

# The Canadian Student Guide to Applying Psychology in Varied Career Paths



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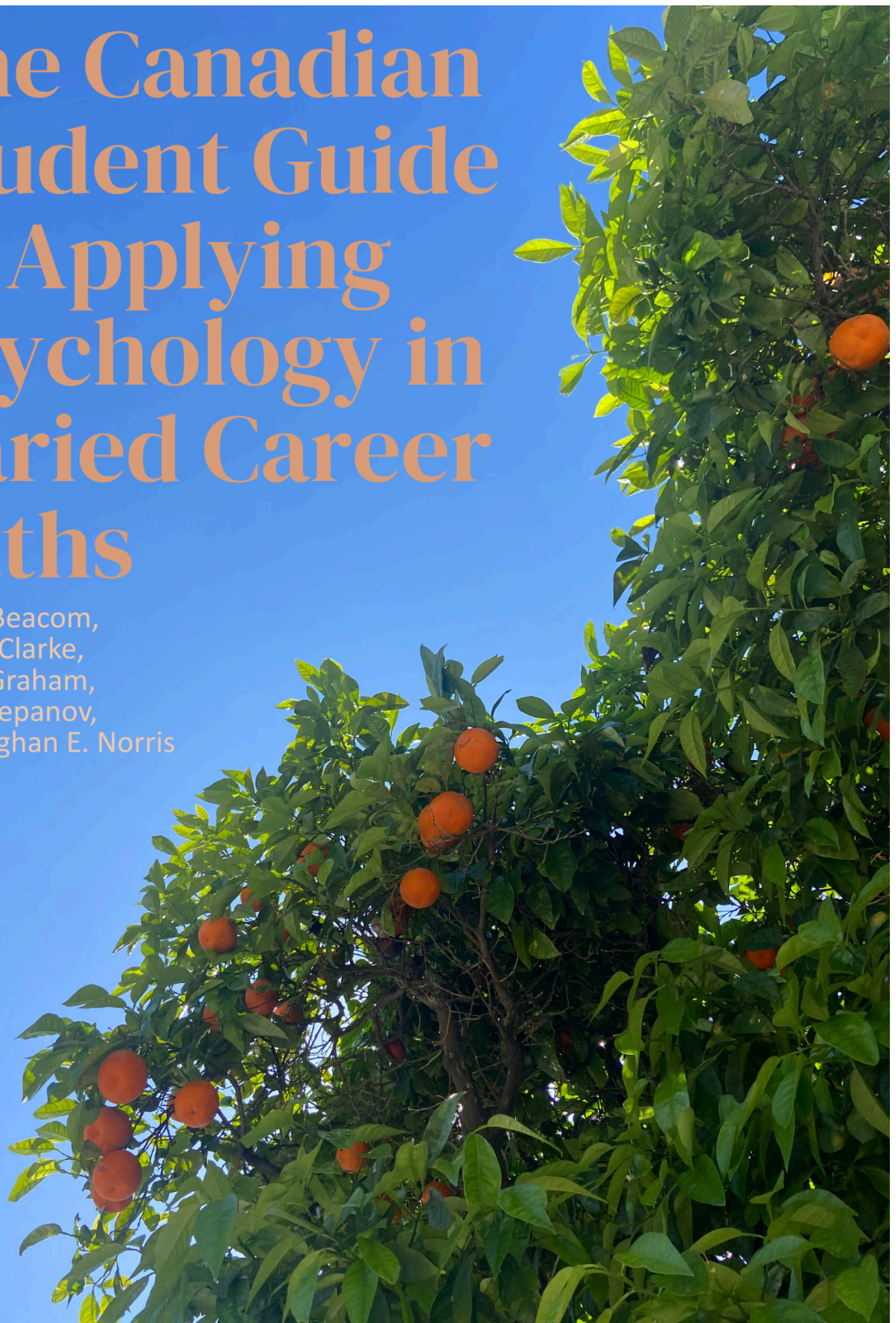
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## PART I

# INTRODUCTION - OUR INTENTION

### Our Intention

Written by students, for students, our intention for The Canadian Student Guide to Applying Psychology in Varied Career Paths is to showcase the diverse career pathways available for those interested in psychology. We hope to emphasize the value of an undergraduate degree in Psychology, and provide clarity on the many ways it can be applied.

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## PART I

# WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGY?

Psychology is the overarching study of the mind, brain, and behaviour, encompassing a wide range of subdisciplines. Although all subdisciplines study psychology, they may do so with specialized methods, theoretical perspectives, and focus areas. Some subdisciplines of psychology include clinical psychology, cognitive psychology, community psychology, comparative cognition, forensic psychology, health psychology, industrial/organizational psychology, neuropsychology, and social psychology, and more (listed in alphabetical order). Psychology is grounded in science and can be applied in many settings including schools, hospitals, private practices, businesses, health clinics, and the legal system, just to name a few. For more information on psychology in Canada, visit: Canadian Psychological Association.

<https://cpa.ca/public/psychologyincanada/>



## PART I

# INTRODUCING SUBDISCIPLINES IN PSYCHOLOGY

At the undergraduate level, most Canadian universities strive to teach students a well-rounded understanding of the discipline, including its many subdisciplines. Specialized training within these subdisciplines typically occurs through graduate training. The following section provides brief overviews of some of the primary subdisciplines in psychology. The intention of this section is not to be exhaustive. Rather, we hope it inspires readers to explore further and seek out more detailed information.

[Clinical Psychology](#)

[Cognitive Psychology](#)

[Forensic Psychology](#)

[Industrial-Organizational Psychology](#)

[Neuropsychology](#)

[Social Psychology](#)

There are many subdisciplines of psychology that are not covered in this guide—indeed, there are 35 sections within the Canadian Psychological Association where professionals with shared interests in subdisciplines connect, and there are 54 within the American Psychological Association. Please visit the following links for more information on subdisciplines in psychology, such as addiction psychology, Black psychology, environmental psychology, and more: <https://cpa.ca/sections/> <https://www.apa.org/about/division>



# Clinical Psychology

Clinical psychology is a popular sub-discipline of psychology that includes mental health and psychopathology, but it is often broader than students realize. Scholars in this area study topics including depression, anxiety, health, pain management, stress, family functioning, memory, neuropsychology, sport psychology, and workplace wellness.

Indeed, this list is not even close to exhaustive! There are many interesting and important questions tied to mental health, and many of these questions are context dependent. For example, what facilitates mental health in toddlers may be quite different from what facilitates mental health for an elite athlete.

Because of their extensive training, Clinical Psychologists are well positioned to assess, diagnose, and treat mental illness. Clinical Psychologists are also well-equipped to do work in program evaluation, research, and policy work. In Canada, the term “Clinical Psychologist” is restricted to those who are formally licensed to practice as a Clinical Psychologist. Clinical Psychologists are licensed at the provincial level, and licensing requirements can vary by province. You can learn more about provincial regulators here: <https://cpa.ca/public/whatisapsychologist/regulatorybodies/>.

You may be thinking, “but you don’t need to be licensed to do policy work!” This is correct! Some people have training in clinical psychology but are not working in therapeutic contexts and are not licensed to practice as Clinical Psychologists. For more information on clinical psychology, visit: <https://cpa.ca/sections/clinicalpsychology/>.

Students often wonder about the differences between clinical psychology and psychiatry. Clinical Psychologists are not medical doctors and do not go to medical school. Instead, they have graduate training from an approved program in clinical psychology and are licensed by a governing body in psychology. In contrast, Psychiatrists attend medical school, and they are licensed as medical doctors. Both Psychologists and Psychiatrists can diagnose and treat psychopathology; however, Psychiatrists have the ability to prescribe medication whereas Clinical Psychologists do not. For more information on psychiatry, visit <https://www.cpa-apc.org/>.

