

THE EDUCAFÉ TIMES



In this issue :Exploring Minds, Transforming Lives: Your Journey into Psychology

Prescribing Success: Interview with Dr. Akila Sadasivan, Director of ThinkBeyond Brain Care Solutions Pvt. Ltd and Samvidh Psych Services

Career Queries

Message from the Editor

Hello Readers!

We bring another edition of The Educafé Times where we talk about another sought-after career opportunity - Psychology. Here we discuss the scope of the career, the challenges, and the skill sets required.

Have some new ideas for our newsletter? Share them at educafestudentsolutions@gmail.com and get a shoutout.

Happy Reading!!

Exploring Minds, Transforming Lives: Your Journey into Psychology

Have you ever wondered why some memories remain vivid while others fade away over time? What influences our thoughts, emotions and actions? How do we make choices and decisions? Why do people behave in specific ways? If you are interested in understanding yourself and the world around you and helping yourself and them, a career in psychology may be ideal for you.

What is Psychology?

The scientific study of mind and behaviour is called psychology. Psychologists investigate the causes of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, using this information to help individuals and society.

Considering Psychology and Counseling as a career?

Look no further..just follow these steps.

CAREER PATH

- Study any of the three streams - Arts, Commerce, or Science at the +2 level.
- If you are pursuing an Arts degree, it is recommended that you specialise in Psychology.
- You can major in Psychology during your graduation in Arts or Science after 11th/12th.
- Pursue post-graduation in Psychology and then do your specialisation in the field of interest. Specialisations include Clinical, Cognitive, Neuropsychology, Child Guidance, Industrial, Educational, Social, Sports and Forensic among others.
- Diploma courses are available in Counseling, but a postgraduate degree in Psychological Counseling leads to better success.



As a psychologist, you have various career options available to you. You can customise your work based on your interests, specialisation and the specific groups of people you want to serve. There are many settings where psychologists can work, such as, private practice, schools, the military, private organisations, rehabilitation or de-addiction centres and hospitals. To excel as a psychologist, you need empathy, active listening, problem-solving and most importantly, patience.

Prescription to Success

Dr .Akila Sadasivan, Director of ThinkBeyond Brain Care Solutions Pvt. Ltd. and Samvidh Psych Services has been working with children and youth over the last 20 years in Bangalore. She offers neuropsychological and clinical psychological services to children and families.

She has developed an Executive Function training programme to improve cognitive functions in children, adolescents and adults. She has launched a digital brain training program known as *Rewire Brain training* to improve executive functions in people.

She has served as an Executive Council member for the Indian Association of Clinical Psychology (IACP) and is a permanent life member (PLM) of IACP. She is a registered Practising Clinical psychologist with the New Zealand Board of Psychologists.

Akila is a Consultant Clinical Neuropsychologist for various NGOs, schools and organizations. She conducts training programmes, workshops and seminars nationally. She is a teaching faculty for counsellor training programmes and special educator training modules in Bangalore and former visiting faculty for M. Phil in learning disability, Mysore University. She has many awards to her name and has been an invited speaker at various psychological forums and conferences. She has published extensively in both national and international journals, books and chapters. Akila holds a PhD from The University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand and an M.Phil, from NIMHANS, Bangalore.



Snippets of an interview conducted with Dr Akila Sadasivan

How did you decide to pursue a career in psychology and what inspired you to become a psychologist?

I studied in a school where there was a separate section called the 'Opportunity Section' for intellectually challenged children. The school encouraged us to interact with these children and buy food from a special canteen; some of us were even bus buddies for children who needed support getting in and out of the school bus. These interactions taught me to love and respect all children alike and helped me develop the capacity to communicate with neuroatypical children. This also made me choose to work with children as my future goal as I realised I had a way of communicating with these children and they trusted me and were happy to follow my instructions.

During my undergraduate studies in Psychology, I assisted two children with learning disabilities. I became interested in learning disorders and developed effective teaching techniques as a result of their struggles. I decided to become a psychologist specialising in learning disabilities after seeing their progress. After completing a Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology, I worked for an organisation that helped children from a Government school and worked on reducing school dropouts. This achievement led me to pursue an M.Phil at NIMHANS where I studied neuropsychological interventions for reading disorders with Dr. Shobini. I have never looked back since.

With so many areas of specialisation available in Psychology, what did you choose and why and what is the pathway?

I was focused on Child psychology from the beginning. As I learned more, I understood that becoming a Clinical Psychologist is the only way I can obtain a licence to practice in India. So becoming a Clinical Psychologist focusing on children was what I had decided. As part of the 2 year M.Phil course at NIMHANS, I was introduced to the neuropsychology unit where I fell in love with cognitive training. So I decided to combine all 3 areas of passion- child, clinical and neuropsychology! Hence I am currently working in the space of Child (developmental) neuropsychology!

In your experience, what are some common misconceptions people have about the field of psychology?

- Psychologists can read minds
- That if you go to a psychologist, he/she will label you as "mad"!

Another common misconception is that people think when they talk to their children lecturing them on the dos and don'ts, they are "counselling" their child!

In your opinion, what are some of the most rewarding aspects of being a psychologist?

