COURSE CODE: PSYC448

COURSE TITLE: COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

SESSION #2 : Guiding Principles and Values of Community Psychology

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College of Education
School of Continuing and Distance Education
2017/2018 – 2018/2019 ACADEMIC YEAR

Course Information

Provide the following information:

Course Code:	PSYC448
Course Title:	Community Psychology
Course Credit	3 Credits
Session Number & Session Title:	Session #2: Guiding Principles and Values of Community Psychology
Semester/Year:	Second Semester/2018-2019

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Course Instructor's Contact

Provide the following information:

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Session Overview

- **Introduction**: In section 1, you learned about the history and scope of community psychology. Do you have principles and values that guide your life? Critical awareness of principles and values is important to community psychologists. As a field that touches the lives of people, community psychology is not value-free but value-bound. What values and principles guide the work community psychologists do in communities and institutions? In this session, you will learn about the core values and guiding principles of community psychology. Come along with me.

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Session Outline

The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

- Goals of community psychology

- Principles of community psychology

- Definition of values

- Importance of values for community psychology

- The seven (7) core values of community psychology

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Session Learning Goals

- The goals of this session are to:
  - Demonstrate the ability to explain the goals and principles of community psychology.
  - Demonstrate the ability to discuss the core values of community psychology.
  - Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate the importance of values in the practice of community psychology.

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Session Learning Objectives

- The desired measureable learning objectives students will achieve upon completion of this session are to.

  - Describe the goals of community psychology.
  - Explain the principles that guide the practice of community psychology.
  - List and discuss the core values of community psychology.

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Session Learning Outcomes

- By the end of this session, you should be able to:

  - Explain the goals of community psychology.
  - Discuss the principles that guide the practice of community psychology.
  - List and describe the core values of community psychology.

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Session Activities and Assignments

This week, complete the following tasks:

- Log onto the UG Sakai LMS course site: http://sakai.ug.edu.gh/XXXXXXXXX

- Read Chapter 1 of the Recommended Text - Kloos et al. (2012). *Community Psychology: Linking individuals and Communities;* pp. 25-33 & *Chapter 1 of Nelson and Prilelltensky (eds.) (2010). Community Psychology. In Pursuit of Liberation and Well-Being.*

- Watch the Videos for Session 2 – Guiding Principles and Values of Community Psychology

- Review Lecture Slides for Session 2 – Guiding Principles and Values of Community Psychology

- Visit the Chat Room and discuss the Forum question for Session 2.

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Reading List

- **Required Text**
- Akotia, C. S. (2014). Community psychology: Moving psychology into the community. In C. S. Akotia & C. C. Mate-Kole (Eds.), *Contemporary psychology: Readings from Ghana* (pp. 163-177). Tema: Digibooks Ghana Ltd.

- Kloos, B., Hill, J., Thomas, E., Wandersman, A., Elias, M. J., & Dalton, J. H. (2012). *Community psychology: Linking individuals and communities*. New York: Wadsworth.

- Nelson, G., & Prilleltensky, I. (2010). *Community psychology: In pursuit of liberation and well-being*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

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Topic One

GOALS OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

Goals of Community Psychology

- The goals of community psychology are**:**

   1. To optimize the well-being of communities and individuals through services and intervention programs.

   2. To bring about change in the lives of people.

   ❖ These goals underlie the principles of community psychology.

Topic Two

PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

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Principles of Community Psychology

- The principles are easily understood in comparison with other approaches in traditional psychology. The principles are described below:

1. **Level of analysis**: Psychology has traditionally focused on the <u>individual</u> level of analysis. Within CP, it is believed that people cannot be understood outside of their social context. Therefore, CP focuses on understanding people within their social contexts using a holistic framework called the "ecological levels of analysis". This framework recognises that individuals live within webs of social relationships.

Principles of Community Psychology

2. **Person-in-context**: It is one of the fundamental principles of CP. It emanates from Lewin's (1951) equation; B $=f$(PxE). This principle suggests that human behaviour (**B**) must be understood as a function of the person (**P**), the environment (**E**), and the interaction between the two.

    – This principle introduces environment as a key variable that helps to understand human behaviour. This principle marks a departure from traditional psychology, which focuses on understanding behaviour from <u>feelings</u> and <u>thoughts</u>.

Principles of Community Psychology

3. **Principle of holism**: It focuses on understanding a person as a <u>whole</u>, including his or her strengths and weaknesses, in the context of the many relationships, settings, and environments in which the person is embedded. It upholds gestalt psychologists' view that "the whole is bigger than the sum of its parts".