Students also often wonder about whether they have to be a Clinical Psychologist or Psychiatrist to provide psychotherapy. Based on the Regulated Health Professions Act (1991), the controlled act of psychotherapy is defined as “treating, by means of psychotherapy technique, delivered through a therapeutic relationship, an individual’s serious disorder of thought, cognition, mood, emotional regulation, perception or memory that may seriously impair the individual’s judgement, insight, behaviour, communication or social functioning.” In Canada, the ability to provide psychotherapy is restricted to certain professions, and like other professions, licensure requirements vary by province. Professions commonly associated with licensure to provide psychotherapy, in addition to clinical psychology and medicine, include nursing, occupational therapy, psychotherapy, and social work. For more information on counselling and psychotherapy, please see <https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/>.

The Canadian Psychological Association has recently published a comparison of scopes of practice of Psychologists, Physicians, Social Workers, Counsellors, and Psychotherapists. Below we provide their table as a helpful overview of professional duties.

**Table 1**  
**Summary of Scope of Practice, by Profession**

	<b>Physicians</b>	<b>Psychologists</b>	<b>Counsellors, Psychotherapists &amp; Social Workers</b>
Formulate/ communicate a diagnosis	Yes	Yes	No
Administer/ interpret psychological tests	No <sup>1</sup>	Yes	No <sup>1</sup>
Provide psychotherapy	Yes	Yes	Yes
Provide counselling or other forms of mental health treatment	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes <sup>3</sup>
Prescribing authority	Yes	No	No
Program evaluation	No	Yes	No
Develop treatment plans	Yes	Yes	No
Regulated profession	Yes	Yes	Yes*

## Figure 1

Table summarizing the scope of practice Physicians, Psychologists, Counsellors, Psychotherapists, and Social Workers. Retrieved from <https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Advocacy/CPA%20Policy%20Primer%20Final%20December%202024.pdf>

1. Psychiatrists, Physicians, and other service providers can all administer basic screenings for psychological symptoms and feelings; however, Psychologists typically administer and interpret psychological testing for more complex symptoms.
2. According to Kurdyak and colleagues (2020), only 3% of non-psychiatry physicians and 27% of psychiatrists provide psychotherapy.
3. In Ontario and Quebec, Psychotherapy is a restricted and regulated practice, permitted only for members of certain professions.

\*Social Workers are usually licensed at the provincial level through Colleges of Social Work. Psychotherapists are licensed in Ontario and Quebec. Counsellors are generally certified through the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association.



# Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive psychology encompasses the broad study of mental processes including learning, memory, attention, sensation and perception, thought patterns, language, navigation, and more. Scholars in this area may use questionnaires, ongoing feedback about daily activities and thoughts, and imaging techniques to understand how the mind stores, processes, and uses information. Like other areas of psychology, cognitive psychology can be applied to many different contexts, such as education, artificial intelligence and technology, comparative cognition, user experience (UX), and sport psychology. Cognitive Psychologists develop the knowledge and skills that can help organizations, schools, and businesses succeed, given their strong understanding of what influences the inner processes of the mind. For more information on cognitive psychology, visit: <https://cpa.ca/sections/brainandcognitivescience>.

# Forensic Psychology

Forensic Psychologists study psychology in the context of the law. Work in this field can include exploring criminal behaviour, perceptions of criminals, behaviours of the judge and jury, and how these factors impact trials and outcomes for those interacting with the criminal justice system. Using knowledge of the legal system, Forensic Psychologists work on civil and criminal cases, carry out assessments to interview witnesses and defendants, conduct scholarship on best practices in legal situations, and contribute to policy and practice development. Individuals working in forensic psychology often collaborate with other members of the legal system and in addition to working in academia, may work in hospitals, prisons, or government agencies. They may also provide guidance and support for those involved in the criminal justice system, such as victims and their families, perpetrators, or inmates. For more information on forensic psychology, visit: <https://cpa.ca/sections/criminaljusticepsychology/>.

# Industrial-Organizational Psychology

Industrial-Organizational (I/O) psychology is the study of human behaviour in the workplace. This area focuses on understanding group and individual behaviours to innovate and create solutions in workplace contexts. Knowledge of attitudes, culture, decision making, ethics, career development, leadership, and group dynamics is important for work in this subdiscipline. I/O Psychologists can help organizations with recruitment, performance measurement, training, workplace motivation, and quality of work life. For more information on industrial/organizational psychology, visit: <https://www.csiop-scpio.ca/>.

# Neuropsychology

Neuropsychology focuses on studying physiological processes of the brain, and how they relate to behaviour, cognition, mental health, and brain functioning. Utilizing various research methodologies and imaging techniques (e.g., fMRI, EEG), Neuropsychologists seek to find the connections between brain mechanisms, thoughts, and behaviours to discover how these inner processes are associated with various outcomes. Such research findings can be applied in a wide variety of ways, including supporting those with brain injuries and other neurological disorders such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. As such, Neuropsychologists can apply their training in research and applied settings, including healthcare settings. For more information on neuropsychology, visit: <https://cpa.ca/sections/clinicalneuropsychology/>.

# Social Psychology

Social Psychologists seek to understand the relationships among our environment and both intra- and interpersonal aspects of our lives. Some domains explored within social psychology include attitudes and behaviour, social influence, personality, interpersonal relationships, group dynamics, cross-cultural psychology, and more. Like other areas of psychology, those trained in social psychology can work in research or applied contexts. Moreover, Social Psychologists can work in academia, public policy, marketing, organizational behaviour, consulting, and even healthcare. For more information on social psychology, visit: <https://cpa.ca/sections/socialandpersonality/>

