



## Infusing Community Psychology Practice Competencies into Doctoral Training

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implementation, and evaluation of school-based interventions (e.g., mentoring, service-learning) designed to promote academic success. **Scot Seitz**, is a doctoral student in the Community and Clinical Psychology Program at Georgia State University. Mr. Seitz has conducted research in both Public Health and Community Psychology. As an undergraduate at Emory University, Scot's research focused on the transmission of infectious nematodes and viruses in the United States and Bolivia. After teaching sixth grade science for two years as a Teach For America corps member, Scot became interested in the design and evaluation of positive youth development programs. Currently, he is working with Gabriel Kuperminc to evaluate a youth mentoring program, a positive youth development afterschool program, and a teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS prevention program. As a former educator and current graduate student, Scot is also interested in creative approaches to graduate student training in both Community and Clinical Psychology. **Christyl Wilson** is a doctoral student in the Developmental Psychology program at Georgia State University. Prior to graduate school, Christyl was a Teach For America corps member and taught elementary school for 3 years. She is interested in positive youth development, education, and youth program evaluation. Currently, Christyl works with Dr. Gabriel Kuperminc to evaluate a group mentoring program and a sexual health intervention for youth.

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## Infusing Community Psychology Practice Competencies into Doctoral Training

### Abstract

Since 2008, the Georgia State University doctoral training program in Community Psychology has made several modifications to coursework requirements, qualifying examinations, community practicum requirements, and advisement processes. Recognizing that graduates pursue trajectories ranging from independent consulting practice to academia, the primary goal was to provide greater flexibility in shaping training to match the types of careers that students envision. Accordingly, the *Community Psychology Practice Competencies* and the closely aligned *Community Psychology Value Proposition* provide a useful framework for helping guide students and advisors in selecting relevant coursework and field experiences that match the students' training goals. In this paper, we focus on two specific areas in which we have infused the *Competencies*. The first area is practicum field-work, for which we have created a process built around the *Value Proposition*: students identify a potential field experience, work with community contacts to develop a statement of work focused on building experience and expertise in as many as four competency areas, and negotiate relevant deliverables. The second is advisement: Students are asked in their year-end progress reports to reflect on the extent to which they have gained experience with each competency during the year, and to identify a subset of focal competencies to gain experience and expertise in the coming year. With their advisors, students can then use this information to map out and modify their training plans. The paper describes the materials we have developed and provides preliminary quantitative and qualitative information about how the use of the *Competencies* is beginning to benefit students, advisors, and community partners. We describe successes and challenges we are encountering and conclude with the next steps we anticipate in the evolution of our training program.

Since 2008, the community psychology doctoral program curriculum at Georgia State University (GSU) has undergone a series of modifications that reflect our faculty's vision of aligning the training we provide to the wide range of career paths that our students pursue after graduation. A set of 18 core competencies associated with community psychology practice in the United States (Dalton & Wolfe, 2012; Wolfe, Chien Scott, & Jimenez, 2013) informed some of these modifications. In this article, we discuss how the community psychology program at GSU has begun to incorporate these competencies into the curriculum. We also present a case study to illustrate how a focus on competencies can enhance students' applied

field experiences (Kuperminc, 2011).

The refinements to our curriculum were motivated by a shift in the composition of the faculty and a recognition that we needed to attend to the diverse interests of our students, preparing them for careers both within and outside of the academy. The need to train students for jobs outside of the academy has ignited rigorous discussion within the field (Dalton & Julian, 2009) and the discussion has been fueled in part by Dziadkowiec & Jimenez's (2009) summary of results from a survey of graduate training programs conducted by the Society for Community Research and Action's (SCRA) Council of Education Programs and the

Practice Group (now recognized as the Practice Council). Those authors concluded that many community psychology programs did not have specific criteria in place to evaluate their training of practitioners. Instead, programs tended to emphasize skills that are closely aligned with the work of academic community psychologists, such as program development and applied/community research, but underemphasize skills that more closely characterize the work of practitioners in the field, such as collaboration, consultation, and advocacy.

Building on the results of the survey and expertise of community psychology practitioners, the Task Group on Defining Practice Competencies developed a set of 18

competencies to promote more comprehensive and meaningful training in community psychology programs. These core competencies encompass five domains (displayed in the results of *Table 3*).

In parallel to the development of the core competencies, Ratcliffe and Neigher (2010) spearheaded an effort to develop a “value proposition” (p. 5) in order to communicate in practical terms the types of knowledge and skills that community psychologists can offer to a wide range of community settings. By emphasizing what community psychologists *do*, the value proposition, therefore, offers a means of marketing community psychology competencies to an external audience (See *Table 1*).

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Community Psychology Skill Sets

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1. Plan and conduct community-based applied research.
  2. Evaluate programs/services.
  3. Incorporate psychological, ecological and systems level understanding into holistic, sustainable community development processes.
  4. Contribute to organizational assessment, program planning and development.
  5. Locate, evaluate, and apply information from diverse information sources to new situations.
  6. Facilitate small and large group processes.
  7. Communicate effectively; disseminate information in both technical and lay language with diverse stakeholder groups.
  8. Build community and organizational capacities.
  9. Build and maintain collaborations with a network of clients, communities, organizations, and other involved professions.
  10. Apply leadership, supervisory and mentoring skills.
  11. Develop organizational and community resources.
  12. Develop additional skill sets, consistent with individual interest and organization needs.
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*Table 1: Summary of Community Psychology Value Proposition*

