

Clinical Psychology, Nature, Development and Activities of Clinical Psychologist (MAPSY 202)

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What is Clinical Psychology?

- Clinical Psychology is the branch of Psychology.
- It concerned with the assessment and treatment of mental illness, emotional disorders and behavioural problems.
- Clinical Psychology promoting human adaptation, adjustment, personal effectiveness and satisfaction.
- Clinical Psychology focuses on the intellectual, emotional, biological, psychological, social and behavioural aspects of human functioning across the life span, in varying cultures, and at all socioeconomic levels.
- Clinical Psychology is a science that generates research efforts to discover and validate information about what people are like and why they behave as they do.

Historical Overview of Clinical Psychology

“The official birth of clinical psychology can be traced to 1896 when “Lighter Witmer” opened the first Psychological Clinic in Philadelphia Pennsylvania.”

Clinical Psychology has its roots in 3 sets of historical factors :

1. Use of scientific research methods by Psychologists.
2. Study of human individual differences.
3. The ways in which Behavioural Disorders have been viewed and treated over the years.

Definition of Clinical Psychology :

“Clinical psychology involves research, teaching and services relevant to the application of principles, methods and procedures for understanding, predicting and alleviating intellectual, emotional, biological, psychological, social and behavioural maladjustment, disability and discomfort, applied to a wide range of client populations.” (APA 1991)

Clinical Psychology Studies:



Characteristics of Clinical Psychology :

Emphasis on science

Emphasis on maladjustment

Emphasis on the individual

Emphasis on helping

Scope of Clinical Psychology :

Early definitions stressed assessments, evaluation and diagnosis

More recent inclusion of intervention in various forms as well as prevention

Evidence based practice

Active debate on the 'science of clinical psychology'

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Activities of Clinical Psychologist :

1. Intervention And Therapy

- A major activity of clinical psychologist is intervention and treatment.
- Many clinical psychologist work directly with people who have a mental illness or psychological disorder.
- By choosing an appropriate treatment, clinical psychologist can help such people overcome their problem or, at minimum, manage their symptom.
- All psychological intervention rests on the ability to develop and maintain functional therapeutic relationships with clients.
- Psychotherapy is the activity that most frequently engages the typical clinician's efforts and to which the most time is devoted.

2- Assessment and Diagnosis :

- Assessment has long been a critical part of the clinical psychologist's role.
- Assessment whether through the observation, testing or interview, is a way of gathering information so that an important question can be solved.
- Assessment of an individual's development, behavior, intellect, interests, personality, cognitive processes, emotional functioning and social functioning are performed by clinical psychologists as are assessment activities directed towards families, couples and groups.
- The process of assessment is very important as it leads to the diagnosis of the clients problems.
- Interpretation of assessment results, and integration of these results with other information available, in a way that is sensitive to the client, is an essential skill of clinical psychologist.

3- Teaching :

Clinical Psychologist who have full or part-time academic appointments obviously devote a considerable amount of time to teaching.

Those whose responsibilities are primarily in the area of graduate education, teach course in advance psychopathology, psychological testing, interviewing, intervention, personality theory and so on.

Some also teach abnormal psychology, introduction to clinical psychology.

4- Clinical Supervision :

This activity is another form of teaching. However, it typically involves more one- to- one teaching, small group approaches and other less formal, non class room varieties of instruction.

Clinical psychologists often spend significant portions of their time supervising students, interns and others.

In short one learns by doing but under the controlled and secure conditions of a trainee – supervisor relationship.

5 – Research

Clinical psychology has grown out of an academic research tradition. As a result, when clinical training programs were first established after world war 2, the scientist – practitioner model was adopted.

This meant that in contrast to other mental health workers such as psychiatrist or social worker, all clinicians were to be trained both as scientist and practitioner.

Although this research emphasis may not be so prominent in some training programs as it once was, the fact remains that clinical psychologists are in a unique position both to evaluate research conducted by others and to conduct their own research.

6 – Consultation

Consultation, regardless of the setting in which it occurs, or the particular purpose it has, is a significant activity of many clinical psychologists. A growing number of clinical psychologists serve as consultants.

In consultation, the goal is to increase the effectiveness of those to whom one's efforts are directed by imparting to them some degree of expertise. It takes innumerable forms, in many different settings.

Consultation can run the gamut from clinical cases to matter of business, personal and profit. It can deal with individuals or entire organizations. Sometimes it is remedial, other times it is oriented toward prevention.

Thank You