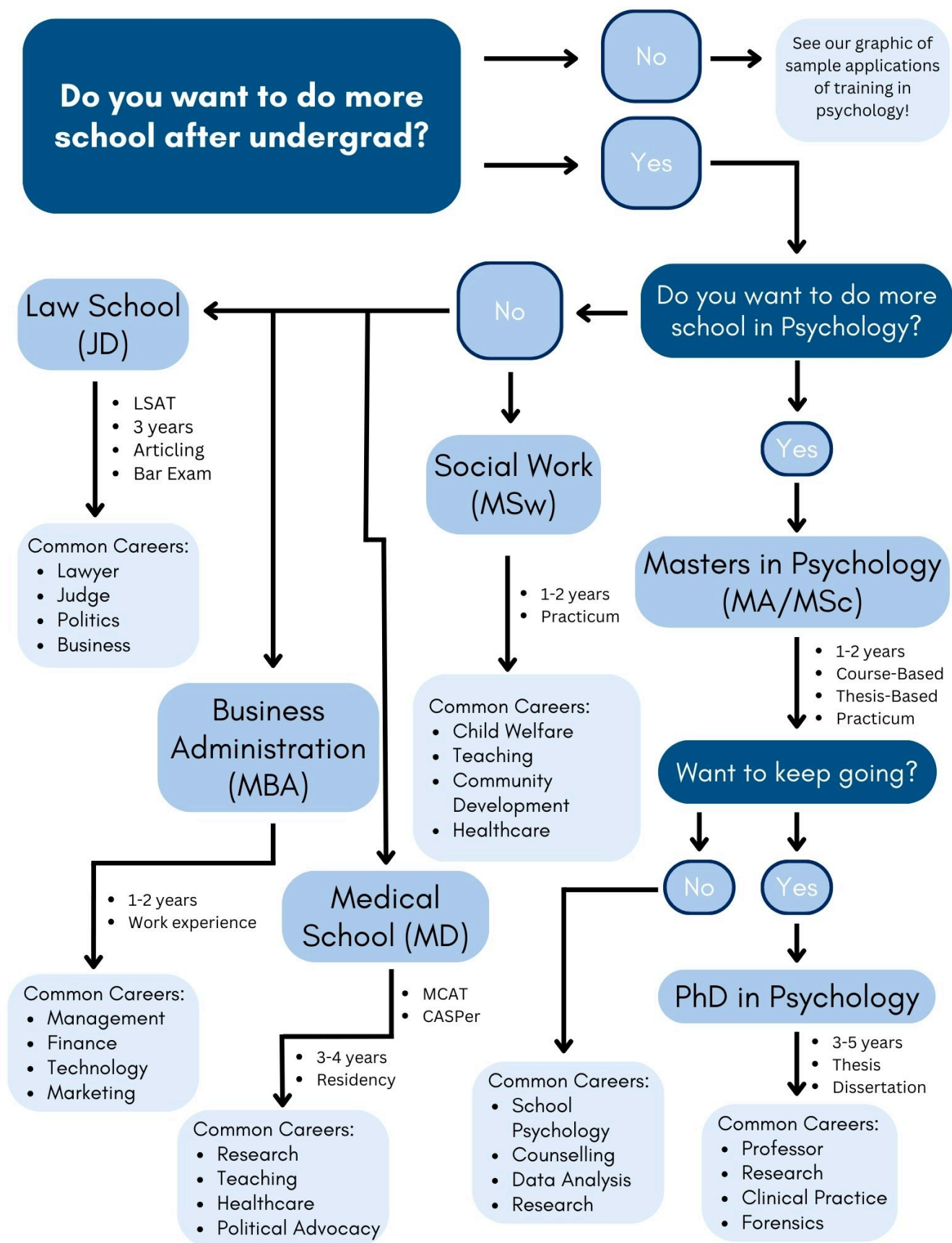


## PART II

# WHAT CAREER PATHWAYS DO STUDENTS TAKE FROM PSYCHOLOGY UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS?

Many students are surprised to learn that undergraduate training is not prescriptive for one job path. Indeed, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) analyzed data from the Canadian Household Survey (2011) regarding individuals' undergraduate education and their current careers. Generally, this analysis demonstrated that no field of study in university has only one possible career path for graduates to follow, and students with a specific background tend to go on in varied paths. For example, those who reported studying within the fields of law, social sciences, or behavioural sciences in university were employed in a wide range of industries including business, finance, administration, policy, and program officers (HEQCO, 2015). HEQCO made a very helpful tool to help students visualize the many potential paths available to them, and you can access this here: <https://heqco.ca/edudata-where-graduates-work/>

Although it can be reassuring to know that there are many pathways available, we know from psychology that too much choice can be hard! Our intention in this next section is to open ideas related to career choices. An important consideration for potential pathways is whether you would like to pursue additional training beyond your undergraduate degree. We have created a flow-chart, provided below, that explores some career pathways based on whether you would like to pursue additional training. Please note that the flow chart illustrates only some of the potential education pathways for those with training in psychology. As you respond "Yes" or "No" to the questions provided, the chart provides you with potential advanced degrees (e.g., Masters of Social Work), the requirements to be completed in the progress of obtaining this degree (e.g., 1-2 years of school and a practicum), and potential job opportunities that may be pursued upon degree completion (e.g., child welfare, community development). This flowchart is not exhaustive. Our aim is to provide examples to help readers consider pathways that might not be readily apparent.





## Figure 2

*Flow chart: Considering undergraduate training in psychology for post-graduate training*

If you are considering graduate training in psychology, please be aware that not all programs are reputable. This is an important consideration: it is up to you to determine if your program meets the standards to which you aspire, and whether your program meets registration requirements if applicable. The Canadian Psychological Association maintains a list of Clinical graduate programs that it has accredited, and we share that here in case it is helpful: <https://cpa.ca/accreditation/cpaaccreditedprograms/>

### **Not every career path requires additional training!**

Undergraduate training in psychology provides a strong base for pursuing further training, but it also provides a strong base for transitioning directly into the workforce! Students develop many relevant and tangible skills throughout their undergraduate degree that are of interest to potential future employers and equip them to excel in several different work environments. Some of these skills include critical thinking, written communication, problem solving, interpreting research, and gaining an understanding and insight into behaviour (Norris & Herrewynen, 2023).

Just as with the flowchart above, we hope to provide students with information to help them consider just some of the career pathways available to students with undergraduate degrees in psychology upon graduation. The chart below includes examples of careers that are relevant for individuals with an undergraduate degree in psychology, and it includes some details pertaining what these jobs may entail, the skills and personal attributes that are frequently sought, and the average salary in Canada associated with these careers. Information in this chart was summarized from Job Bank, a central database created and maintained by the Government of Canada (<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/>).

# Sample Ways to Apply Undergraduate Training in Psychology

	Common Tasks	Common Skills	Common Personal Attributes	Average Wages
<b>Lab Assistant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect and organize data</li> <li>Data analysis</li> <li>Literature reviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing</li> <li>Numeracy</li> <li>Reading Comprehension</li> <li>Communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attention to detail</li> <li>Adaptability</li> <li>Analytical thinking</li> </ul>	\$15.00 – 46.45/h
<b>Marketing Consultant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop strategies</li> <li>Conduct surveys</li> <li>Prepare reports or interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinating</li> <li>Time management</li> <li>Writing</li> <li>Reading comprehension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attention to detail</li> <li>Innovativeness</li> <li>Social orientation</li> </ul>	\$20.00 – 53.30/h
<b>Corporate Development Planning Advisor*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research and analyze policies</li> <li>Implement programs to improve systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation</li> <li>Persuading</li> <li>Systems analysis</li> <li>Coordinating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaboration</li> <li>Adaptability</li> <li>Analytical thinking</li> </ul>	\$25.96 – 69.23/h
<b>Community and Social Services Worker</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist and support clients</li> <li>Implement workshops/programs</li> <li>Coordinate volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social perceptiveness</li> <li>Communication</li> <li>Negotiating</li> <li>Persuading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service orientation</li> <li>Social orientation</li> <li>Stress tolerance</li> </ul>	\$18.50 – 35.00/h
<b>Social Policy Researcher*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with government</li> <li>Research and develop policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital literacy</li> <li>Writing</li> <li>Numeracy</li> <li>Reading comprehension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attention to detail</li> <li>Active learning</li> <li>Social orientation</li> </ul>	\$26.00 – 59.6/h
<b>University Admissions Officer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrative activities</li> <li>Evaluate procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time management</li> <li>Coordinating</li> <li>Instructing</li> <li>Monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analytical thinking</li> <li>Attention to detail</li> <li>Active learning</li> </ul>	\$20.00 – 44.20/h

All information in this section was summarized from Job Bank in January of 2025. Job Bank is a website created by the Government of Canada to help Canadians find jobs and better understand the labour market in Canada. For more information about career pathways, job descriptions and requirements, wages, or even job prospects go to: [www.jobbank.gc.ca](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca).

\*Job titles with an asterisk indicate some employers may require a Master's degree

### Figure 3

*Sample Ways to Apply Undergraduate Training in Psychology*



## PART II

# WHAT ABOUT HELPING PROFESSIONS OUTSIDE OF PSYCHOLOGY?

There are of course several careers that are considered to be helping professions, and although they are not classified as subdisciplines of psychology, they spark the interest of many psychology students, and undergraduate training in psychology is relevant for these professions. Below, we provide additional information on some (but not all!) professions outside of the traditional disciplinary boundaries of psychology that students are often curious about. For content reviewing careers related to psychotherapy, [please see the section on Clinical Psychology](#) which reviews adjacent career paths including psychotherapy.

You can continue progressing through the book, or click these links to take you straight to these chapters!

[Behavioural Analysis](#)

[Occupational Therapy](#)

[Social Work](#)

[Speech Language Pathology](#)



# Behavioural Analysis

A Behaviour Analyst uses Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA), often with positive reinforcement, to support individuals in reducing behaviours that have been identified as having negative social and/or personal consequences. Often, ABA is used to support behavioural challenges associated with autism or intellectual impairment, but it can also be applied in other areas such as health and sport, child maltreatment interventions, and substance use. To become a behaviour analyst, like other regulated professions, one must be licensed and registered to practice. For more information on Behavioural Analysis in Canada, visit: Behaviour Analyst Certification Board: <https://www.bacb.com/>.