**Competency-Based Graduate Training in Community Psychology**

The development of community psychology practice competencies has occurred in the context of a broader movement within

professional psychology toward identification, training, and assessment of competencies as a means to ensure high quality in the delivery of human services (Kaslow et al., 2004). While recognizing a longstanding resistance among community

psychologists to the adoption of rigid accreditation requirements for professional practice in the field (Dalton & Julian, 2009), proponents of the competencies have argued for the need to identify and articulate a core set of skills and competencies that offer a “clearer and consistent understanding of the qualities of a community psychologist that could enhance the ability of the field to advertise for jobs and market graduates” (Wolfe et al., 2013, p. 2). Accordingly, the practice competencies have been seen as offering guidance for the training of effective practitioners and for defining and marketing the field to potential consumers and community partners. It is with these dual objectives of articulating a coherent framework to guide training and communicating the value of our work to external audiences that GSU began to infuse the competencies into its doctoral program.

**The Context at GSU**

The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of GSU’s community psychology program in 2013 offered an opportunity to reconnect with alumni, primarily through personal contacts and social media. We have been able to gather current or recent employment information for 61 alumni who earned a Ph.D. either in community psychology or our dual community-clinical program from 1996 through 2015, including 43 graduates of the community program and 18 graduates of the clinical-community program (See *Table 2*). Among the community program graduates, 28% (n = 12) were most recently employed in academic positions (including tenure track and non-tenure track teaching or research faculty positions). Largely due to GSU’s location in Atlanta, a similar proportion

|                          | Community<br>(n = 43) |     | Clinical-Community<br>(n = 18) |     | Total<br>(n = 61) |     |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----|--------------------------------|-----|-------------------|-----|
|                          | f                     | %   | f                              | %   | f                 | %   |
| Academic                 | 12                    | 28% | 4                              | 22% | 16                | 26% |
| Government/Public Health | 13                    | 30% | 1                              | 6%  | 14                | 23% |
| Community Practice       | 18                    | 42% | 2                              | 11% | 20                | 33% |
| Clinical Practice        | 0                     | 0%  | 11                             | 61% | 11                | 18% |

*Table 2: Types of Employment Among Current or Recent Ph.D. Graduates*

(30%, n = 13) of community graduates were in government/public health positions, typically serving as behavioral scientists at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The largest proportion (42%, n = 18), were practitioners employed in positions that included community consultation, program development, or evaluation. Among the 18 graduates of the clinical-community program, the largest proportion was employed in clinical practice (61%, n = 11), in positions that often included some

engagement in community consultation, program development, or evaluation. The others were employed in academic/clinical settings (22%, n = 4), community practice settings (11%, n = 2), and government/public health settings (6%, n = 1).

This snapshot of alumni underscores the need for a flexible curriculum that can prepare students for a broad range of professional career paths. In discussions of how best to maintain a coherent program that offers comprehensive training in the field and



empowers students to take greater control over the direction of their training, our faculty agreed that it would be important to shift some of the responsibility for choosing courses and practicum field placements to students and their advisors. The competencies could then be used as a framework to help students, in consultation with their advisors, to be more intentional about identifying and working toward their unique training goals. The competencies also offer a framework for ongoing reflection about the extent to which students are gaining exposure to, experience with, and expertise in (Kloos, 2010) the areas of competence they view as most critical to their professional development.

### **Infusing the Competencies into Advisement and the Practicum Experience**

As we considered the ways in which we could infuse an explicit use of the competencies, we quickly realized that it would be necessary to adapt them to recognize skills associated with doing clinical work in community settings that characterize the training of our dual-degree clinical-community students. Moreover, we recognized that we might also need to further adapt the competencies to account for specialized skills that align with careers at the intersection of community psychology and public health. While such adaptations will likely evolve over time, we settled on three areas in which to begin introducing the competencies in our curriculum: the introductory course that all doctoral students take their first year, student annual reviews, and practicum field placements. In the paragraphs that follow, we describe the steps that we have taken to date, and offer some preliminary lessons learned by summarizing results of data that we have gathered and providing a brief case example.

#### *Introductory course*

Students take an introductory course in community psychology during their first semester in the doctoral program. One way of

introducing the competencies has been to assign students to learn about the career of one or more community psychologists, either through readings (e.g., Kelly & Song, 2004; Song & Kelly, 2008) or through making direct contact with a practicing community psychologist via a resource provided by the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA, 2016). In preparing a presentation to the class, students are encouraged to delve into and reflect on the salience of various competencies for different career paths.

#### *Annual review*

Students are required to complete an annual report each spring, summarizing their accomplishments during the year. The student's report is then used for discussion during a formal advisement meeting and in the preparation of an annual assessment of student progress. As part of this assessment we incorporated a simple survey, asking students to (1) indicate the competencies they have been exposed to during the past year, and (2) select up to 5 competencies that they would like to gain experience with during the upcoming year (see Appendix A). The former provides our faculty with information that can help assess areas of strength and gaps in the overall training program, and the latter provides a starting point for discussion between advisors and graduate students about course selection, the types of field placements to pursue for required practica, and other activities related to the students' training.

