

Community Mental Health & Social Change: A Training Course in Liberation Psychology

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Course Overview:

The course is designed to empower professionals working at the intersection of mental health and social justice. Drawing from the foundational insights of "Community Psychology" by Geoffrey Nelson and Isaac Prilleltensky, this course bridges theory and practice to address real-world challenges. It integrates community psychology training, liberation psychology concepts, and ecological models in psychology to cultivate inclusive mental health leadership. Participants will explore the social determinants of mental health, community-based interventions, power dynamics in communities, and critical perspectives on mental health. Through cultural competence in psychology and grassroots mental health initiatives, learners will be equipped with methods to foster recovery, resilience, and systemic transformation.

Target Audience:

- Community psychologists
- Social workers
- Public health professionals
- Mental health clinicians
- Human rights advocates
- Organizational development consultants
- Educators and policy-makers in health and social care

Targeted Organizational Departments:

- Public and community health departments
- Corporate social responsibility divisions
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion teams
- Mental health services and wellness programs
- Nonprofit program development units

Targeted Industries:

- Health and human services
- Education and research institutions
- International NGOs and humanitarian organizations
- Government and public policy agencies
- Community development and urban planning

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Course Offerings:

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Apply ecological models in psychology to real-world mental health challenges
- Design empowerment-based mental health programs
- Evaluate social determinants of mental health in marginalized communities
- Use values in community psychology to guide program development
- Integrate cultural competence and inclusive practices into interventions
- Analyze power dynamics in community contexts
- Plan and assess community-based interventions for psychological well-being

Training Methodology:

This course uses a participatory and experiential learning model rooted in critical pedagogy. Training will include case studies of grassroots mental health initiatives, role plays around power dynamics in communities, and group activities focused on social intervention planning. Guided discussions will explore the interplay between marginalisation and psychological well-being. Using real-life scenarios from the textbook and field, participants will apply transformative and participatory research methods. Each day concludes with a structured reflection to reinforce learning and promote personal insights. Materials are grounded in empowerment-based mental health frameworks, promoting inclusive psychological practices.

Course Toolbox:

- ebook "Community Psychology: In Pursuit of Liberation and Well-Being"
- Case study briefs and community scenarios
- Value-mapping worksheets and empowerment checklists
- Cultural competence evaluation templates
- Methods for participatory action research guides, planning sheets
- Reflection journals and facilitation guides

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Course Agenda:

Day 1: Foundations of Liberation and Community Psychology

- **Topic 1:** Introduction to Community Psychology and Liberation Frameworks
- **Topic 2:** Values and Principles in Community Psychology
- **Topic 3:** Understanding Oppression, Liberation, and Well-Being
- **Topic 4:** Ecological Models and Multilevel Interventions
- **Topic 5:** Prevention and Promotion Strategies for Mental Health
- **Topic 6:** methods for Contextualizing Social Problems
- **Reflection & Review:** Personal and Collective Journeys in Community Psychology

Day 2: Power, Inclusion, and Cultural Contexts

- **Topic 1:** Community and Power Dynamics
- **Topic 2:** Commitment, Accountability, and Inclusion
- **Topic 3:** Addressing Racism and Colonization in Psychology
- **Topic 4:** Gender, Feminist Theory, and Social Justice
- **Topic 5:** Working with Immigrant and Refugee Communities
- **Topic 6:** Cultural Competence and Cross-Cultural Psychology
- **Reflection & Review:** Intersecting Identities and Inclusive Mental Health Practices

Day 3: Interventions for Empowerment and Recovery

- **Topic 1:** Overview of Community Psychology Interventions
- **Topic 2:** Designing Social Interventions for Systemic Change
- **Topic 3:** Organizational and Community-Level Approaches
- **Topic 4:** Small Group and Individual Interventions
- **Topic 5:** Recovery and Inclusion Models in Mental Health
- **Topic 6:** Promoting Resilience and Collective Healing
- **Reflection & Review:** Building Sustainable Empowerment Models

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Day 4: Participatory Research and Community Action

- **Topic 1:** Foundations of Community-Based Research
- **Topic 2:** Post-positivist and Social Constructivist Paradigms
- **Topic 3:** Transformative Research and Participatory Action
- **Topic 4:** methods for Evaluating Community Programs
- **Topic 5:** Research Ethics and Power in Knowledge Production
- **Topic 6:** Evidence-Based Advocacy for Social Justice
- **Reflection & Review:** From Research to Action: Closing the Loop

Day 5: Addressing Structural Barriers and Leading Change

- **Topic 1:** Understanding Marginalization and Social Exclusion
- **Topic 2:** Globalization, Poverty, and the Politics of Mental Health
- **Topic 3:** Confronting Ableism and Advocating Accessibility
- **Topic 4:** Supporting Disadvantaged Families and Children
- **Topic 5:** Building Community Resilience to Climate and Crisis
- **Topic 6:** Charting Future Directions in Liberation Psychology
- **Reflection & Review:** Transforming Systems and Sustaining Justice

FAQ:

What specific qualifications or prerequisites are needed for participants before enrolling in the course?

No formal prerequisites are required. However, experience in mental health, community development, or social justice work is beneficial.

How long is each day's session, and is there a total number of hours required for the entire course?

Each day's session is generally structured to last around 4-5 hours, with breaks and interactive activities included. The total course duration spans one week, approximately 20-25 hours of instruction.

How does liberation psychology apply to real-world organizational challenges?

Liberation psychology provides frameworks for confronting systemic inequality, empowering community voices, and promoting accountability in policy and organizational change. Participants learn to diagnose institutional barriers and build inclusive, justice-oriented systems.

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How This Course is Different from Other Community Mental Health Courses:

The course stands out by grounding every element in the liberation psychology framework, going beyond symptom-based approaches to tackle the root causes of mental distress. Unlike many courses that treat mental health as an individual issue, this course trains participants to recognise systemic oppression, power imbalances, and cultural contexts. Using methods from the book by Nelson and Prilleltensky, it emphasizes empowerment, ecological thinking, and participatory methods. This course not only enhances knowledge but also builds real-world skills for social transformation through community-based mental health strategies, critical reflection, and cross-sector collaboration.

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- IT Security Training & IT Training Courses
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