# Occupational Therapy

The role of an Occupational Therapist (OT) is to help individuals face and overcome the problems and barriers that interfere with their ability to achieve everyday tasks. Such tasks might include self-care activities, accommodating movement, and the ability to pursue hobbies. OTs are trained to aid individuals with personal limitations or injury in a diverse range of settings to improve holistic functioning, addressing physical, medical, or psychosocial challenges. For example, they may work in hospitals to support rehabilitation of injured patients or, assist individuals facing new impairments in ability at home adjust to an altered way of living. For more information on occupational therapy in Canada, including registration requirements, visit: Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT): <https://caot.ca/>.



# Social Work

Social Workers have expertise in social justice, and they help individuals with varied backgrounds and experiences to improve their wellbeing. They may provide direct support to individuals and families, and may also do broader work related to policy and systems, including within the criminal justice system. Social Workers often work in hospitals, government agencies, correctional facilities, community organizations, and private practice. For more information on social work in Canada, including registration requirements, visit: Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators: <https://ccswr-ccorts.ca/>.

# Speech Language Pathology

Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) equip individuals with strategies to improve challenges associated with communication and swallowing disorders or impairments. SLPs can treat individuals with physical, verbal, or cognitive exercises to improve atypical speech and language development, and/or aid in issues with feeding and swallowing. They can assist individuals of various ages with differing causes of impairment, for example, children with delayed speech development, or adult stroke victims re-learning how to swallow food can both be helped by SLPs. For more information on SLP in Canada, including registration requirements, visit: Speech-Language & Audiology Canada (SAC): <https://www.sac-oac.ca/>.

## PART III

# STUDENT FAQs

Below, Dr. Norris has answered some question from students about pathways in psychology. We would like to thank Kayleigh Bowes, Samreen Najeeb, Hajer, and Melanie Cavallo for their submissions.

[How do I decide between pursuing graduate school and entering the workforce after I complete my undergraduate degree?](#)

[What are some emerging career fields in psychology, and how can I prepare for them?](#)

[How useful is research experience for non-academic psychology careers?](#)

[Are there specific certifications or additional training that would help me get a job in applied psychology fields?](#)

[What can I do for a career with training in psychology?](#)

[How can I help to promote the application of psychological science in my industry?](#)

[I wish to learn and/or work abroad. What should I do?](#)

[What can I do to strengthen my chances for being admitted to graduate programs, and future career paths?](#)

[Do psychological scientists tend to choose one area of research and stick with that for a career, or do research interests change?](#)



# What can I do for a career with training in psychology?

We hope this resource helped to answer this question! To reinforce a core theme, there are many, many career paths available for students graduating with a degree in psychology. It is important that you can communicate your knowledge of psychology, and the skills that you've developed, during your training. For example, many students in psychology are comfortable with basic research design, data collection, data management, data analysis, and results communication. Students in psychology also receive training regarding research ethics, often engage in collaborative group work, and have experience delivering oral presentations. These are very valuable skills that students sometimes do not think to share when on the job market.

# What are some emerging career fields in psychology, and how can I prepare for them?

The world is rapidly changing, and it can be hard to predict the needs of our societies in the future. That said, being able to articulate your knowledge and competencies across contexts can be very helpful, allowing you to make a quick pivot if needed. Psychological science is relevant as we explore emerging topics such as the impacts of space travel on cognition and mental health, benefits and drawbacks of remote work, impacts across industries related to artificial intelligence, the effective design of physical spaces to meet human needs, risks of misinformation, and questions more broadly about how to support individuals in such a way that they can belong, thrive, and flourish. This is of course a limited list—hopefully this resource has demonstrated just how broadly psychology impacts the world around us.

# Do psychological scientists tend to choose one area of research and stick with that for a career, or do research interests change?

This is a great question! To some degree, it depends! Many researchers focus on the same topic of interest, such as memory, building upon years of expertise as their scholarship evolves. This can lead to phenomenal advancements of knowledge in one specific area, and help to develop nuance in research.

Other researchers find “jumping off” points where they shift focus to an adjacent area—sometimes a jumping off point is a natural next step (e.g., studying education from a perspective of printed textbooks versus GenAI), where curiosity guides the steps. Other times, specific expertise is needed in a new context, and a researcher might generalize their knowledge and experience into a new domain. For example, a researcher who studies schoolyard bullying might adapt their work into an online context.

It is less common for a scholar to completely shift their research focus to an entirely new topic, but this is still possible! Researchers are trained to ask questions, select appropriate methodologies, collect and analyze data, and develop insight based on what they find. Thus, well trained researchers are very well equipped to research a variety of topics, and depending on the requirements of their job, they may shift their focus as interests and needs evolve.

# What can I do to strengthen my chances for being admitted to graduate programs, and future career paths?

This is another answer of “it depends,” and advice can differ depending on who is offering it, and the paths being considered. That said, there are a few common pillars you might consider.

Grades are very important for graduate and professional school, though they may be less important for other pathways. Most graduate programs, and job postings, will post requirements for consideration. To know whether grades are an important factor, you should carefully review what has been posted.

Volunteer and work experience can be very helpful, especially if you can communicate the skills that you have developed through those experiences. For example, working as a server at a restaurant means that you would have developed skills such as working in fast-paced environments, potentially with challenging customers, and potentially in high heat (or cold)! If you have worked in retail, you may have been trusted with cash and/or keys to the business, learned to understand customer needs, and found solutions when customers were dissatisfied. In each of these roles, you likely gained experience using good judgment for when to escalate challenging cases to your supervisor. Volunteering through opportunities such as research labs and other placements can be a great way to make connections with others, build relationships with mentors who may be potential referees, and they can be a great way to determine if certain paths are of interest. For example, if you volunteer in a research lab and determine you don't like research, this is really helpful to know when it comes to choosing your next steps (e.g., a research-focused program may not be what you want)! It is important that you take time to reflect on the skills and experiences that you have through work and volunteer experiences, and consider how you can make connections between those skills and experiences, and what the specific opportunity of interest would benefit from. Articulating experiences in the context of a current opportunity is an important skill. If you have a career office either at your school or in your city, they are a great resource for helping you to communicate about your knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes in ways that are meaningful for the opportunities at hand.

If there are standardized tests associated with your future path, taking time to prepare can be a very wise investment. Students often ask “how much time should I devote to preparing for this big test?” The answer is it depends—this can vary a lot by individual. One approach to understanding how much prep time is needed is to find a practice test, and take it without preparing. This can be a helpful benchmark for determining how much you know at the outset, and how far you need to go with your studying.

Lastly, an important thing to consider no matter what you are applying to is your references. Graduate and professional schools often require written letters, where a phone reference is more typical for jobs (though written letters can also be requested). References should come from people who know you well in a professional setting. A reference from a research supervisor or seminar instructor will be much more detailed and nuanced than a letter from an instructor in a large course who doesn't know you well. Building professional relationships to have strong and detailed letters of reference takes time. You should consider who you know that could write



you a strong and detailed letter. If you don't have anyone who could serve this role, it's a great time to start building those relationships. Attending office hours, attending public lectures happening within your current program to get to know folks, asking questions, and getting involved through volunteering and small classes are great ways to build these relationships.

For graduate school, students should look at the websites of schools they are curious about applying to. They will list admission requirements on their website. Students can track these requirements, working towards meeting those requirements during undergraduate training. To help with tracking this, students can make a copy of [this website](#), filling it in with program admission requirements.

For specific jobs, job postings should tell you if there are specific competencies that would be helpful. To help track this information, you can make a copy of [this spreadsheet](#) and track information from jobs that are of interest to you.