*Table 3* shows results from the 2015-2016 academic year annual report survey. Not surprisingly, the majority of students reported exposure to most of the competencies listed in the area of *Foundational Principles*, although only about one in three students reported exposure to #4: *Community Inclusion and Partnership*. Similar to findings in Dziadkowiec and Jimenez's (2009) report, students in our program were more likely to report exposure

| Competency  | Exposed in past year | %    | Focus for next year | %    |
|---|----------------------|------|---------------------|------|
| <b>Foundational Principles</b>  |                      |      |                     |      |
| 1 Ecological Perspectives   | 18                   | 0.78 | 5                   | 0.22 |
| 2 Empowerment   | 12                   | 0.52 | 8                   | 0.35 |
| 3 Sociocultural and Cross-Cultural Competence                                     | 18                   | 0.78 | 4                   | 0.17 |
| 4 Community Inclusion and Partnership   | 8                    | 0.35 | 5                   | 0.22 |
| 5 Ethical, Reflective Practice  | 17                   | 0.74 | 1                   | 0.04 |
| <b>Community Program Development and Management</b>                               |                      |      |                     |      |
| 6 Program Development, Implementation, and Management                             | 7                    | 0.30 | 6                   | 0.26 |
| 7 Prevention and Health Promotion<br>Community Organization and Capacity Building | 8                    | 0.35 | 9                   | 0.39 |
| 8 Community Leadership and Mentoring  | 9                    | 0.39 | 4                   | 0.17 |
| 9 Small and Large Group Processes   | 7                    | 0.30 | 2                   | 0.09 |
| 10 Resource Development   | 11                   | 0.48 | 1                   | 0.04 |
| 11 Consultation and Organizational Development                                    | 15                   | 0.65 | 3                   | 0.13 |
| <b>Community and Social Change</b>  |                      |      |                     |      |
| 12 Collaboration and Coalition Development  | 6                    | 0.26 | 4                   | 0.17 |
| 13 Community Development  | 6                    | 0.26 | 3                   | 0.13 |
| 14 Community Organizing and Community Advocacy                                    | 8                    | 0.35 | 5                   | 0.22 |
| 15 Public Policy Analysis, Development, and Advocacy                              | 5                    | 0.22 | 5                   | 0.22 |
| 16 Community Education, Information Dissemination, and Building Public Awareness  | 13                   | 0.56 | 3                   | 0.13 |
| <b>Community Research</b>   |                      |      |                     |      |
| 17 Participatory Community Research   | 6                    | 0.26 | 6                   | 0.26 |
| 18 Program Evaluation   | 12                   | 0.52 | 9                   | 0.39 |
| <b>Additional Competencies</b>  |                      |      |                     |      |
| 19 Clinical Community Competency  | 4                    | 0.17 | 6                   | 0.26 |
| 20 Other Skills   | 2                    | 0.09 | 6                   | 0.26 |
| 21 Other Academic Research Activities not Captured Above                          | 12                   | 0.52 | 2                   | 0.09 |

Table 3: Exposure to Competencies in Past Year (check all that apply) and Focus for Next Year (select up to 5). Annual Review Survey Responses for 2016 (n = 23).

to many of the competencies associated with applied research (e.g., *Program Evaluation*) and academic community psychology. Nearly all of the descriptions of “other” types of competencies involved training in advanced methodology and statistics, such as Geographic Information Systems and Multi-level modeling. Further analysis of these data revealed that students in our dual clinical-community program ( $n = 9$ ) reported exposure to fewer competencies ( $M = 6.56$ ,  $SD = 3.05$ ) than did other community students ( $n = 13$ ,  $M = 9.77$ ,  $SD = 5.28$ ).<sup>1</sup> Also, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students ( $n = 7$ ) reported exposure to a higher number ( $M = 9.14$ ,  $SD = 4.98$ ) of competencies in the past year than did 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students ( $n = 10$ ;  $M = 8.40$ ,  $SD = 4.58$ ) and students in their 5<sup>th</sup> or higher year ( $n = 4$ ;  $M = 5.75$ ,  $SD = 4.11$ ). Reflecting the diversity of career paths that we expect our students to pursue, students highlighted a wide range of competencies that they wished to pursue in the upcoming year, which were distributed across all 18 competencies.

### *Practicum*

Students in our doctoral program are required to complete 3 semester-long practica in community settings. The vast majority of practica are unpaid; however, when funds are available, it is acceptable for students to be compensated for their work. Whereas faculty have ongoing relationships with various community organizations, students have the freedom to negotiate practicum experiences with organizations and community settings of their choosing. In order to communicate the type of work that our students can complete, our faculty’s task was to develop materials that would describe potential practicum activities in a language that would be meaningful for various community agencies, and for community partners with whom we do our work. For this

purpose, we felt that the language of the competencies contained too much professional jargon and technical terminology to be accessible to many community partners, and concluded that the language used in the value proposition (Ratcliffe & Neigher, 2010) would be more useful. Using this language, we developed materials to assist students in presenting themselves to community agencies and negotiating a feasible project that would produce concrete and meaningful deliverables. We developed a flowchart outlining the steps that students would take to identify a site and negotiate terms of a practicum project (see Appendix B). We also developed a one-page flyer describing the types of “services” that our practicum students are able to provide (see Appendix C). In addition, we developed a statement of work listing items in the value proposition that would be the focus of students’ practicum work, a format for detailing a work plan with a timeline and expected deliverables, and a form for obtaining formal agreement among the student, advisor and site supervisor (see Appendix D).

We reviewed materials from practica completed from 2014 to 2016. Practicum placement settings varied from clinical settings and trauma centers to local evaluation firms and community organizations. Students engaged in different types of practicum activities including analyzing data, performing needs assessments, facilitating psychosocial support groups for adolescents, designing outreach efforts, developing surveys, and conducting field observations. Table 4 presents a summary of the knowledge and skill areas endorsed by 12 students that completed community practica between 2014 and 2016. The most common knowledge and skill areas involved applied research, including program

<sup>1</sup> Given that these data reflect responses from all of the students who were currently in residence at the

University, and the small sample size, we did not conduct statistical analysis of group differences.



evaluation, organizational assessment, and dissemination. Less frequent were knowledge and skill areas that involved community capacity building and community development.