Each day when parents report the progress their child makes in school, with their peers or at home, I am thrilled to be a part of this journey. Also every year, around May-June, I get several calls and messages from parents of children whom we have helped over the years, reporting their success in their board exams. These success stories keep me motivated and I want this for every child we work with.

What are the most challenging aspects of practising psychology and how do you navigate them?

Mental health is still considered a taboo subject in our country, which makes it difficult to highlight its importance alongside physical health. It is crucial to make people understand that it is okay to seek help, especially for children who are unable to do so directly because parents do not understand it. The other challenge is the significant misconceptions about the role of clinical psychologists. Moreover, the confusion between psychologists and psychiatrists, along with the misconception that psychologists can read minds, adds to the challenge.

The lack of regulation in the field of psychology is a significant issue that has resulted in the public's distrust of psychologists. Without an overseeing body, many practices are performed under the name of psychological intervention, which not only wastes clients' time but also leaves them feeling disheartened.

I often find building trust in the people around you and your clients and creating awareness helps reduce this dilemma and also the taboo associated with mental health issues. Following ethical practices, setting and maintaining clear boundaries helps build trust. Also, frequent communication with the client and helping them become aware of their rights as a client helps maintain trust.

Can you discuss the importance of ethical considerations and boundaries in the practice of psychology?

Maintaining ethical boundaries in clinical psychology is extremely essential, particularly in India as we do not have any regulatory and/or licensing body to protect our profession. Hence we have to be careful that we stay within the ethical boundaries of the profession. Doing things by the book, keeping clients aware of their rights and allowing them to participate willingly in the process of intervention or other aspects are crucial. In addition, maintaining the confidentiality of your clients and having a system of maintaining and protecting records is another way of keeping within ethical boundaries.

How do you handle difficult or ethical dilemmas that may arise in your practice?

I usually discuss this with a senior colleague or supervisor who can help me figure out ways in which I can deal with the situation without breaking any ethical code.

Can you describe a typical day at your centre? What are the common problems that parents come to you with?

We start our day at 9:30 a.m. and finish by 5:30 or 6 p.m. We start with an assessment which can go on till 2 p.m. Then after lunch we see children who come to us after school. Some sessions are individual, some are online, others are in person and several sessions are group sessions. I sometimes see parents, discuss the assessment report with them and at other times I'm counselling them about their child. Sometimes, I also see adults and/or children for therapy.

How do you manage the emotional demands of your work, particularly when dealing with challenging cases or clients?

Having a collegial community to fall back on helps reduce emotional stress. Having someone (as a supervisor) with whom you can discuss difficult clients also helps. Having hobbies and taking breaks from work are certainly healthy ways to cope with stress.

How do you balance the demands of your professional life with your personal life and self-care?

Having several hobbies helps. Having set work hours and not extending them beyond a certain time also is essential to maintaining the work-life balance. Allowing your clients to understand that your private life is not accessible to them and that you will be unavailable beyond work hours at the outset (setting limits with clients) helps to maintain a work-life balance.

How do you stay updated with the latest developments and research in the field of psychology?

Reading the latest articles, attending conferences, CREs and meeting professionals working in your field of interest are all ways in which I keep myself updated on what is happening in the field of psychology

Can you share any tips or insights on networking and building professional relationships within the field of psychology?

Maintaining professional networks is very important. Being part of social media groups of professionals, attending conferences and seminars, inviting professionals to give talks to your clients and hosting seminars and conferences at your workplaces are ways to maintain a network of professionals.

Would you recommend this career to young people now? What should they look out for, as they embark on this exciting career?

In my opinion, this is a wonderful profession that gives me a great sense of satisfaction. It allows me to be of service to society. So anyone who is interested in serving society and wishes to help clients must consider becoming a clinical psychologist. Research or teaching are also other options in the field. If you want to help clients or work with mental health then clinical psychology must be pursued through an M.Phil from an RCI recognised institute.

Keen to know more on Psychology ?
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Career Queries

by : Dr. Sudha Bhogle



What are the differences between a B.Com and BBM degree, and how do they prepare students for careers in business?

A B.Com degree equips students with a wide range of managerial skills including general business principles, accounting, economics and quantitative skills. After completing a B.Com degree, students may choose to pursue advanced courses such as M.Com, Master of Finance (MFin), Master of Accounting (MAcc), MBA, Chartered Accountancy [CA], Certified Financial Analyst [CFA], Cost and Works Accountant or Company Secretary [CS].

BBM is an undergraduate course that provides an overview of business management. It is recommended to follow up with an MBA to enhance career opportunities. With a BBM and MBA qualification, there is a vast scope for specialisation in finance, sales/marketing, human resources, operations and systems roles in the corporate world.

Both fields offer ample growth opportunities, but it is advisable to pursue post-graduation in the relevant subject to enhance skills and succeed in a competitive world. While having an interest in a particular area is essential, having the ability to pursue that interest is equally critical. The proper synchrony between interest and ability is crucial in building a successful career.

We will talk about this in our next Edition.

Can you guess?

Mail us your answers at educafestudentsolutions@gmail.com

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