# How can I help to promote the application of psychological science in my industry?

This is such a great question! We know that many folks take at least one course in psychology, yet we often find it missing in various industries. Developing the knowledge and skills to identify relevant evidence-based work and connecting it to a current need is an important skill set that you have hopefully developed in your undergraduate training. If you are looking to develop this skill more deeply, you might find workshops in “Knowledge Translation” and “Science Communication” of interest! These fields focus on the how of communicating science for varied audiences.

# I wish to learn and/or work abroad. What should I do?

We live in an interconnected world, and many folks seek experiences outside of their current regions. When you are looking to move abroad, you should always connect with the relevant government office and/or schools in the country you are seeking to move to.

# Are there specific certifications or additional training that would help me get a job in applied psychology fields?

It depends! Desired skill sets can vary based on the needs of the organization. A great exercise is to look up potential jobs of interest ahead of time. Do some internet searching on key words, and see what jobs pop up! You can then track required qualifications posted in job ads of interest. They should tell you if there are specific competencies that would be helpful. To help track this information, you can make a copy of [this spreadsheet](#) and track information from jobs that you're interested in. As your sample grows, you can look to see if there are common qualifications of jobs you are interested in. We are all limited in resources—focus on those competencies most commonly required for jobs you are most interested in. This is a great road map for competencies to consider working towards!

# How useful is research experience for non-academic psychology careers?

This is a great question, and the answer is a challenging “it depends!” Some non-academic careers are very research intensive. In these pathways, academic research experience can help to develop competitive competencies. In others, direct research experience may be less important to the job tasks. That said, research experience helps to develop transferrable skills such as learning to collect and manage data in ethical ways, use data to make useful insights, and fosters groupwork on complex tasks. As with above, a great exercise is to look up potential jobs of interest ahead of time. Do some internet searching on key words, and see what jobs pop up! You can then track required and desired qualifications posted in job ads of interest. They should tell you if there are specific competencies that would be helpful, such as research. To help track this information, you can make a copy of [this spreadsheet](#) and track information from jobs that are of interest to you.

# How do I decide between pursuing graduate school and entering the workforce after I complete my undergraduate degree?

This is a really hard question. For some, the answer will be obvious—there will be a clear pathway and desire. For many of us, the question is harder. Graduate school is a big commitment. For psychology programs, gaining experience in research labs can help you to determine whether this is something you might want to do for a long period of time. Many students take a year to work and “test drive” their skills before determining whether they want to, or need, to pursue further training to enter into careers that meet their goals. Talking with a trusted mentor, academic advisor, family, and friends can be helpful as you identify potential pathways. Sometimes, it is a leap into the unknown. This is okay! Most people have twists and turns in their career journeys. Just because you decide to (not) pursue further training right now, doesn't mean you can't go back and pursue it later.

If you are thinking of taking time to pursue a job, but want to hold the door open for future training, one strategy you might use is to ask about letters of reference before you graduate. Specifically, you can let your potential referees know that you are taking time to pursue an opportunity, but that you might want to pursue further training in the future. You can ask if they would be willing to serve as a reference for you at that time. Assuming they say yes, when you are ready to apply, respond to that email where they agreed! Referees often know a lot of people and write a lot of references. Doing a friendly “bump” from that that earlier email, reminding them of who you are and your past connections, can help to reactivate the foundation you laid before pursuing your other opportunity.

## PART IV

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more open access (free!) resources related to careers in psychology, please see:

- The Canadian Handbook for Careers in Psychological Science – Norris, 2019: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/psychologycareers/>
- Careers and Psychology – Norris, 2022: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/psychologycommons/chapter/careers-and-psychology-norris-m-2-28-2022/>
- CPA Career Hub: <https://cpa.ca/careers/career-hub/>
- Job Bank Canada: <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/>





## PART IV

# APPENDIX A - ALUMNI PROFILES

We hope you've gathered from this resource that there are *many* career paths, and most people have twists and turns throughout their journeys. In this next section, we are pleased share brief bios of professionals who have training in psychology at the undergraduate and graduate levels.



# 1. Undergraduate Paths

These alumni profiles include those whose highest degree obtained is at the Bachelor's level.

[Anastasia Clarke](#)

[Sara Jones](#)

[Marie McEnemy](#)

[Emily Ross](#)

[Michelle Taylor](#)

# Anastasia Clarke

## CAREER TIMELINE

**2019:** Case Aide  
for an ongoing  
child protection  
unit with Child  
and Family  
Programs

**2019-2022:**  
Income  
Assistance Worker

**2022-Current:**  
Training  
Coordinator

## ALUMNI PROFILE: ANASTASIA CLARKE

Training Coordinator at the Saskatchewan Ministry  
of Social Services

### **Education**

**2018:** B.A. Psychology

**2019:** Professional Assault Response Training

**2022:** Certified trainer in De-Escalating  
Potentially Violent Situations

**2024:** Mental Health First Aid



### **What made you choose this path?**

I've experienced a lot of individuals in my life struggling with mental health conditions, in addition to myself, and part of why I originally went into this career was to learn how to help those around me. Since I've gained my degree and started working, I've learned that while I can't fix everyone around me, I enjoy learning how interactions in our environment and our genetics create individual personalities.

### **Do you have advice for students interested in pursuing a similar path?**

I think my biggest piece of advice would not get too stuck in what you think you should be doing. I went into psychology thinking I'd go on to get my master's or PhD and be a registered psychologist. While that might still be something I do in the future, I've found that keeping myself open to opportunities and allowing my career to flow naturally has been extremely rewarding!

### **What has been the biggest challenge on your career path so far, and how have you navigated it?**

Truthfully, as mentioned I have my own mental health conditions, and I struggle a lot with imposter syndrome. In the past, I tried to simply "power through" which not so shockingly did not work. I've taken the time to prioritize my mental health by seeing a therapist myself, taking medications, and being honest about my struggles and I've been doing so much better. It's still a life-long thing I have to manage, but it's getting better every day! For my imposter syndrome, I've found that keeping track of accomplishments and positive feedback, whether big or small, gives me something to look back at when those little voices in my head start getting a little too loud.

### **What has been the biggest joy on your career path so far?**

The biggest joy, and frustration at times, has definitely been the people! I love getting to work one-on-one with people, and in my current role as a Training Coordinator, I get to interact with so many different types of people who all have different styles of thinking and learning. It's been fabulous to be able to continue learning alongside them as I teach them skills to use in their careers going forward.

Sara Jones

## CAREER TIMELINE

**2020-2022:** Lab  
Coordinator

**2022-2023:**  
Operations  
Specialist

**2023-Current:**  
Employment Advisor

## ALUMNI PROFILE: SARA JONES

Employment Advisor

### **Education**

**2020:** B.A.H Psychology, Minor in  
Sociology  
@ Queen's University

**2023:** Social Service Worker Diploma  
@ George Brown College



### **What made you choose this path?**

After I graduated university, I volunteered for a distress/listening line, and I found that I really enjoyed being a supportive listener to callers. During this time, one of my co-volunteers told me about graduate certificates that you can complete at different Ontario colleges. Following this conversation, I started researching different certificate and diploma options. I decided to apply to an accelerated social service worker program since I enjoyed the type of volunteering I was doing with the listening line. I got accepted and during that year-long program, I happened to do my placement in employment services within a nonprofit. Throughout the placement, I realized I loved doing 1-on-1 case management, assisting with skill development and facilitating workshops on computer and job search skills. Following the completion of this program, I found my current job and I love it!

### **Do you have advice for students interested in pursuing a similar path?**

First, take advantage of the many research assistant positions within the Queen's Psychology Department; it provided me with such valuable experience. Second, to develop new skills outside of school and build connections, find volunteer opportunities that align with your values and strengths.

Finally, when thinking about what to do after you graduate, look into graduate certificates or accelerated programs at colleges. There are so many practical diplomas/certificates that give you the exact skills that you need in the workplace!