### A Case Example

A new relationship formed with one community organization, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), offers a case study of one setting in which this practicum process has been successful. IRC is an international refugee resettlement organization that has offices across the globe. IRC's Atlanta office is the largest resettlement agency in the state of Georgia. Representatives of IRC contacted our program chair and expressed an interest in developing a partnership with the community psychology program. They were especially interested in evaluation of their various resettlement programs to document long-term success. Faculty met with representatives of IRC and learned more about the needs and strengths of the organization. After a careful discussion, it was agreed that the practicum program was the best way to provide needed services and to develop a long-term partnership with IRC. Subsequently, we invited IRC to come to one of our brown bag meetings to discuss possible practicum opportunities. Prior to their presentation, faculty shared the newly updated statement of work and the value proposition document with IRC and explained to them details of the practicum requirements, the skills of our students, and the training provided by our program. After a representative from IRC presented at our brown bag meeting, several students expressed interest in working there and one was able to arrange a practicum project for the following semester. Using the value proposition document and statement of work, the student negotiated with her site supervisor to develop a project, a timeline, and a list of deliverables. The project addressed the following competencies: #1

(Plan and conduct community-based applied research), #2 (Evaluate programs and services), and #5 (Assessment of organization or community). Specifically, the project involved developing logic models for each of IRC's four programs and focused on delivery of health services, economic empowerment, case management, and community engagement. IRC wanted to use the logic models to aid subsequent grant seeking and program evaluation. The student, along with her faculty and site supervisors realized that substantial stakeholder involvement would be necessary if the student was to complete such an ambitious project in a single semester. The student was able to meet multiple times with the directors of each program within the organization. Reflecting on the experience, the student wrote the following:

*I ... learned that, as an evaluator in-training, I have a lot of knowledge and insight to offer to these program managers. The leadership team did not perceive the same amount of overlap and integration between services and programs as I, an outsider, did. I was impressed by how much each program had to gain from one another and I was excited to cast light [on the areas of overlap]. I feel like this helped in creating a ... paradigm shift among the leadership ... [toward] building bridges more. As is evident in the logic models, each program director and... program ... [is] essential in accomplishing each goal. Although each goal may have a point person and many different funding sources which force programs into silos, I saw the leadership team begin to emphasize program integration and communication more each time I spoke with them. Although my job was to create logic models for the IRC, I feel that I also helped improve their sense of community among the program*

| Knowledge and Skill Areas   | Number of times endorsed |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1 <b>Plan and Conduct Community-Based Applied Research</b><br>• Includes planning studies and participatory community research  | 3                        |
| 2 <b>Evaluate Programs and Services</b><br>• Develop evaluation designs<br>• Collect, analyze, report and/or interpret evaluation data according to professionally-accepted standards   | 10                       |
| 3 <b>Sustainable Community Development</b><br>• Work with a community to develop a vision and take actions to achieve it  | 0                        |
| 4 <b>Program Development, Implementation, and Management</b><br>• Design, implement, and sustain culturally and contextually appropriate programs in collaboration with stakeholders  | 3                        |
| 5 <b>Assessment of Organization or Community</b><br>• Assess organizational/community needs, strengths, and resources   | 7                        |
| 6 <b>Build Community or Organizational Capacities</b><br>• Empower community/organization to develop sustainable leadership and capacities  | 1                        |
| 7 <b>Develop Organizational or Community Resources</b><br>• Identify resources and challenges at multiple levels<br>• Help integrate the use of human and material resources, including community/organization assets and social capital<br>• Search for, select, and write grants      | 3                        |
| 8 <b>Apply Relevant Information to New Situations</b><br>• Locate, evaluate, and apply relevant information from diverse sources to new situations  | 5                        |
| 9 <b>Facilitate Small and Large Group Processes</b><br>• Partner with groups to enhance their capacity to work together productively  | 1                        |
| 10 <b>Community Education, Information Dissemination, and Building Public Awareness</b><br>• Communicate information to various stakeholders<br>• Disseminate information in both technical and lay language, as needed   | 5                        |
| 11 <b>Build and Maintain Collaborations</b><br>• Facilitate inclusive coalitions with stakeholders<br>• Maintain a network of clients, communities, organizations, and other involved professions<br>• Assist in negotiating goals and mediating partnerships around a particular issue | 1                        |
| 12 <b>Apply Leadership, Supervisory, and Mentoring Skills</b><br>• Collaboratively lead with individuals and groups<br>• Supervise others through a strengths-based framework<br>• Support individuals as they identify personal strengths and community resources                      | 2                        |
| 13 <b>Public Policy, Analysis, and Development</b><br>• Create or analyze public policy<br>• Translate research findings into useful recommendations for policy   | 4                        |
| 14 <b>Direct Services Provision</b><br>• Provide psychoeducation<br>• Conduct psychological services or assessments   | 2                        |
| 15 <b>Other</b><br>• Please specify:  | 2                        |

*Table 4: Exposure to Knowledge and Skills During Practicum Experience (mark up to 4)*

*I feel that I also helped improve their sense of community among the program directors. For the past few months I've served as a bridge between the programs and now it seems that they want to build some [bridges] of their own.*

To ensure that our newly developed practicum process is useful for the community partners, we also requested feedback from the site supervisor who worked closely with the student.