    – Social problems must be understood from a <u>holistic perspective</u> other than an individualistic perspective.

Principles of Community Psychology

4. **Victim-blaming**: It is a practice in traditional psychology that holds people reponsible for the <u>causes of </u> and <u>solutions to</u> their problems. This practice is refered to as "victim-blaming" (Ryan, 1971). This practice emanates from defining and understanding social problems from individualistic perspectives.

Principles of Community Psychology

- Community psychologists do not blame the victim. Instead, they attempt to <u>reframe</u> the problem in terms of its social context and consider it as stemming from degrading social conditions.

- CP thus provides a new way of thinking about social issues and problems (i.e. "paradigm shift" or "shift in perspective"; Dalton, Elias, & Wandersman, 2001, p.6). Therefore, CP represents a different world view of psychology.

Principles of Community Psychology

5. **Strengths-versus-deficits principle**: CP considers the strengths of disadvantaged persons and communities as its central focus other than their deficits or problems.

   – CP assumes that attempts to understand disadvantaged people by focusing on their deficits or problems confer a subordinate status on them in relation to the person or persons seeking to understand them.

   – In planning preventions, a focus on the strengths of disadvantaged people provides the opportunity to use their own talents, resources, and capacities to rebuild them.

Principles of Community Psychology

6. **Timing of intervention**: Traditional applied psychology intervenes late, usually after the problem has occurred. Community psychology, however, emphasises prevention and early intervention. Thus, CP is "proactive", seeking out, in assessing needs while traditional applied psychology is "reactive", operating in the waiting mode.

7. **Goal of intervention**: In traditional applied psychology, the goal is to reduce maladaptive behaviours through treatment and rehabilitation. In community psychology, however, the goal is to promote competence and well-being through self help, community development, and social action.

Principles of Community Psychology

8. **Role of client and professionals**: In traditional applied psychology, the client basically plays a passive role and he or she is supposed to comply with the therapist, who is perceived as an "expert".

   – In CP, however, the client actively participates and has freedom of choice in any intervention. The community psychologist acts as a "resource collaborator", and not as an expert, in order to achieve his or her goal.

Topic Three

DEFINING VALUES

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Defining Values

- Values may be described as deeply held beliefs about what is morally acceptable and good (Dalton, Elias, & Wandersman, 2007).

- Values are religiously held and can arouse emotions. They can represent ends or means or both.

- Values may originate from our social relationships.

- Values may also originate from spiritual beliefs or practices.

- Aside from individuals, families, communities, and cultures uphold value systems.

Slide 23

Topic Four

IMPORTANCE OF VALUES FOR COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

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Importance of Values in CP

- Values enable community psychologists to clarify their choices of social problems for research and action.

- Values help community psychologists to question the dominant cultural narratives and worldviews that seek to maintain the status quo.

- Values guide community psychologists to avoid a discrepancy between actions and values. That is, values help community psychologists to "walk the talk".

- Values help community psychologists to engage with a culture of a community.

- Values provide community psychologists with a unifying spirit and a shared commitment for their work.

Topic Five

CORE VALUES IN COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

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Core Values in Community Psychology

- In its attempt to become science (a scientific field), traditional psychology appears to have ignored the role of moral and value aspects of its work (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). Community psychology attempts to fill this void in the value base of psychology by incorporating values into its framework.

- Community psychology, therefore, involves a balancing act between values, research, and action.

- There are seven (7) core values in community psychology. These are described below:

Core Values in Community Psychology

1. **Individual and family wellness**: This value seeks to uphold the physical and psychological well-being of community members at the individual and family levels. Wellness involves resilience, life satisfaction, and competent social skills among family members.

    –   Community psychologists, therefore, aim at promoting individual and family wellness by designing community-based interventions to prevent maladaptive behaviours, individual and family social problems, and illness.

Core Values in Community Psychology

– Community psychologists strengthen social competence, emotional competence, healthful behaviours, social support, and mutual help groups among family members. Efforts to strengthen family wellness promotes individual wellness as well.

– Prilleltensky (2001) argues that the promotion of individual and family wellness gives rise to "collective wellness", which reflects the health of communities and societies.

Core Values in Community Psychology

2. **Sense of community**: It refers to the feeling of togetherness, belongingness, and interdependence that community members perceive in a community in which they live. This is one of the most important concepts for community psychology.