### **What has been the biggest challenge on your career path so far, and how have you navigated it?**

The biggest challenge is working within a sector that is underfunded. Unfortunately, the sector can be difficult to navigate for people, and many organizations can't offer the extent of support that would be required for a society in which everyone is able to thrive! I've been able to navigate these challenges by remembering that my work is at the individual level and that when you allow participants to guide the type of support they want, there are many more moments of celebration and joy! And then at a larger scale, staying informed and looking into social action can provide hope during these times.

### **What has been the biggest joy on your career path so far?**

I love working with our clients! I try to create a space that is comfortable, nonjudgemental, motivating, and includes lots of humour. I get so excited to see my clients during each appointment, help them work towards their goals, and to celebrate all their wins with them.

# Marie McEnemy



## CAREER TIMELINE

**1989-1998:**

Primary  
Classroom  
Teacher

**1996-2011:** At

Home with  
Children Full-Time

**Current:** Supply  
Teacher, Support  
Staff EarlyON  
Simcoe North,  
Volunteer with  
several  
organizations

## ALUMNI PROFILE: MARIE MCMENEMY

Supply Teacher with Simcoe County District  
School Board, Support Staff with EarlyON  
Simcoe North

### **Education**

**1989:** B.A.H. Psychology  
@ Queen's University

**1989:** B.Ed.  
@ Queen's University



### **What made you choose this path?**

Came from a family of teachers.

### **Do you have advice for students interested in pursuing a similar path?**

Just show up every day and try and do your best. Things are very challenging right now. Explore other options too. It helps you to appreciate the jobs you do. I have found working with EarlyON to be rewarding in the field of Infant Mental Health. It has helped to inform my teaching and working with families.

### **What has been the biggest challenge on your career path so far, and how have you navigated it?**

I worked very hard in the early years of my teaching career, and found it difficult not to burn out when I started my family. I found that working casually in two jobs worked well to attain a flexible work week.

### **What has been the biggest joy on your career path so far?**

It has been a great pleasure to do a variety of work within my community. Being able to watch families grow with their babies and then see them again as their children mature in the school system has enabled me to interact with them on a long-term basis. It is nice to be respected in both jobs as an intuitive, hard worker.

Emily Ross

## CAREER TIMELINE

**2019-2022:** Various Volunteer Positions with the Arts and Science Undergraduate Society at Queen's University

**2021:** COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic Support Worker at Kingston General Hospital

**2021-2022:** Undergraduate Psychology Teaching Assistant at Queen's University

**2021-2023:** Nursing Support Assistant at Kingston General Hospital

**2023:** Human Resources Coordinator for Home and Community Care Support Services (now Ontario Health at Home)

## ALUMNI PROFILE: EMILY ROSS

Compressed Time Frame Nursing Student at Western University to become a Registered Nurse

### Education

**2022:** B.A.H. in Psychology @ Queen's University

**2025:** Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Compressed time frame) @ Western University



### What made you choose this path?

I originally got my psychology training while enrolled in the Concurrent Education Program at Queen's University with the goal of becoming an elementary school teacher. I always knew I wanted a career path that allowed me to care for and mentor others. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I began working in a hospital. I enjoyed that I was able to support people during these times while understanding the physical, cognitive, mental, and emotional challenges people were experiencing. I choose nursing because I was able to work directly with people, provide compassionate care, and apply scientific knowledge, including psychological science, to my approach as a nursing student and in my future career as a Registered Nurse.

### Do you have advice for students interested in pursuing a similar path?

Don't be afraid to take the leap and enjoy the process along the way. If something peaks your interest, follow-up on it. If you think further education or working in a specific field/industry is meant for you, seek out opportunities to volunteer or shadow to gain more insight and experience. Similar to psychology, nursing is a career path that has many diverse opportunities. If you are passionate about it, go for it and you will find where fit into the profession.

### What has been the biggest challenge on your career path so far, and how have you navigated it?

My biggest challenge was making a change in my educational path, and ultimately changing my career path overall. It can be scary to change your mind and take the leap into something different. I was always told all my life that "no education is a waste" and I can truly say that my training in psychology has been invaluable during my nursing education, from considering holistic perspectives of patient experiences to navigating workplace dynamic and much more.

### What has been the biggest joy on your career path so far?

My biggest joy in nursing is my ability to care for patients and their loved ones during challenging times - to be able to bring some light to others is an absolute joy. I enjoy the many opportunities that exist in nursing and my ability to apply knowledge from the lenses of health and psychological sciences to make direct, positive impacts on peoples' lives.

# Michelle Taylor

## CAREER TIMELINE

**2018-2019:**  
Recruitment  
Representative

**2019-2022:**  
Recruitment  
Coordinator,  
International

## ALUMNI PROFILE: MICHELLE TAYLOR

Regional Manager, International  
Undergraduate Enrollment

### **Education**

**2018:** B.A. Psychology  
@ Queen's University



### **What made you choose this path?**

Joy of public speaking, interacting with people and making quick connections. Having an impact on students future academic goals.

### **Do you have advice for students interested in pursuing a similar path?**

Networking & taking advantage of all the opportunities for involvement inside and outside of the classroom.

### **What has been the biggest challenge on your career path so far, and how have you navigated it?**

Contract renewals through term positions. Navigated through open dialogue with my employer, reflection on the strategic and operational goals of the institution and how my position added value to that.

### **What has been the biggest joy on your career path so far?**

Supporting students from all over the world in navigating their Queen's education. Seeing the impact they make in the Queen's community, the growth from young adulthood into adulthood and maintaining connection with their families.

## 2. Master's Paths

These alumni profiles include those whose highest degree obtained is at the Master's level.

[Tal Cohen](#)

[Carli Fink](#)

[Rahul Patel](#)

[Meredith Richmond](#)

[Meghan Rowe](#)

[Rebecca Simms](#)

Tal Cohen

## CAREER TIMELINE

**2023-2024:** Home  
visit research  
assistant --  
conducting infant  
development  
assessments for a  
perinatal  
psychiatry trial

**Current:** M.H.Sc  
in Physiology

## ALUMNI PROFILE: TAL COHEN

Master's student at the University of  
Toronto in the Medical Physiology  
program

### **Education**

**2019-2023:** H.B.Sc. Psychology  
@ Queen's University

**2024-2025:** M.H.Sc in Physiology  
@ The University of Toronto



### **What made you choose this path?**

I wanted to create more opportunities for myself. In 2024, I applied to various professional schools, one of which was this Master's program. While the decision was ultimately made for me based on acceptances and rejections, I chose to pursue the Master's rather than spend another year working, knowing it would open more doors in the long run for what I knew I was interested in.

### **Do you have advice for students interested in pursuing a similar path?**

Consider everything! I had so many misconceptions about so many careers prior to graduating, that I avoided opportunities that I could've enjoyed and seen myself doing. If you have many interests, and see yourself doing many different things, that is a good thing. Gain exposure to anything you think you may want to do.

### **What has been the biggest challenge on your career path so far, and how have you navigated it?**

Being unsure of what's next. I'm still unsure, and I'm slowly learning that this is okay. Most careers are not linear, and people jump from different areas throughout their career lifespan. In other words, this is a part of life, so you might as well be comfortable with it and stay focused and hard-working in the present.

### **What has been the biggest joy on your career path so far?**

Working with babies! I had the absolute best job following my degree. Working with a clinical population after years of doing mainly administrative/academic research was very exciting.



Carli Fink

## CAREER TIMELINE

**2014:** Summer positions as a tour guide and camp counsellor

**2015-2016:** Guidance Program Manager at an Independent School

**2016-2017:** Associate Director of a non-profit serving post-secondary students

**2017-2019:** Part-time Graduate Assistant, Academic Advising at Northeastern University

**2019-2021:** Career Counsellor at Queen's University

**2019-2021:** Seasonal Part-time International Admissions Evaluator at UC Berkeley

**2021-2023:** Career Strategist, Arts at UBC Vancouver

## ALUMNI PROFILE: CARLI FINK

Strategist, Workforce Planning and Talent Strategy at Ontario Centre of Innovation,  
Founder and Career Consultant at Foreseeable Futures

### Education

**2014:** B.A.H Psychology  
@ Queen's University

**2015:** B.Ed.

@ University of Ottawa

**2019:** M.Sc. Applied Psychology  
@ Northeastern University



### What made you choose this path?

Strong interest in educational and career paths and curiosity about how people make these decisions; strong desire to learn about the education system and have a positive impact on how it serves students, and a strong desire to help others both at the individual level (such as through advising) and at the systemic level (such as through programs and policies).

