Fields of Psychology

Clinical Psychology: focuses on diagnosing and treating mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders. Some of the more common disorders that might be treated include learning disabilities, substance abuse, depression, anxiety, and eating disorders.

Counseling Psychology: addresses the emotional, social, work, school and physical health concerns people may have at different stages in their lives, focusing on typical life stresses and more severe issues with which people may struggle as individuals and as a part of families, groups and organizations. Counseling psychologists help people with physical, emotional and mental health issues improve their sense of well-being, alleviate feelings of distress and resolve crises. They also provide assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of more severe psychological symptoms.

Cognitive Psychology: the study of mental processes such as attention, language use, memory, perception, problem solving, creativity, and thinking. Most cognitive psychologists have a specialty, such as attention, memory, problem-solving, language processing or information processing. They can work with patients with any variety of mental illness, those who may have suffered trauma, or any number of brain disorders. They also can work with patients on a long-term basis, such as those dealing with dementia, or on a short-term basis, such as helping a child with a learning disability learn how to cope with their schoolwork and process the information they receive in school.

Community Psychology: goes beyond an individual focus and integrates social, cultural, economic, political, environmental, and international influences to promote positive change, health, and empowerment at individual and systemic levels. Community psychologists can work as educators, professors, program directors, consultants, policy developers, evaluators; and researchers in community organizations, universities, or government agencies to promote mental health and community well-being.

Developmental Psychology: a scientific approach which aims to explain how children and adults change over time. A significant proportion of theories within this discipline focus upon development during childhood, as this is the period during an individual's lifespan when the most change occurs. Developmental psychologists study a wide range of theoretical areas, such as biological, social, emotion, and cognitive processes.

Educational Psychology: involves the study of how people learn, including topics such as student outcomes, the instructional process, individual differences in learning, gifted learners and learning disabilities. This branch of psychology involves not just the learning process of early childhood and adolescence, but includes the social, emotional and cognitive processes that are involved in learning throughout the entire lifespan.

Experimental Psychology: Experimental psychologists employ human participants and animal subjects to study a great many topics, including, among others sensation & perception, memory, cognition, learning, motivation, emotion; developmental processes, social psychology, and the neural substrates of all of these.

Forensic Psychology: the intersection between psychology and the justice system. It involves understanding fundamental legal principles, particularly with regard to expert witness testimony and the specific content area of concern (e.g., competence to stand trial, child custody and visitation, or workplace discrimination), as well as relevant jurisdictional considerations (e.g., in the United States, the definition of insanity in criminal trials differs from state to state) in order to be able to interact appropriately with judges, attorneys and other legal professionals. An important aspect of forensic psychology is the ability to testify in court as an expert witness, reformulating psychological findings into the legal language of the courtroom and providing information to legal personnel in a way that can be understood.

Health Psychology: focuses on how biology, psychology, behavior and social factors influence health and illness. The field of health psychology is focused on promoting health as well as the prevention and treatment of disease and illness. Health psychologists also focus on understanding how people react, cope and recover from illness. Some health psychologists work to improve the health care system and the government's approach to health care policy.
Industrial/Organizational Psychology: I/O psychologists apply principles of psychology to human resources, administration, management, sales, and marketing problems. Activities may include policy planning; employee testing and selection, training and development; and organizational development and analysis. May work with management to organize the work setting to improve worker productivity.

Neuropsychology: a sub-specialty of clinical psychology that specializes in the assessment and treatment of patients with brain injury or disease.

Psychometric/Quantitative Psychology: a field of study concerned with the theory and technique of psychological measurement. One part of the field is concerned with the objective measurement of skills and knowledge, abilities, attitudes, personality traits, and educational achievement. For example, some psychometric researchers have, thus far, concerned themselves with the construction and validation of assessment instruments such as questionnaires, tests, raters' judgments, and personality tests. Another part of the field is concerned with statistical research bearing on measurement theory (e.g., item response theory; intraclass correlation).

Rehabilitation Psychology: a specialty area within psychology that focuses on the study and application of psychological knowledge and skills on behalf of individuals with disabilities and chronic health conditions in order to maximize health and welfare, independence and choice, functional abilities, and social role participation across the lifespan. Rehabilitation psychologists are uniquely trained and specialized to engage in a broad range of activities including clinical practice, consultation, program development, service provision, research, teaching and education, training, administration, development of public policy and advocacy related to persons with disability and chronic health conditions.

School Psychology: a field that applies principles of educational psychology, developmental psychology, clinical psychology, community psychology, and applied behavior analysis to meet children's and adolescents' behavioral health and learning needs in a collaborative manner with educators and parents. School psychologists are usually state-certified to deliver services to students through the school system; duties can include administering IQ tests and other assessments as well as counseling and planning interventions.

Social Psychology: the scientific study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others. Social psychologists therefore deal with the factors that lead us to behave in a given way in the presence of others, and look at the conditions under which certain behavior/actions and feelings occur. Social psychology is concerned with the way these feelings, thoughts, beliefs, intentions and goals are constructed and how such psychological factors, in turn, influence our interactions with others.

Sport Psychology: an interdisciplinary science that draws on knowledge from many related fields including biomechanics, physiology, kinesiology and psychology. It involves the study of how psychological factors affect performance and how participation in sport and exercise affect psychological and physical factors.