Prior to participating in GSU's practicum, IRC had recently identified a new strategic plan. Thus, the leadership team at IRC was looking for students to help with evaluating the feasibility of the strategic plan. Together, the site supervisor and the student decided that developing logic models to identify how each program area is related to the overall strategic plan would be a helpful product for the organization. The site supervisor was complimentary of the process through which the student articulated skills that she expected to acquire. She found the skills very relevant to the organization's work. She also noted that many of the leadership members felt that they had the opportunity to learn new skills while working with the student. She said, "program evaluation, facilitation of planning, and others are concrete skills that few leadership team members have experience with or have the capacity to do well, and it was a huge benefit to have the student identify what needed to be done and lead the facilitation." Finally, the site supervisor suggested that more frequent check-ins with the student's GSU advisor would be very helpful to ensure that the organization meets the needs of the students.

Overall, both the organization and the student found the newly updated practicum experience helpful and effective. The organization received a final product that met their short- and long-term needs. Also, the statement of work and the checklist of skills assisted the organization to develop a feasible

and meaningful practicum experience collaboratively with the student. The updated flowchart also makes the negotiation process more transparent and manageable for the student. More importantly, the student reported feelings of competency and accomplishment because the student was able to initiate and document concrete changes within the organization.

## Conclusions and Next Steps

We have found many aspects of the CP practice competencies and the value proposition to be helpful in our annual review and practicum processes. Incorporation of the CP competencies in the annual review has encouraged students to reflect on their career goals and the specific training they want to receive before graduation. In addition, the value proposition has been especially useful for guiding students' decisions about the types of practicum experiences they want to pursue. Further, the value proposition enables us to communicate effectively the "services" that our practicum students can offer to community organizations, and enables students and their community partners to establish clear expectations about practicum projects and deliverables.

Although we have found the competencies to be helpful, we also identified challenges to effectively using them for our annual review and practicum processes. Specifically, in the first year that we began incorporating the competencies into the annual review, students reported wanting to focus on most or all of the competencies during the next academic year (even though students were asked to limit their selection to only 5 competencies that they wanted to emphasize during the upcoming year). Unfortunately, without greater focus on a smaller number of competencies these ratings offered little guidance to advisors for recommending coursework or practicum placements the students could focus on during the upcoming year. It is possible that the wide range of

competencies was overwhelming to students and they had difficulty determining which competencies were most important for their career goals.

As the competencies are further developed, it may be useful to further delineate foundational, core, and specialized competencies (Kaslow, 2004). The current competencies list includes a set of five foundational principles. These foundational competencies represent the basic values and perspectives that all community psychologists should possess (e.g., an ecological perspective, ethical and reflective practice). For the remaining competencies, it may be helpful to differentiate between core and specialized competencies. Core competencies represent knowledge, attitudes, and skills that should be developed by all community psychologists, although individuals will develop each of the competencies to varying degrees (e.g., program evaluation, consultation). Finally, specialized competencies are required for work in specific subspecialties of community psychology (e.g., community organizing, academic community psychology). This categorization of CP practice competencies may help students focus on a more targeted set of competencies in their graduate training (specifically, the foundational and core competencies along with a select few specialized competencies).

In addition, categorizing competencies as foundational, core, and specialized would be useful in identifying the unique strengths of graduate training programs. It is likely that most graduate programs already emphasize the foundational competencies; however, given the relatively small size of most programs, it is unlikely that every program will be able to cover all of the specialty areas represented in the field. Further elaboration of the competencies has the potential to enhance the “truth in advertising” that applicants seek as they search for graduate

programs that can best serve their professional goals.

Dzidic, Breen, and Bishop (2013) critiqued the focus of the competencies on specific knowledge, attitudes, and skills rather than on the orientations and values that community psychologists should embody. They argued that the competencies should be “positioned as tools *for* understanding, rather than *as* understandings” (Dzidic et al., 2013, p. 2). The distinction between foundational, core, and specialized competencies may provide a structure to address Dzidic et al.’s concern. Specifically, the foundational competencies can represent community psychology orientations and values (e.g., empowerment perspective, appreciation for diversity) whereas core and specialized competencies can emphasize specific community psychology knowledge and skills. Although the foundational competencies may need to be revised (e.g., adding certain virtues that community psychologists should embody), the distinction between foundational and core/specialized competencies can help clarify our “way of being” and our “way of doing” (Dzidic et al., 2013, p. 6). Such further differentiation of the practice competencies could also be useful for graduate training programs by specifying the broad orientations and values that should be fostered as well as the more specific knowledge and skills that should be developed by students.

In addition, the CP competencies may have been more useful in our annual review process had we asked students to indicate the level of training they sought for each competency. Kloos (2010) introduced an approach to rating the level of exposure, experience, and expertise that students obtain. When completing the annual review, students could indicate the level of exposure, experience, and expertise they hope to receive for each competency, thereby allowing students to express their interest in a wide range of competencies while also

specifying the degree to which they want advanced training.

In conclusion, GSU's initial steps to infuse the competencies into doctoral training in community psychology have emphasized familiarizing students and faculty with the competencies and to begin using them as a framework for guiding individual and program-wide decisions about training. We believe that these initial steps have been successful in that they provide students and advisors a clear and common language for identifying goals and tailoring coursework and field experiences to students' professional goals. A next step is to refine the processes for assessing students' achievement of the competencies while they are in graduate school and tracking the critical areas for ongoing professional development once our students move on to their careers.