### Do you have advice for students interested in pursuing a similar path?

Don't worry about the fact that your interests may not fit into an easily-identifiable job title, like "psychotherapist" or "teacher." Lean into your interests and connect with people/organizations that are already engaged in this work.

### What has been the biggest challenge on your career path so far, and how have you navigated it?

Explaining it to others. I've navigated that by developing a cohesive narrative that focuses on the most key elements while also accepting that not everybody needs to understand my choices.

### What has been the biggest joy on your career path so far?

The variety! I've gotten to work for so many amazing employers, in so many awesome cities, and with so many wonderful colleagues. I've learned a ton and developed a wide range of skills.

Rahul Patel

## CAREER TIMELINE

**2022-2023:** Part-time Science Consultant

**2023:** Advisory Intern

**2024:** Part-time recruitment & Selection Consultant

**2024-Current:** Assessment Specialist

## ALUMNI PROFILE: RAHUL PATEL

Assessment Specialist

### **Education**

**2017-2021:** B.Sc. (Hons) Psychology  
@ Queen's University

**2021-2023:** M.A. Industrial/Organizational Psychology  
@ University of Guelph

**2023-2027:** Ph.D. Industrial/Organizational Psychology  
@ University of Guelph



### **What made you choose this path?**

I chose this career path during my undergrad due to inspiration from working as a Marketing Assistant Manager, completing an Organizational Behavior course, and being a Research Assistant. Working as a Marketing Assistant Manager exposed me to managerial tasks which made me curious about how organizations hire qualified candidates by interviews and other assessments out there. I took an Organizational Behaviour course to understand human-centric issues in organizations, which mapped onto what I observed as a manager. I was also a Research Assistant within the Psychology department, though I felt I was missing a practical piece, leading to an "Aha!" moment: researching my experiences in the workplace would fill these practical gaps. I then researched Industrial/Organizational Psychology and the Canadian programs that offer this degree.

### **Do you have advice for students interested in pursuing a similar path?**

Reflect on what you would generally value from a career, which should guide your decisions. My career path values research and evidence to base decisions that impact candidates and employees. Secondly, reflect on your current courses and extra-curriculars—what is it that you enjoy? I knew that I enjoyed research, but the Psychology research and courses I was taking were missing the practical component of the human workplace. Thirdly, network with people—your professors, your TAs, alumni from your program, and professionals on LinkedIn. Simply asking for a quick chat could lead to the source of inspiration for your career path. Lastly, get relevant experience and think from an outside perspective as to what is needed to make you operate effectively in that role and for the lab/organization as a whole. In other words, become curious about your work environment!

### **What has been the biggest challenge on your career path so far, and how have you navigated it?**

The biggest challenge of my career path was getting into graduate school. With the limited Canadian programs that offer Industrial/Organizational Psychology degrees, many applicants apply for the same few programs, so the application process is very competitive. For research-based graduate programs, research experience is typically valued. I started volunteering for a lab in the Psychology department the summer after my first year, which taught me that I liked research. Still, to be sure of my interests, I obtained diverse research experience by assisting in labs studying different topics in second and third year. My variety of research experiences demonstrated my research competence for graduate program applications in Industrial/Organizational Psychology.

### **What has been the biggest joy on your career path so far?**

The biggest joy in my career path so far is that it is still evolving. My constant learning, reflection, and curiosity enable me to pursue opportunities that challenge me—some of which are outside my domain of expertise. Sometimes, discomfort enables growth, and that realization of growth brings me joy.

Meredith Richmond

## CAREER TIMELINE

**2001-2006:** Family  
Services Worker -  
Children's Aid  
Society

**2006-2016:** Clinical  
Case Manager and  
Psychotherapist for  
a Non-Profit  
Addictions Agency

**2016-2018:** Federal  
Government  
Case Manager -  
Veterans Affairs  
Canada

**2018-2021:** Veterans  
Services Team  
Manager

**2021-2022:** Manager -  
Office of Women and  
LGBTQ Veterans

**2022-2024:** Ontario  
Regional Lead,  
National Managers  
Community - Canada  
School of Public  
Service

**Current:** Member of  
the Immigration and  
Refugee Board of  
Canada

## ALUMNI PROFILE: MEREDITH RICHMOND

Member of the Immigration and Refugee  
Board of Canada

### **Education**

**1996:** B.A. in Psychology  
@ Queen's University

**1999:** Diploma in Early Childhood  
Education

**2024:** M.P.A.  
@ Queen's University



### **What made you choose this path?**

Second year biopsyc course. I fell in love with the brain and motivation systems and then how those systems interact with in ways that impact our behaviors/ addictions / mental health. I fell in to child welfare but it gave me the experience I needed to join the addictions agency and eventually become a registered Psychotherapist. I struggled with my own mental health and undiagnosed neurodivergence and barely made it through my BA. I had initially wanted to go to grad school.

### **Do you have advice for students interested in pursuing a similar path?**

There is more than one way to get to where you want to go and during that journey you may learn you want to go some where else entirely. Be open to possibilities and remain curious.

### **What has been the biggest challenge on your career path so far, and how have you navigated it?**

Mental Health and undiagnosed ADHD. YEARS of therapy and meds ;) I had to advocate for my needs and ask for support to be authentically me. This was much harder during the beginning of my career and there were times I was not sure I would make it. Having good medical and family/friend supports was so important. Finding mentors was also key.

### **What has been the biggest joy on your career path so far?**

When I won an award in my second year in the Government for being a leader in workplace wellness. I had left my previous workplace on stress leave because of a lack of support and finding a place where I was thriving and being recognized for who I was and what was important to me was so validating.

Meghan Rowe



## CAREER TIMELINE

**2020-2021:** Part-time Laboratory Manager

**2020-2021:** Part-time Neurofeedback Technician

**2021-2022:** Clinic Administrator

**2024-Current:** Laboratory Manager

**2024-Current:** Same Day Counsellor, Dalhousie Student Health and Wellness

## ALUMNI PROFILE: MEGAN ROWE

Same Day Counsellor, Dalhousie Student Health and Wellness

### Education

**2020:** B.A.H. Psychology @ Queen's University

**2025:** M.S.W. @ Dalhousie University

**2025-2029:** Ph.D. Health @ Dalhousie University



### What made you choose this path?

I chose a career in social work because after my undergraduate degree in psychology, I knew I wanted to engage in a field that allowed me to practice both clinically and engage in research. My praxis engages critical social theories (mad studies, critical race theory, transformative justice, abolition), and social work provided me the ideal avenue to integrate these frameworks into both my clinical practice and research areas.

### Do you have advice for students interested in pursuing a similar path?

There are so many options!! Explore what it is you want to do (client-facing, research, clinical, non clinical, etc) and then explore which fields/careers might allow you to realize whatever it is you are interested in. If you are looking to go the graduate school route, explore many different programs that might allow you to achieve your goals: Clinical psychology (research + clinical), Social work (clinical + option for research depending on program), Counselling psychology (clinical + research depending on program/MA or MEd), Occupational Therapy, etc. If you are not interested in graduate school, there are many careers that will allow you to leverage your psychology background/interests: support worker, youth worker, psychoanalyst, intake coordinator, clinic administrator, community outreach worker, research coordinator, etc. It really depends on what your interests are.

