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CAREER IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

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You might have come across the saying 'Health is wealth'. This is applicable for both physical and mental health. For a good life mental health is as important as physical health. Considering the importance of mental well-being of people, a lot of study and research has already been made and the area is being further explored. If you are a person who wants to unravel the mysteries of human mind and also want to offer a healing touch to those who are afflicted with mental illness a course in clinical psychology is the best option.

Studying psychology doesn't mean that you'll learn how to read people's minds or faces. That it does is, apparently, the most abiding myth about the subject. The human mind is complex and so is its working. Psychology provides an understanding to that. In this subject we study the nature, processes, reactions and other aspects related to the human mind. Psychologists try to understand the pattern of human thinking and behavior at different stages of growth and development of human beings. Those who like to understand the intricacies of how people think, act and react can choose psychology as their area of study and career.

Clinical psychology is a branch of psychology devoted to understanding

mental health problems in individuals and developing effective treatments for the full spectrum of mental, emotional, and behavioural disorders one may experience; depression, anxiety disorders, interpersonal difficulties, and psychotic disorders are but a few.

Clinical psychologists often work in hospitals, private practice, or academic

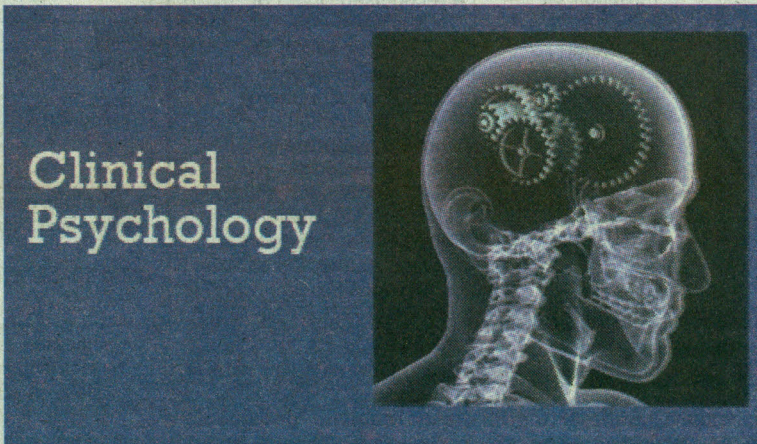
sis, therapeutic goals, and treatment notes.

To work as a clinical psychologist is to experience the immense satisfaction of helping people overcome emotional and psychological difficulties. Unlike psychiatrists, clinical psychologists do not prescribe medications and instead address psychological issues with a variety of techniques that depend in part upon their area of specialty. Specialization in the field of clinical psychology may come by the choice of theoretical framework, such as cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, humanistic, family systems, positive psychology, transpersonal or existential. Specialization may also be achieved by focusing upon a specific disorder or condition such as depression, schizophrenia, addiction or learning

disabilities (to name a few) or upon children, families, adults or the elderly.

Irrespective of their area of specialty, clinical psychologists assist people in the midst of major life problems, physical traumas, and difficult life transitions. Events such as these tend to spark anxiety, depression, compulsive behaviors and other psychological problems that interfere with day-to-day living.

settings. Clinicians are trained in a range of techniques and theoretical approaches. Some specialize in treating certain psychological disorders, while others work with clients suffering from a wide variety of problems. Clinical psychologists treat some of the most severe psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia and depression. In addition to working with clients, clinical psychologists have to keep detailed records of client assessment, diagno-



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Clinical psychologists also have the option of teaching in a college or university, engaging in research, or working for organizations that need their services. Wherever they work, clinical psychologists perform the meaningful task of helping to relieve distress and return normalcy to lives upended by dysfunction.

JOB ROLES

- ◆ Assessing and diagnosing a client's psychological functioning and behavior using direct observation, interviews, and psychometric tests.
- ◆ Developing a course of therapy using empirically supported (or scientifically valid) psychological treatments for clients.
- ◆ Working in conjunction with other healthcare professionals to ensure the best course of treatment for a client's needs.
- ◆ Treating psychological disorders using various psychological techniques, such as cognitive therapy, behavioral treatment, stress inoculation training, anxiety management, and exposure therapy.
- ◆ Conducting applied research for the development and validation of assessments and interventions, and for program evaluation.

ELIGIBILITY

Psychology is offered as a subject at the Plus Two or equivalent level with a combination of other social sciences and statistics. At the graduate level, one can study psychology as a general or Honours subject in most universities. Master's degree courses in psychology are offered both in arts and science streams. Eligibility for admission to the Bachelors degree programme is 10+ 2 after any subject stream, while a Master's degree programme requires a bachelor's degree with psychology as one of the subjects. Clinical psychology courses are available in a few colleges and university departments, either as a specialization or as a subject at postgraduate level.

Those who desire to go for Ph.D. should clear the Junior Research Fellowship/Lectureship examination (National Eligibility Test-NET) conducted by the University Grants Commission or the University-level examination.

A Career in Clinical Psychology Requires:

- ◆ Excellent communication skills.
- ◆ Skill in the analysis of personal problems and individual needs.
- ◆ An understanding of the influence of feelings, attitudes, thoughts, and perspectives on the behavior of others
- ◆ An understanding of ethical principles, of diversity, and of cultural context.

- ◆ The ability to lead, inspire, and work effectively with people.
- ◆ Personal integrity and a commitment to behave ethically.
- ◆ An active concern for the welfare of others.
- ◆ Recognition of the need for competence and continuous learning.
- ◆ An ability to be non-judgmental and objective

SCOPE

India is on the verge of an explosion of mental illnesses. A survey to explore the opportunities for future mental health professionals and challenges they would face in their careers, noted that the number of people suffering with mental problems was on the increase, and there was a serious lack of mental health professionals. In the coming few years India as a nation would need a number of psychologists and mental health professionals to help people deal with these problems. Hospitals and schools are the major places where mental health professionals could look for various opportunities.

Clinical Psychologists can work in -

- ◆ Regional health authorities such as hospitals, mental health clinics, and psychiatric and rehabilitation centers.
- ◆ Private practice.
- ◆ Universities and colleges.
- ◆ Industries
- ◆ Prisons and correctional facilities.
- ◆ Research agencies.

- ◆ Schools.
- ◆ Government Sector

There are enormous opportunities for those who study psychology, both at the basic as well as the advanced level. This fascinating subject can therefore be the beginning of a very interesting and worthwhile career.

LIST OF INSTITUTIONS FOR STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGY

- ◆ Department of Psychology
University of Delhi -www.du.ac.in
- ◆ Department of Psychology,
Barkatullah University, Bhopal-
www.bubhopal.nic.in
- ◆ Department of Psychology, Christ
University, Bangalore- www.christuniversity.in
- ◆ Presidencycollege, Chennai-
www.presidencycollege.ac.in
- ◆ Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi-
www.bhu.ac.in
- ◆ Dayanand Anglo Vedic college,
Chandigarh -www.davchd.com
- ◆ Amity University, Noida -
www.amity.edu
- ◆ The National Institute of Mental
Health and Neuro Sciences,
Bangalore www.nimhans.ac.in)
offers M. phil in clinical psychology

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