



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION
Minority Fellowship Program

Proceedings of the Summit on Master's Training in Psychological Practice

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American Psychological Association
750 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

Consensus Statement

We recognize the expertise in science, clinical practice and leadership offered by psychologists. Our responsibility is to address the shifting demographics and behavioral health needs of the U.S. population. We need to bring additional scientifically informed and culturally and linguistically responsible practitioners to all populations, including underserved populations, using approaches distinct from those offered by other behavioral health practitioners.

We believe this can be accomplished by the development of a complementary model of training and credentialing for master's level practitioners in psychology. This alliance and integration in the field of psychology that includes both doctoral and master's level practitioners who are committed to the scientifically driven practice of psychology will greatly expand the reach of our field in the coordinated delivery of behavioral health services.

The behavioral health workforce would benefit from the inclusion of master's level psychology practitioners in the following ways:

- The standard of training should include clinical and cultural proficiency and should be grounded in the science of psychology as a recognized and regulated part of our profession.
- This master's level of training should include access to a level of regulation/licensure that permits them to be competitive with other master's level providers of behavioral health services.
- The master's practitioner in psychology should be integrated within the field of psychology.
- Having training embedded in psychological science and evidence based models of behavioral health treatment, practitioners with a master's in psychology should be distinguished from other master's level providers of behavioral health services.

Overall Areas of Consensus

- APA should embrace both the training of psychological practitioners at the master's level and accreditation for master's degree training programs. APA should also advocate for licensing and consistent titling of master's trained individuals with the understanding that there are both benefits and challenges.
- It is important to affirm and maintain the doctoral degree as the entry level for psychologists and to enhance the "value added" of psychologists.
- Clearly distinguishing the master's level psychological practitioner from the psychologist is critical in order to define the unique identity of the master's level psychology practitioner as compared with other master's level providers. This definition should also include a broader focus to reflect psychology as a health profession and be operationalized.
- Embracing master's level trained practitioners provides an opportunity to meet the increasing needs of underserved and marginalized populations which will ultimately serve the public interest. Currently, there are not enough psychologists from diverse backgrounds in the field or in the pipeline.
- Determining a proper title for the master's level practitioner is important and needs further consideration. It should not be demeaning or divisive. The words "licensed" and "psychology/psychological" should be included in the title.
- Emphasis should be placed on the training and cultivation of scientifically informed and culturally and linguistically responsible practitioners.
- APA should develop a model act for master's level practice/licensure.
- There is a need to examine existing data and collect additional data to address questions about delineating scope of practice, licensure, credentialing, etc. In particular, we can address questions such as: *What is the current scope of practice for doctoral and master's level practitioners in different states? In what settings are professionals practicing? What kinds of services are they offering, and to what clientele? Which clinical services do we claim as psychology?*
- It is expected that some psychologists may be concerned about APA supporting master's psychology practitioners. As such, APA should utilize change management strategies to understand the perspectives of concerned psychologists and collaboratively work through potential barriers.
- It will be important to investigate the workforce impact of this initiative, including to what extent community access to psychological services is enhanced (especially for underserved), quality and safety are improved, and health disparities are reduced.
- The economic/financial impacts of this initiative should be further reviewed. Impact could be expected for the Association, for practitioners, for health care delivery systems, for state/federal behavioral health systems, and others.

At the conclusion of the Master’s Summit, Dr. Worrell thanked the participants for their diligent work on this issue and for developing a consensus statement that represents multiple constituencies and stakeholders in psychology and beyond. He also informed them that the report on the Summit will be shared with the APA Council of Representatives at their next meeting. Mr. Dailey also thanked the participants and encouraged them to move forward on this issue in the same spirit of collaboration that was evident during the Summit.