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Appendix A

**Annual Review Survey: Community and Community-Clinical Competencies**

Below is a list of Competencies for Community Psychology. The purpose of this list is to help you identify competencies that you have been exposed to and those that you want to focus on next year.

Please indicate the competencies that you have been exposed to in the past year by checking boxes in the first column. The past year includes the current Spring semester and the past Fall and Summer semesters. You may have been exposed to the competencies through coursework, research, and/or practica and other applied activities. For instance, many first-year students are usually exposed to many competencies through the Introduction to Community Psychology course, whereas fifth-year students may have been exposed to only a few competencies throughout the past year.

Please also indicate up to five competencies that you would like to focus on throughout the upcoming year by checking the boxes in the second column. This includes the upcoming Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters.

Note: The below competencies were adapted from the Competencies of Community Psychology Practice (<http://www.scra27.org/what-we-do/practice/18-competencies-community-psychology-practice/>)

| Competency   | Select each competency that you have been exposed to during the past year | Select NO MORE THAN 5 competencies that you want to focus on throughout the upcoming year |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Ecological Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply ecological perspectives</li> <li>• Identify processes of interdependence, resource exchange, adaptation and succession in settings</li> <li>• Use an ecological level of analysis</li> </ul> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>  |

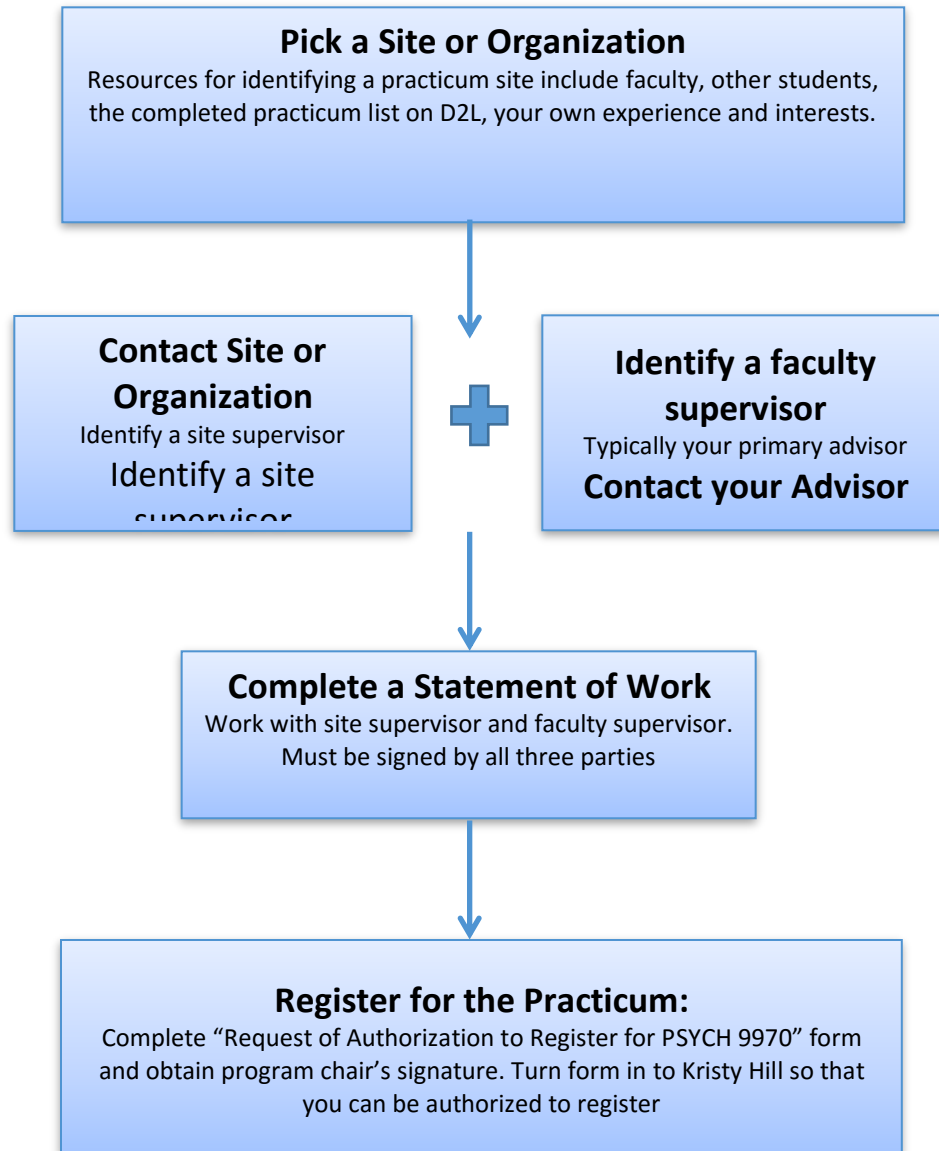
|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>2. Empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize a collective empowerment perspective</li> <li>• Support marginalized communities in their efforts to participate in community decision-making and to gain access to resources</li> <li>• Develop genuine and inclusive partnerships with community members and organizations</li> </ul>   | □ | □ |
| <p>3. Sociocultural and Cross-Cultural Competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value, integrate, and bridge multiple worldviews, cultures, and identities</li> <li>• Analyze social inequality and power imbalances</li> <li>• Assess power dynamics and use this assessment to support community building and advocacy</li> <li>• Understand how one’s assumptions affect partnership with community</li> </ul> | □ | □ |
| <p>4. Community Inclusion and Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support representation and respect for all community members</li> <li>• Encourage divergent perspectives on community and social issues</li> <li>• Facilitate empowerment among those with less power in the community</li> </ul>   | □ | □ |
| <p>5. Ethical, Reflective Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continually reflect on how your values and life experiences influence your work</li> <li>• Identify and address your own ethical issues</li> </ul>   | □ | □ |
| <p>6. Program Development, Implementation, and Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess community strengths and needs</li> <li>• Develop inclusive and sustainable partnerships with stakeholders and community members</li> <li>• Design, implement, and sustain culturally and contextually appropriate programs in collaboration with stakeholders</li> </ul>   | □ | □ |
| <p>7. Prevention and Health Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement programs that embrace a prevention and health promotion perspective</li> <li>• Identify resources and challenges at multiple levels</li> </ul>  | □ | □ |

