

Sample Student

PDC 124, Online

Career Research Paper

The career that I had in mind when I first began college was one in counseling psychology. Luckily, this career was one matched closely to my interests and personality type. Although I've begun considering other career avenues, I still chose to research this specific career in depth.

A person in counseling psychology will typically use personality tests/assessments, interviews, case histories, and observation methods to evaluate a patient's problems, needs, and goals. Counseling psychologists will evaluate data and, from there, create an action plan or treatment plan to counsel the patient with. The goal in this career is to help each patient work toward developing and adjusting social, educational, personal, and vocational skills.

I'm most definitely interested in this career. I've always had an interest in listening to people and their "problems". Even in my early teenage years, and now into my adult years, people of all ages have come to me for emotional support, advice, and confidentiality. I've wondered what people see in me, but have always been humbled by the trust people place in me. The idea of helping people achieve a happier lifestyle is thrilling to me. The idea of being the person that one person can talk to about anything is very exciting and fulfilling to me; I love the idea of being a problem solver.

I see this career as having many advantages and few disadvantages. From a personal standpoint, the biggest disadvantage or problem I foresee is becoming too wrapped up in a patient's problems. I tend to worry, so this roadblock may be one to

consider and learn to overcome. Other than that, the Choices Planner cited that a career in counseling psychology may have awkward hours, but I don't see that as a major problem right now. The biggest advantage would be being in a career that I find personally rewarding and fulfilling.

Although I can honestly say that the pay for my career of choice is not one of the top priorities, I am glad to learn that this is a decent paying occupation. The average annual wage for a counseling psychologist in California is \$73,790, which breaks down to around \$35 an hour. In San Diego specifically, the average annual pay is \$63,470. The outlook in this career is definitely positive; growth is increasing and is estimated at 27%. San Diego is among the group of regions that have a stable outlook in a career involving counseling psychology. (A stable outlook is defined as a 0%-20% growth rate.)

A typical day in the life of a counseling psychologist can vary greatly, depending on the type of business the psychologist works for. Those with private offices make their own hours, but those working in hospitals and other health care facilities may have irregular hours, working night or weekend shifts. Those working in teams may feel daily pressure to meet expectations of the group and deadlines, and may end up traveling some.

Any career in the counseling psychology field requires that you be licensed or certified in all states. Depending on an individual's specific career goals, the level of education differs. Counseling psychologists with a PhD will have much more job opportunity as a psychologist without a PhD. With a PhD one can work in health care facilities, different types of schools, government agencies and private industries. A doctoral degree usually implies five to seven years of graduate study.

Careers closely related or similar to a career in counseling psychology would be

family psychology, clergy workers, social workers, and special education teachers.

I had a counselor in middle school name Mrs. Firth. She made such an imprint on my life; most likely because my best friend and I were in her office weekly trying to solve our middle school “issues”. Mrs. Firth undoubtedly provided encouragement and problem solving skills girls my age (at the time, 13-14) could relate to. Even now as a 20 year old adult, I still know Mrs. Firth, and still feel a close and warm bond with her. My “interview” would be considered long term because she has taught me so much about her career over the years. For the record, my ultimate dream would be to be working in a middle school environment just as she does. Mrs. Firth has taught me so much by example; just by observing the way she is with people and children speaks volumes. She is tender-hearted, extremely intelligent, aware of the world she and her students live in. she is wise and firm when she needs to be. She knows, teaches, and counsels right from wrong. Mrs. Firth has advised me that I get some experience in teaching, because many jobs in the field of counseling psychology in schools require that type of experience. She also recommends that I major in social work also, as that is something I am very interested in; she’s suggested that this will provide excellent opportunity and will be helpful on the road to achieving my goals.

I have learned quite a bit about my career of choice in psychology. I’m even more intrigued with the research I’ve done. At the same time, I’m a bit overwhelmed; if I decide to definitely pursue this career, I have many, many years of school ahead of me, and I have definitely got to decide if that’s a challenge I am up for, physically, emotionally, financially, and relationally.

Bibliography:

1. US Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, www.bls.gov, accessed Sunday, May 20, 2007
2. Choices Planner, www.access.bridges.com, accessed Saturday and Sunday, May 19 and 20, 2007
3. Interview Source, Jane Firth