

My strong desire to become a psychologist

Life



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Career Research: Psychologist

As I grew older I had people ask me, “ What do you want to do when you grow up?” It wasn’t until late in high school that I was able to offer them an answer. I want to be a psychologist. Psychology has interested me from a young age, but I never knew what it was at that time. I have always enjoyed learning about the human mind and human behavior. Whenever a friend of mine did something out of the ordinary I would always wonder why they would do such a thing. I would think about it frequently until I came up with an answer and then counsel them on their deep-rooted problems. Growing up I was always just the friend that had great advice, but it wasn’t until I began thinking seriously about my future that I decided I could use that curiosity and advice to help people as a psychologist.

A psychologist has the task of studying the human mind and behavior. They research various aspects of behavior and use that knowledge to provide mental health care for distressed patients (Kesler). Though I am unsure it will be my final decision, right now I want to be a clinical psychologist. They offer a listening ear that is free of judgment and solid advice for those with mental health issues. Psychologists offer a variety of proven effective treatments to help people improve their lives (Kesler). These treatments may be extensive talk therapy, hypnosis, or even medication with the help of the client’s physician. The most important thing that a psychologist does is help people. While it may seem like a basic job to some people, there is a lot that goes on within a human mind. It is very impressive that these individuals are able to analyze the mind and properly help people who are struggling with issues.

Life can become overwhelming, so it is important for psychologists to be around and offer a helping hand.

Psychologists work in a variety of environments such as: hospitals, private practices, schools, businesses, nursing homes, and many others places. Ideally, I would like a private practice that focuses on treating childhood trauma. I am aware that I will be unable to create a private practice immediately, so I would like to begin my career by creating a reliable reputation at an already reputable clinic. If things go according to plan, I would own my own private practice for childhood trauma by the age of thirty. In order to do this I must obtain a doctoral degree and experience one year of a full-time internship. After I complete my degree and my internship, I must still actively practice in the field for a year before obtaining my license (APA 2011).

All of my hard work will be paid off with the incentives being a psychologist offers. The starting salary of most psychologists is approximately \$50, 000, but after a few years of experience the salary can increase to \$75, 000 or higher (Grohol 2002). Besides the salary, the job offers many perks that I find very desirable. The work week is typically a standardized Monday through Friday from 9AM to 5PM with weekends and holidays off. The field is also fairly diverse so I feel confident that I will find the correct position to put both my knowledge and interests to work. If I happen to get bored with one practice, I can always begin practicing another. The career is also dependable. People are always going to need help with their issues and counseling. My career will not suffer due to a poor economy or advancing technology like so many other careers will.

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While I am excited about all the incentives of being a psychologist, I also know there are some negatives to the career as well. The largest issue most psychologists have with the job is that it is mentally draining at times (Grohol 2002). It can be difficult to hear tragic stories from people for eight hours every single day. It is also hard to advance over competitors in this field. In order to advance as a psychologist, it requires a great deal of marketing and a solid reputation. It may take me a year or two to really set my own pace and get used to the profession, but I think that I will eventually become completely emerged in my occupation and look forward to work day after day. There is nothing I love to do more than help people and I believe the benefits of the career will greatly outweigh the potential negatives.

To guarantee I get the incentives I desire I will begin looking for job prospects as soon as I graduate. Competition for jobs as psychologists can be fierce at times, but since I will have a doctoral degree at that point my chances of getting a reputable job will be better (Bureau Labor of Statistics 2014). Psychologists are supposed to grow in demand within ten years, so I believe finding a job prospect will be quite easy. I would ideally inquire at the facility that I did my internship as a potential job prospect. At that point, I would know most of the employees, perhaps some clients as well, and be familiar with the environment. If I was not successful in doing that, then I would need to continue my search of potential prospects. I would first check online using basic job search engines to see if there were any generic positions available. While that would not be my ideal situation, it could lead me to potential contacts that have better prospects in mind for me. I would like to begin my career in a small, private practice office. I would like it to be

a two or three person office that had a small to medium client base, but a fantastic reputation. At this time in my career, I want to prove that I have what it takes; not jump down the throat of competitors and immediately make enemies within the community. I feel that 'slow and steady wins the race' when looking for job prospects.

To ensure the future of my career goes as planned I have spent many nights coming up with a solid plan of action. After a year at NCCC I will transfer to the University at Buffalo to complete my undergraduate in psychology. After I have achieved my undergraduate I will begin the process of obtaining my PhD in counseling psychology and school psychology at UB. Ideally, I would finish this in five years rather than eight years by going to school full time and loading up on hybrid courses. During my last year of study, I will be required to participate in a one year long internship. I have not done a lot of research on potential internships since I am undecided on my specialty, but I do have a prospect in mind. I would enjoy interning at the VA Western New York Healthcare System. They offer a wide variety of services so I could get a feel for many aspects of the career. They also have a great reputation in the public eye. Many students are able to get jobs in their desired field at the facility after the internship is completed.

After my internship it would be time to begin actively participating in my career... finally! Though I would not be licensed for a year after the internship, I would have the ability to practice supervised for a year at a small facility. Once my reputation as a psychologist gets established, my next step would be to open my own office for private practice. As I mentioned earlier, my dream is to specialize in clinical psychology for those

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with childhood trauma. Once I have my own private practice that is doing well, I will try to help future psychologists by offering internships and educating young people on the beauty of being a psychologist. I feel it is a respectable career that takes a great amount of skill, patience, and dedication. I cannot wait for the day that I can say with pride, " I am psychologist."