|   |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <p>8. Community Leadership and Mentoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop trusting relationships with community leaders and members</li> <li>• Collaborate with individuals and/or groups to enhance their capacity to lead effectively</li> <li>• Support individuals as they identify personal strengths and community resources</li> <li>• Teach and facilitate critical reflection among community leaders and members</li> </ul> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>9. Small and Large Group Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with community groups to enhance their capacity to work together productively</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>10. Resource Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and integrate the use of human and material resources, including community assets and social capital</li> <li>• Conduct needs assessment of community and/or organization</li> <li>• Utilize knowledge from assessment to seek funding and to develop programs needed by community</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>11. Consultation and Organizational Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess organizational needs and resources</li> <li>• Develop partnership with members</li> <li>• Facilitate learning, planning, and decision-making</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>12. Collaboration and Coalition Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate inclusive coalition to represent all segments of the community</li> <li>• Assist in negotiating goals and mediate partnerships to achieve collective actions</li> <li>• Maintain partnerships with all members and stakeholders of the community</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>13. Community Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with a community to develop a vision and take actions to achieve it</li> <li>• Facilitate and/or enhance community efforts to identify needs and goals</li> <li>• Empower community to develop sustainable resources and leadership</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>14. Community Organizing and Community Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work collaboratively with community members to improve community conditions through organizing and advocacy</li> <li>• Assist members in creating sustainable systems change</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|   |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <p>15. Public Policy Analysis, Development, and Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create or analyze public policy</li> <li>• Build and sustain effective relationships with policy makers and elected officials</li> <li>• Translate research findings into useful recommendations for policy</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>16. Community Education, Information Dissemination, and Building Public Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate information to various segments of the public in order to strengthen competencies and awareness, or for advocacy</li> <li>• Tailor information to different stakeholders for their use</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>17. Participatory Community Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with community partners to plan and conduct research</li> <li>• Employ diverse research methods to meet and address the needs of the community</li> <li>• Take contextual influences into consideration when analyzing data</li> <li>• Communicate the research findings to community members to help them pursue community goals</li> </ul> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>18. Program Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with community members to promote program improvement and program accountability to stakeholders and funders</li> <li>• Transfer knowledge of evaluation to community members</li> <li>• Conduct evaluations that adhere to professionally accepted standards</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>19. Academic Research (Activities Not Captured Above)</p>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>20. Community-Clinical Competency: Therapy, Psychological Services, or Assessment Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct psychological services or assessments</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>21. Other (Please specify in the box below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E.g., Specific methodological skills such as HLM</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Appendix B**

**Flowchart for the Practicum Process**





## Appendix C

### Community Psychology Practicum Georgia State University (rev. 11/2015)

#### What is the Community Psychology Practicum?

The Community Psychology Practicum enables current doctoral students to work with community organizations for at least one academic semester (Fall, Spring, or Summer). The doctoral student can offer a range of services including:

- Evaluation of programs and services
- Development and/or implementation of programs
- Resource identification and acquisition, including grant writing
- Development of needs assessments
- Public policy analysis and development
- Building and maintaining collaborations
- Community education
- Direct services provision
- Planning and conducting community-based applied research

#### How can I work with a Community Psychology practicum student?

1. Inform the director of the Community Psychology Program that you would like to work with a practicum student (see contact information below). Please include a brief description of your organization, the type of work that would be involved in a practicum, the expected time commitment (usually an average of 8-10 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters or 16-20 hours per week during the summer), and contact information for the person that interested students should contact.
2. Interested students will communicate directly with the contact person.
3. Select a student to work with (either informally or through a formal interview process).
4. Meet with the practicum student to complete a Statement of Work document. This document will outline the formal expectations of both the site supervisor and the practicum student. The final version will be signed by the student, the site supervisor, and the student's faculty advisor at Georgia State.

#### Who do I contact if I have additional questions?

Please contact the director of the Community Psychology Program, Dr. Gabriel Kuperminc ([gkuperminc@gsu.edu](mailto:gkuperminc@gsu.edu) or 404-413-6281), with any additional questions.

You can find information about Georgia State's Community Psychology Program at <http://psychology.gsu.edu/graduate/areas-of-study/community-program/>. You can find information about the field of Community Psychology <http://www.scra27.org/what-we-do/what-community-psychology/>.

**Appendix D**

Practicum Statement of Work

*Community and Clinical-Community Practica*

*Revised February 2015*

**The Write-up for the Statement of Work (SOW) has three components. Although they are described in a 'linear' order, completing these components may require some negotiation and multiple iterations before arriving at a final SOW. Students are encouraged early to allow sufficient time prior to the semester in which the practicum will be completed.**

*1. Site Information*

After the student has a preliminary discussion about the practicum idea with the faculty supervisor, she or he should go to the practicum site and complete the *Site Information* section with the principal on-site contact. The student then discusses the completed form with the faculty supervisor to obtain the information needed to assess the knowledge and skills that will be gained through the practicum experience and write up a project description.

