The Role of Psychology in Societal Challenges: What Can You Do To Solve Today's Problems

Antonio E. Puente
University of North Carolina Wilmington

Carolinas Psychology Conference
Campbell University
04.13.2024
OUTLINE

BACKGROUND

CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES
OUTLINE

BACKGROUND

CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES
La Familia

Krista Puente Trefz, PsyD
Private practice in Stuart, FL

Antonio Nicolas Puente, PhD
George Washington University

Lucas Llanso Puente, PhD
Sales Force/Slack
INFLUENCE

Roger W. Sperry, PhD

Alexander Luria, PhD
PERSONAL BACKGROUND  (1988 – present)

- North Carolina Psychological Association (e)
- National Academy of Neuropsychology: Professional Affairs & Information Committee (a); Division 40 Practice Committee (a); President (e)
- National Academy of Practice Psychology Section (e)
- APA: Policy & Planning Board (three terms-e); Division 40 (e); Committee for Psychological Tests & Assessments (e); Ethics Committee (a); Board of Directors/Presidential trio (e), Advocacy Coordinating Committee (a); Health Finance Committee (a); Testing Advisory Group (a)
- North Carolina: North Carolina Medicaid Office (a); North Carolina Blue Cross/Blue Shield (a)
- Health Care Finance Administration: Working Group for Mental Health Policy (a)
- Center for Medicare/Medicaid Services: Medicare Coverage Advisory Committee (fa)
- American Medical Association’s Current Procedural Terminology Committee Advisory Panel: HCPAC (IV/V) (a)
- American Medical Association’s Current Procedural Terminology: Editorial Panel (e; rotating and permanent seat/two terms)
- Joint Committee for Standards for Educational and Psychological Tests (a)
- APA: President (e)

legend: a = appointment, fa = federal appointment, e = election; italics implies current appointment/elected position
CURRENT PROCEDURAL TERMINOLOGY:

CNS Assessment Codes Timetable:
Idea to Reality (Activity X Date)

- Codes Without Cognitive Work Obtained, 1994
- Request by CMS/AMA to Obtain Work Value, approximately 2000
- Initial Request for Practice Expense by APA, Summer, 2002
- APA Appeared Before AMA RUC, September, 2003
- Initial Decision by AMA CPT Panel, November 7, 2004
- Call for Other Societies to Participate, November 19, 2004
- Final Decision by AMA CPT Panel, December 1, 2004
- Submission of CPT Codes to AMA RUC Committee immediately thereafter
- Review by AMA RUC Research Subcommittee in January, 2005
- Review by AMA RUC Panel in February 3-6, 2005
- Survey of Codes, second & third week of February, 2005
- Analysis of Surveys, March, 2005
- Presentation to RUC Committee in April, 2005
- Inclusion in the 2006 Physician Fee Schedule on January 1, 2006
- Meeting with CMS, April 24, 2006
- CMS Transmittal and NCCI Edits published September, 2006
- AMA CPT Assistant articles published November, 2006
- AMA CPT Assistant Q & A published December, 2007
- Presentation to AMA CPT Panel February 9, 2007
- Presentation to CMS a series of Q and As July, 2007
- Acceptance and publication of new CPT testing code language, October, 2008
- Initial acceptance of clarification of testing codes by CMS, October, 2008
- Continued involvement in the explanation of their use (e.g., AMA CPT presentation, October, 2010)
- Working on compliance officers interpretation of simultaneous use of professional and technical codes
- A new set of codes (e.g., interpretation) are here, scheduled for use in 01.01.19 and continuously revised
- Testing Guide Developed 2020 and revised in 2024

For more information: www.ama-assn.org/go/cpt-processfaq
PRE- AND POST-PANDEMIC STRESS LEVEL COMPARISON

% OF ADULTS WHO RATE THEIR AVERAGE STRESS BETWEEN EIGHT AND TEN*

- Parents: 33% (2023), 24% (2019)
- Single adult households: 23% (2023), 18% (2019)
- Retired individuals: 12% (2023), 11% (2019)

*Respondents were asked to rate their average level of stress during the past month on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means “little or no stress” and 10 means “a great deal of stress”

**Defined as adults who have a child under 18 living in their home at least 50% of the time for whom they are the parent or guardian

***Defined as households with one adult (with or without children)

STRESS IN AMERICA™ 2023 © 2023 American Psychological Association
PSYCHOLOGY AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT
States Have Become the Living Laboratories for Policy Development

• **Issues**: States (even local governments) are social thinking and federal policy laboratories.
  • “How the right trounced liberals in the states” (*Democracy*, Winter, 2016)
  • Masters psychological associate will be our next professional challenge and frontier.
States Have Become the Living Laboratories for Policy Development

• **Issues:** States (even local governments) are social thinking and federal policy laboratories.
  - “How the right trounced liberals in the states” (*Democracy*, Winter, 2016)
  - Masters psychological associate will be our next professional challenge and frontier.

• **Solutions:**
  - A shift from focusing only on federal to states.
  - From focusing on reimbursement to “psychological gestalt”.
  - Whereas the doctorate has and will remain our benchmark, a clearer demarcation of how do differ from our masters’ colleagues must be developed and, similarly, we must welcome them into our family.
National Policy in a Time of Change

- We must define what is a psychologist (i.e., a specialist).
National Policy in a Time of Change

- We must define what is a psychologist (i.e., a specialist).
- A new and more robust licensing model is needed (e.g., license transportability).
National Policy in a Time of Change

- We must define what is a psychologist (i.e., a specialist).
- A new and more robust licensing model is needed (e.g., license transportability).
- Our clinical educational and training system is antiquated (e.g., advocacy, billing, EDI, etc.).
National Policy in a Time of Change

- We must define what is a psychologist (i.e., a specialist).
- A new and more robust licensing model is needed (e.g., license transportability).
- Our clinical educational and training system is antiquated (e.g., advocacy, billing, EDI, etc.).
- We are historically the only doctorate level provider that has not been defined as a physician by Medicare AND our educational and training system does not parallel the other included health professions defined as physicians.
National Policy in a Time of Change

- We must define what is a psychologist (i.e., a specialist).
- A new and more robust licensing model is needed (e.g., license transportability).
- Our clinical educational and training system is antiquated (e.g., advocacy, billing, EDI, etc.).
- We are historically the only doctorate level provider that is not been defined as a physician by Medicare AND our educational and training system does not parallel the other 12 included health professions defined as physicians.