    – If environments and individuals are well matched, a more **optimal** community as well as one with a sense of spirit and a sense of "we-ness" can be created.

    – Having a sense of community is the feeling of the relationship an individual has with his/her community. Sense of community is sometimes referred to as **"community spirit"** or sense of belonging in a community.

Core Values in Community Psychology

– When people lack sense of community, they would not be involved in any activity in their community. Lack of sense of community therefore slows down community development. Community psychologists focus on promoting sense of community in the communities where they work.

Core Values in Community Psychology

3. **Respect for human diversity**: This value upholds the various communities and social identities that exist in communities. This diversity may result from gender, ethnicity, nationality, race, sexuality, and social economic status.

    – In other words, respect for diversity refers to the view that people have the right to be different, where being different does not mean being inferior.

    – If difference or diversity is accepted as a fact of life, then resources ought to be equitably distributed to everyone regardless of other considerations.

Core Values in Community Psychology

– Besides, research on human diversity focuses on strengths and resources within communities and how these can be used in promoting quality of life.

4. **Citizen participation**: This value involves the use of democratic processes in decision-making at the community level such that all members of a community can actively participate in taking decisions regarding the social problems that affect their lives.

Core Values in Community Psychology

- Citizen participation also refers to peaceful, respectful, collaborative processes of making decisions that involve all members of a community.

- Thus, community psychologists ensure the inclusion of community members in decisions that impact on community members' lives. In this way, it is assumed that community members would be much more willing to get involved in community life and help bring about change in their communities.

Core Values in Community Psychology

5. **Collaboration and community strengths**: This value involves relationships between community psychologists and citizens with whom they work. It is one of the most distinctive values of community psychology.

    – Traditionally, psychologists carry themselves as experts (researchers, clinical professionals, educational professionals, consultants etc.) in their relationship with community members .

    – This posture creates an unequal relationship hierarchy of experts and clients, which may not be useful for community work. Though community psychologists have expertise, they also seek to identify and appreciate the life experiences and wisdom of citizens.

    – Thus, community researchers aim at achieving participatory or collaborative partnership with community members.

Core Values in Community Psychology

6. **Empirical grounding**: This value refers to the need to for community research to inform community action and interventions. In other words, community action ought to be grounded in meaningful community research.

   – To initiate change in communities, community psychologists must first conduct research, findings of which must be acted upon to promote quality of life. No community problem can be addressed without proper research.

   – Empirical grounding includes the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods in understanding community life. Community members should participate in defining the problems or issues that affect them and in deciding how to resolve them.

Core Values in Community Psychology

7. **Social justice**: This value refers to the transparent, equitable, and fair allocation of power, opportunities, obligations, and resources in a community (Prilleltensky, 2001).

    – There are two types of social justice that guide the work of community psychologists. These are: (a)distributive justice, and (b)procedural justice.

Core Values in Community Psychology

- **(a) Distributive justice**: It focuses on the allocation of resources among members of a population. A typical example would be ensuring that health insurance reaches everyone in the population in Ghana.

- **(b)Procedural justice**: It concerns whether different groups are represented in collective decision making or not. For example, if a law is to be made for the physically challenged, it is important that representatives from this group are also part of the drafting of the legislation.

Core Values in Community Psychology

– With this value in mind, community psychologists, for example, work with other agencies to advocate for policies that make resources available for all members of a community. Note that social justice may be sought at institutional, community, and societal levels.

Topic Six

EXERCISE

Exercise

- List, at least, three important social problems or issues that your community is facing. Choose of these social problems or issues you listed and answer the question:

- Which community psychology values are relevant to this social problem or issue, and why? How does this social problem or issue involve factors at the individual, microsystem, organisational, locality, or macrosystem levels?

Topic Seven

FORUM QUESTION

Forum Question

- Which of the seven core values of community psychology tie in well with your own values? Are there any other values that are important to you, and why?

References

- Dalton, J. H., Elias, M. J., & Wandersman, A. (2001). *Community psychology: Linking individuals and communities* (1st ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

- Dalton, J. H., Elias, M. J., & Wandersman, A. (2007). *Community psychology: Linking individuals and communities* (1st ed.). Belmont, CA; Wadsworth.

- Nelson, G., & Prilleltensky, I. (Eds.). (2005). *Community psychology: In pursuit of liberation and well-being*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

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- Prilleltensky, I. (2001). Value-based praxis in community psychology: Moving toward social justice and social action. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *29*, 747-778.

- Ryan, W. (1971). *Blaming the victim*. New York: Random House.