*2. Assessment of Knowledge & Skills*

Based on conversations with the site supervisor, the student will complete an assessment of knowledge and skills. The assessment is used to help the faculty supervisor to determine whether the site and expected experience meet the practicum requirement.

*3. Project Description*

Upon discussion with site supervisor and faculty supervisor, student will write a description of the proposed project. It should be approximately one page long. It should include responsibilities of the student (including time commitment and on-site hours, etc.), the GSU supervisor, and those at the practicum site as appropriate. The project description should also include a timeline with due dates and descriptions of deliverables that are part of the student's responsibilities.

Once approved by the faculty supervisor and agreed upon with the site supervisor and the student, the three parts of the Statement of Work (i.e., Site Information, Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, and Project Description) should be signed by all three parties (student, faculty and site supervisors), indicating their agreement regarding the nature of the practicum and its expectations. The final Statement of Work document with signatures should be emailed to the site supervisor, faculty advisor, and community program chair. The signatures can be electronic, or a scanned copy of the signature page can be included.

The student must also complete a registration form to be signed by the community program chair. For CLC practica, the form must also be signed by the Director of Clinical Training or his/her designee. *Note that the registration form is due 1 week prior to the fee deadline each semester.*

**STATEMENT OF WORK**

**Community and Clinical-Community Practicum**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Check one: Community Practicum  or Clinical-Community Practicum

**I. SITE INFORMATION**

Date completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester/yr of practicum: Fall  Spring  Summer  / Year \_\_\_\_\_

Title of practicum project, if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

Name, address and website of practicum site/organization:

\_\_\_\_\_

Mark an "X" to indicate practicum type (see community practicum policies):

Research  Applied

Name of GSU Community Faculty Sponsor/Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

What will be your role(s) at this placement: Supervisee  Consultant

Estimated number of hours per week required by this practicum project: \_\_\_\_\_

Name, title, phone number and e-mail address of on-site practicum supervisor/client:

\_\_\_\_\_

**II. ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

Fill in the table with assistance from your on-site supervisor/client. Mark up to 4 activities (by placing an "X" in the boxes in the second column) that will serve as your primary activities during the practicum.

| Knowledge and Skill Areas*   | Primary Activities for the Practicum (Mark up to 4 by Placing an "X" in the Below Boxes) |
|--|--|
| <b>1. Plan and Conduct Community-Based Applied Research</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes planning studies and participatory community research</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| <b>2. Evaluate Programs and Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop evaluation designs</li> <li>• Collect, analyze, report and/or interpret evaluation data according to professionally-accepted standards</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| <b>3. Sustainable Community Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with a community to develop a vision and take actions to achieve it</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| <b>4. Program Development, Implementation, and Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design, implement, and sustain culturally and contextually appropriate programs in collaboration with stakeholders</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| <b>5. Assessment of Organization or Community</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess organizational/community needs, strengths, and resources</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| <b>6. Build Community or Organizational Capacities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empower community/organization to develop sustainable leadership and capacities</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| <b>7. Develop Organizational or Community Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify resources and challenges at multiple levels</li> <li>• Help integrate the use of human and material resources, including community/organization assets and social capital</li> <li>• Search for, select, and write grants</li> </ul> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| <b>8. Apply Relevant Information to New Situations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate, evaluate, and apply relevant information from diverse sources to new situations</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| <b>9. Facilitate Small and Large Group Processes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with groups to enhance their capacity to work together productively</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| <b>10. Community Education, Information Dissemination, and Building Public Awareness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate information to various stakeholders</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/>   |

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate information in both technical and lay language, as needed</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>11. Build and Maintain Collaborations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate inclusive coalitions with stakeholders</li> <li>Maintain a network of clients, communities, organizations, and other involved professions</li> <li>Assist in negotiating goals and mediating partnerships around a particular issue</li> </ul> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>12. Apply Leadership, Supervisory, and Mentoring Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaboratively lead with individuals and groups</li> <li>Supervise others through a strengths-based framework</li> <li>Support individuals as they identify personal strengths and community resources</li> </ul>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>13. Public Policy, Analysis, and Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create or analyze public policy</li> <li>Translate research findings into useful recommendations for policy</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>14. Direct Services Provision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide psychoeducation</li> <li>Conduct psychological services or assessments</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>15. Other</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please specify:</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

\*The Knowledge and Skill Areas were adapted from the [Community Psychology Value Proposition](#) and the [Competencies for Community Psychology Practice](#)

We are always interested in new practicum opportunities for students. If this site needs expertise or offers opportunities that are not part of your practicum, please make a note below.

**NOTES:**



### III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

*Describe your responsibilities (including time commitment and on-site hours, etc.), and the responsibilities of the GSU supervisor, and those at the practicum site as appropriate. Include a timeline with due dates and descriptions of deliverables that are part of the student's responsibilities. You may attach additional documents if needed.*

Deliverables Table (You may use this table or attach a separate table):

| Key Deliverables | Date Due | Comments |
|------------------|----------|----------|
| 1.               |          |          |
| 2.               |          |          |
| 3.               |          |          |
| 4.               |          |          |
| 5.               |          |          |

Additional Notes:

Signatures:

|                         |       |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Student:                | Date: |
| Site Supervisor:        | Date: |
| GSU Faculty Supervisor: | Date: |