology.

- Time: 15-20 minutes
- Materials: PowerPoint Slides
- Directions:
 1. Read vignette: Imagine your campus has a beautiful lake with a long sandy beach and is surrounded by high cliffs. You notice a student who fell from one of the cliffs and who is now flailing about in the water. The lifeguard jumps in the water to save him. A bit later, another student wades too far into the water and panics as he does not know how to swim,

and the lifeguard again dives into the water to save him. This pattern continues day after day.

2. Tell the class that when discussing with their partner, they should:
 1. Take turns, and try to have an equal speaking time.
 2. Listen carefully and ask clarifying questions of one another.
 3. You should be able to explain your partner's thinking, as well as your own.
 4. Feel free to write notes as you discuss with your partner.
3. Discuss the following questions with a partner (5 minutes)
 1. What are some first-order changes that might be of help to your fellow peers?
 2. Using the preventive approach, what are some second-order changes that could be of help to them?
4. "Cold call" various pairs of students to share what they have talked about (5 minutes)

Classroom Assessment Technique (CAT) – The Muddiest Point: The purpose of this activity is to assess how students are gaining knowledge, and what concept remain unclear.

- Time: 2-3 minutes
- Materials: The "CAT" slide (see PowerPoint slides). Students need a piece of paper.
- Directions:
 1. Ask students to take 1-2 minutes to answer these questions:
 1. What was the muddiest point about today's class?
 2. Write down the concept you are still struggling to understand.
 2. Review answers after class and use students' responses to help guide your review at the start of day 2.

SJO (Social Justice Orientation) Activity: The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to practice innovative and critical thinking skills, while also incorporating sociocultural factors into their methods of problem solving.

- Time: 15-20 minutes

- Materials: PowerPoint Slides, chalkboard and chalk or whiteboard and marker.
- Directions:
 1. Introduce a “Think-Pair-Share” activity.
 2. In pairs or small groups, agree upon a social issue that you are able to examine using a social justice orientation. (3-5 minutes)
 3. Pairs will then discuss the following (10 minutes):
 1. How do social and economic inequities contribute to the root problems of your group’s social issue?
 2. What systemic injustices occur, and how might these systemic factors be misapplied (i. e., blamed on an individual)?
 3. How might a community psychologist approach this issue by reallocating resources, reducing barriers, or promoting self-determination and well-being?
 4. Instructors Note: Please go to the next slide after explaining the rules below, it displays these questions so students can keep track of them and don’t have to memorize them.
 5. Tell the class that when discussing with their partner, they should:
 1. Take turns, and try to have an equal speaking time.
 2. Listen carefully and ask clarifying questions of one another.
 3. You should be able to explain your partner’s thinking, as well as your own.
 4. Feel free to write notes as you discuss with your partner
 6. Ask for some groups to share with the class. Ideas can be shared on a chalkboard or whiteboard. (10 minutes)

Advocacy Self-Assessment Toolkit Activity: To complete the self-assessment in this activity box, first consider several social issues with which you are interested in engaging in advocacy work. Once you have selected the social issues, complete the self-assessment questions for each social issue. Then, total up your scores for each issue to determine which received the high score. This will help you determine what you are most passionate about.

Using the range below, rate your agreement to each question for each of your chosen issues. Once you have determined which social issues might best fit your advocacy competencies and commitment, consider making a plan for your involvement. For the issue you score highest

on, develop a plan to advocate directly and indirectly to initiate social change through policy.

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree/Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

COMMITMENT

1. Are you strongly committed to working on this issue?
2. Are you willing to put in a great effort to achieve this goal?
3. Would you be willing to spend many years working on this issue?
4. Do you have a sense of obligation to continue working on this issue above all others?

CENTRALITY

1. Is what you have listed more important than any other issue you could work on?
2. Is this a matter of great personal meaning to you?
3. Do you have a passion and a burning desire to see this issue dealt with?
4. Is this an issue that you devote a lot of time thinking about?

RESOURCES

1. Are you a member of or work with any activist groups or community organizations that are dealing with the topic you have selected?
2. Are you aware of any friends, family members or colleagues who are either working on this issue or interested in doing so?
3. Do you have access to resources (time, energy, funds, materials) that might be applied to working with this topic?
4. Do you feel that you have the capabilities and confidence to engage in work with the issue that you have mentioned?