### What has been the biggest challenge on your career path so far, and how have you navigated it?

My career path necessitated a graduate-level degree. While pursuing graduate studies is an incredible privilege, it also comes with significant financial challenges, particularly since maintaining full-time employment while in school is generally not feasible. So, this is definitely a piece to consider: look into program funding/stipends, opportunities for RA-TA'ing, scholarships, etc.

### What has been the biggest joy on your career path so far?

I would say it's the ongoing journey of learning and unlearning that is essential in the pursuit of building transformative worlds!



Rebecca Simms

## CAREER TIMELINE

**2025:** Activity  
Director for  
Retirement  
Community

## ALUMNI PROFILE: REBECCA SIMMS

Activity Director for Retirement Community

### **Education**

**2017:** Business Administration  
Diploma  
@ Loyalist College

**2024:** B.A. Psychology  
@ Queen's University

**2025:** M.A. Counselling Psychology  
@ Yorkville University



### **What made you choose this path?**

In this career path, I am able to utilize my background in Psychology by working with our aging seniors in Canada to ensure an enhanced quality of life and a greater sense of well-being for many who are in the last chapter of their lives. The passion I have for human dignity and respect is what led me to pursue this field, and I enjoy it more each day. My work with individuals with Alzheimer's and Dementia is frequently tied back to the foundational learning I built when obtaining my Undergraduate degree at Queen's.

### **Do you have advice for students interested in pursuing a similar path?**

My advice for anyone interested in following a career path like this is to lead with confidence! Earning your degree is no small feat, and you deserve the professional opportunities you are curating for yourself. Remember to use your educational roots and keep your eye on what you are most passionate about and find ways to intertwine that into your work.

### **What has been the biggest challenge on your career path so far, and how have you navigated it?**

My biggest challenge so far has definitely been imposter syndrome. When you are charged with the care of so many wonderful people, it can feel like a massive weight on your shoulders because you want to do the best possible job you can. When I'm feeling like this, I try to remind myself that I am capable of doing this job well and that the fact that I have these anxieties means I care a lot about the role! Self trust, determination, and self-care are all things that have helped me overcome these challenges.

### **What has been the biggest joy on your career path so far?**

Seeing the improved quality of life in so many who suffer from neurodegenerative brain diseases like dementia. It is clear to me that the body has a physiological memory of whether or not someone is enjoying their day, and being able to bring joy to the surface for someone who is feeling isolated by their own mind has been an absolutely incredible part of my career journey so far and feels like a gift every day.

### 3. Doctoral Paths

These alumni profiles include those whose highest degree obtained is at the Doctoral level.

[Dr. Charlene Belu](#)

[Dr. Kerri Ritchie](#)

Dr. Charlene Belu

## CAREER TIMELINE

**2011-2014:** Child  
and Youth Care  
Worker

**2012-2013:**  
Director of  
Volunteer Services  
at a Sexual  
Assault Center

**2013-2014:**  
Research  
Assistant

**2021:**  
Postdoctoral  
Fellow at  
Dalhousie  
University

**Current:** Assistant  
Professor in  
Clinical  
Psychology

## ALUMNI PROFILE: DR. CHARLENE BELU

Assistant Professor in Clinical Psychology

### **Education**

**2011:** B.A. Psychology  
@ MacEwan University

**2021:** Ph.D. Clinical Psychology  
@ University of New Brunswick



### **What made you choose this path?**

I grew up with family in the helping profession, so I always knew that I was interested in helping others. I began my undergraduate degree with the intention of becoming a clinical psychologist with a focus on clinical practice, but fell in love with research during my Honours thesis. This excellent research experience with my supervisor, Dr.

Lynne Honey, was life changing for me. It was at this point I realized that my true heart's desire was to have a career that heavily involved research, and I applied to grad schools in clinical psychology with the intention of becoming an Academic.

### **Do you have advice for students interested in pursuing a similar path?**

I feel very fortunate to have been surrounded by excellent mentors throughout my psychology career who provided me the support and insight I needed to achieve my dreams. Surround yourself with excellent mentors who value you, foster your love for research, and keep that flame alive through the journey. I would also encourage students to find research topics that make them feel excited. It makes the work so much more exciting.

### **What has been the biggest challenge on your career path so far, and how have you navigated it?**

The largest challenge on my career path was leaving my family and friends. Prior to grad school, I had spent my entire life in Edmonton, so the move to Fredericton for grad school meant leaving everyone behind. However, it also meant the start of a new adventure for me, which was really exciting to me. It's also much easier to stay connected to loved ones with video calling and family group messages.

### **What has been the biggest joy on your career path so far?**

The biggest joy in my career path so far has been the relationships I've fostered with people along the way. I've met a number of incredible mentors, who continue to be role models for me. One of my favourite things to do is dream up new research ideas with my former PhD supervisor, Dr. Lucia O'Sullivan (and send 1,000+ excited emails back and forth about them). I've made really excellent friends through this journey, and I can't imagine my life without them.

Dr. Kerri Ritchie

## CAREER TIMELINE

**2002-2015:**  
Psychologist, Maternal  
Fetal Medicine,  
Department of  
Psychology, Ottawa  
Hospital

**2008-2009:** Co-  
Director of Training,  
Department of  
Psychology, Ottawa  
Hospital

**2010-2022:** Director of  
Training, Department  
of Psychology, Ottawa  
Hospital

**2015-2022:**  
Psychologist,  
Psychology  
Consultation Service  
for Inpatients

**2017-2023:**  
Professional Practice  
Coordinator,  
Psychology, Ottawa  
Hospital

**2022-2023:**  
Secondment, Mental  
Health Strat Plan,  
People Health and  
Wellness, Ottawa  
Hospital

**2023-Current:** Senior  
Psychologist, People  
Health and Wellness

## ALUMNI PROFILE: DR. KERRI RITCHIE

Senior Psychologist, People Health and  
Wellness

### **Education**

**1993-1996:** B.A. Psychology  
@ McGill University

**1996-1998:** M.A. Forensic Psychology  
@ City University of New York

**1998-2002:** Ph.D Clinical Psychology  
@ University of New Brunswick



### **What made you choose this path?**

I started off wanting forensic psychology. From that experience working in forensics, I focused my doctoral work on children and adolescents. From that experience, I wanted to focus on early intervention, and worked for 16 years in obstetrics. While in this position, I took on a leadership position as Director of Training. From that I learned about leadership, received training in leadership and worked on national boards. I also began doing work and research on wellness for people working in health care, which led to my current position in People Health and Wellness of creating and developing health care and mental health care clinics and programming specifically for health care workers within an organization

### **Do you have advice for students interested in pursuing a similar path?**

My advice would be that there isn't one career path. There are multiple paths and they can change over time. What we enjoy changes over time. What is available or what exits changes over time. My advice would be that it is about a balance. There will always be things about a job that you don't like, coupled with things, if you are lucky, that you love. Constantly shifting for a "better" job, won't allow you to find surprising things you might grow into. It is also the case that we can get locked into certain paths, and worry we can't shift. You absolutely can make a shift. It often takes a risk, and sometime retraining,

### **What has been the biggest challenge on your career path so far, and how have you navigated it?**

Believing that my options were limited because I had only seen a few examples of what people with my degree could do. I was able to navigate it because I had invested my whole career in getting to know people, being responsive and helpful, and showing people that I could support, operationally, what was needed. When I wanted a shift, I knew who I could ask and they knew me. They also knew what I could do, and were willing to support me in creating a new path, program, and opportunity.

### **What has been the biggest joy on your career path so far?**

It's 2 overarching experiences – Being close to retirement, I can truly look back and understand what a privilege it has been to support students, early careers, staff, and physicians, and community members during some of their best and lowest moments in their lives. It is a humbling experience. Second part, not everyone is fortunate enough to be able to chart their career path, to be able to make choices for their careers, in the moment and at pivotal moments, and for that I am profoundly grateful. Some people do have limited options and choices because of life circumstances.





## PART V

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