**If there was ever a time for psychology to reflect inwardly and change outwardly, it is today.**
An Advocacy Opportunity of a Lifetime

- Historically we have been asking Congress for help.
- They, instead, are asking us what are we doing to-
  - help them understand us.
  - assist them solve the mental health epidemic.
An Advocacy Opportunity of a Lifetime

- Historically we have been asking Congress for help.
- They, instead, are asking us what are we doing to-
  - help them understand us.
  - assist them solve the mental health epidemic.

- The story of “Physician Definition”.
An Advocacy Opportunity of a Lifetime

• Historically we have been asking Congress for help.
• They, instead, are asking us what are we doing to-
  • help them understand us.
  • assist them solve the mental health epidemic.
• The story of “Physician Definition”.

• Senator Tom Tillis and the Mental Health Caucus.
APA Advocacy

• APA C6 and APA C3 (APA Services, Inc.)

• Current bills in significant transition:

  • S. 2511 – the ADAPT Act, which would establish Medicare coverage for interns and post-doctoral fellows (residents)

  • S. 669 – the Increasing Mental Health Options Act, which would support independent practice for psychologists in Medicare.
Advocacy Cognitive Reframing

• Make *change* your narrative.
Advocacy Cognitive Reframing

• Make change your narrative.

• Make advocacy core to you, to psychology, and the future of psychology.
Advocacy Cognitive Reframing

• Make change your narrative.
• Make advocacy core to you, to psychology, and the future of psychology.
• Think nationally; act locally (e.g., school-wide).
Advocacy Cognitive Reframing

• Make change your narrative.
• Make advocacy core to you, to psychology, and the future of psychology.
• Think nationally; act locally (e.g., school-wide).
• Take proactive and positive perspectives.
Advocacy Cognitive Reframing

• Make change your narrative.
• Make advocacy core to you, psychology and the future of psychology.
• Think nationally; act locally (e.g., school-wide).
• Take proactive and positive perspectives.
• Assume that existing problems are yours and yours alone to solve.
Advocacy Cognitive Reframing

• Make change your narrative.
• Make advocacy core to you, psychology, and the future of psychology.
• Think nationally; act locally (e.g., school-wide).
• Take proactive and positive perspectives.
• Assume that existing problems are yours and yours alone to solve.
• Do not look back and worry about the competition; instead, look forward, focus on the needs, and what you and we can do to solve the issues facing society.
Advocacy Cognitive Reframing

- Make change your narrative.
- Make advocacy core to you, psychology, and the future of psychology.
- Think nationally; act locally (e.g., school-wide).
- Take proactive and positive perspectives.
- Assume that existing problems are yours and yours alone to solve.
- Do not look back and worry about the competition; look forward, focus on the needs, and what you and we can do to solve the issues facing society.

- Ask not what our government and institutions can do for you, but what you can do for them.
PSYCHOLOGY AND MORAL PRIORITY
The science, profession, and pedagogy of psychology must come together and advocate for ONE psychology at all levels of society. (APA Services, Inc. c6)
Historical Interface of Psychology and Advocacy:

*Give Psychology Away*
Historical Interface of Psychology and Advocacy: 
*Give Psychology Away*

Future Interface of Psychology and Advocacy: 
*Develop & Give Away a Psychology for All*
Current State of Affairs:

A Moral Challenge
Current State of Affairs:

A Moral Challenge

Solution to the Current Problems:

Psychological Science and Practice as Solutions for Making Moral Priority Decisions
A UNIFIED & SUSTAINABLE PSYCHOLOGY FOR ALL
Involvement

Institutional Perspectives

• The case of Jessica Henderson Daniel, PhD.
• Why did it take APA 125 years?
Involvement

Institutional Perspectives
  • The case of Jessica Henderson Daniel, PhD.
  • Why did it take APA 125 years?

Educational Engagement
  • Make learning matter.
  • Work in a laboratory.
  • Volunteer at a local health or social service agency.
  • Keep others informed and engaged.
  • Take a proactive and positive advocacy perspective.
  • Do the long game; plan to fail- Skinner and Sperry did.
Involvement

Institutional Engagement
• The case of Jessica Henderson Daniel, PhD.
• Why did it take APA 125 years?

Educational Engagement
• Make learning matter
• Work in a laboratory.
• Volunteer at a local health or social service agency.
• Keep others informed and engaged.
• Take a proactive and positive advocacy perspective.
• Do the long game; get a rough plan; plan to fail - Skinner and Sperry did.

Professional Membership
• Psi Chi & Psychology Club.
• Join APA, APA Division(s), SPTA (NCPA).
OLD MAN & THE SEA

Ernest Hemingway

Cojimar, Cuba
Puente Contact Information

Websites
- Practice = clinicalneuropsychology.net
- Academic = antonioepuente.com
- Coding = psychologycoding.org

E-mail
- University = puente@uncw.edu
- Personal = antonioenriquepuente@gmail.com
- Practice = clinicalneuropsychology@gmail.com