Module Reflection Activity

1. Have students select into Groups or Pairs (3-5 minutes)
2. Have students get into groups of two or three to discuss their thoughts. Give students three to five minutes to discuss how a principle or value could be used to create change in their community.
3. Tell the class that when discussing the ideas with their partner, they should:
 1. Take turns, and try to have an equal speaking time
 2. Listen carefully and ask clarifying questions of one another
 3. You should be able to explain your partner's thinking, as well as your own
 4. Feel free to write notes as you discuss with your partner
4. Once conversations begin to quiet, ask for some groups to share with the class. Ideas can be shared on a chalkboard or whiteboard.
5. Use this brief discussion to highlight how Community Psychology principles/values are used to bring about change in communities. Specifically, how we aim to go beyond an individual focus (i.e., how can I change) and integrates other factors (e.g., social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental) to promote long-term change.

CAT—The One-Minute Paper: The purpose of this CAT is to assess the most important things that students learned, and what questions remain unanswered.

1. End class by asking students to write a brief response to the following questions:
 1. "What was the most important thing you learned during this class?" and
 2. "What important question remains unanswered?"
2. Follow up during the next class period to mention a few important things that students said that they learned.
3. If the students' unanswered questions can be quickly clarified, do so. If not, try to connect them to the next unit in your class, where the question may be readdressed.

Please note that the PowerPoint slides include a slide that lists additional outside resources that are not listed on the website. To locate it, open the PDF and navigate to a slide titled Additional Outside Resources and you will see an embedded Word Doc which contains the resources.

Discussion Points

- As this [link](#) indicates, residents of affluent neighborhoods live about 15 years longer than residents of under-resourced neighborhoods. Chicago had the largest life expectancy gap of all cities. If you hover the mouse over the map in this [link](#), you can see what the average life expectancy is for each census tract in Chicago. What might be some of the reasons for this life expectancy gap in Chicago as well as other cities?
 - This activity is meant to help students critically engage with the ecological factors that affect problems in society (e.g., life expectancy). Often health problems are attributed on the individual level, and this resource helps students grapple with the factors of influence environmentally, such as resource distribution, food deserts, educational opportunities, or access to nearby medical services, that would play critical roles in determining the long-term health and wellbeing of community members.
- In what ways does an individualistic perspective limit the field of psychology?
 - This question is meant to stimulate discussion of different types and methods of change. Discussions of prevention, as well as principles and values would be especially relevant here. This question would fit well with the Creating Change activity.
- Reflecting on a time you felt stressed, provide examples of ecological factors that you think influenced your lived experience. Describe how these factors interacted with each other, and how might these factors would differ for someone else.
 - This discussion point centers on contemplation of individual, social, community, and societal factors from a stressful experience. It requires that students also consider how others factors are interdependent and adaptive.
- What would you like to do when you finish your education? How might Community Psychology be part of your career plans? What skills would you like to use in your work?
 - This answer is provoking students to consider how the concepts and themes of Community Psychology can be applied to their lives and fields other than psychology.

Outside Resources

Community Psychology Academic Programs:

<http://scra27.org/what-we-do/education/academic-programs/>

Community Psychology – Social Justice through Collaborative Research and Action:

<https://www.communitypsychology.com/>

Community Tool Box:

<https://ctb.ku.edu/en>

Free Student Associate Membership Form:

<https://socra.memberclicks.net/student-associate-form#/>

Introduction to Community Psychology: Becoming an Agent of Change:

<https://press.rebus.community/introductiontocommunitypsychology/>

Society for Community Research and Action interest groups - Get Involved!

<http://www.scra27.org/who-we-are/interest-groups/>

The Community Psychologist Journal:

<https://www.scra27.org/publications/tcp/>

PowerPoint Presentation

This module has an associated PowerPoint presentation. Download it at https://nobaproject.com//images/shared/supplement_editions/000/000/329/Introduction%20to%20Community%20Psychology.pptx?1584556491.

About Noba

The Diener Education Fund (DEF) is a non-profit organization founded with the mission of re-inventing higher education to serve the changing needs of students and professors. The initial focus of the DEF is on making information, especially of the type found in textbooks, widely available to people of all backgrounds. This mission is embodied in the Noba project.

Noba is an open and free online platform that provides high-quality, flexibly structured textbooks and educational materials. The goals of Noba are three-fold:

- To reduce financial burden on students by providing access to free educational content
- To provide instructors with a platform to customize educational content to better suit their curriculum
- To present material written by a collection of experts and authorities in the field

The Diener Education Fund is co-founded by Drs. Ed and Carol Diener. Ed is the Joseph Smiley Distinguished Professor of Psychology (Emeritus) at the University of Illinois. Carol Diener is the former director of the Mental Health Worker and the Juvenile Justice Programs at the University of Illinois. Both Ed and Carol are award-winning university teachers.

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