

Careers in Psychology

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The field of psychology contains a wide variety of different careers. Those who are interested in pursuing a career in psychology have many options, ranging from working with children in schools to helping adults cope with mental illnesses. Three examples of careers in psychology are sports & exercise psychologist, developmental psychologist, and industrial organizational (I-O) psychologist. These careers cover all different aspects of the psychology field.

A sports and exercise psychologist is someone who works directly with athletes and coaches of virtually any sport, from high school teams all the way up to the professional level. Their duties include but are not limited to helping maintain or improve athletic performance, teaching relaxation techniques, providing counseling services and promoting positive self-talk (“Sports Psychologist,” n.d.). People who have this job may work for a specific team, player, or athletic organization, out of an office, a private practice, rehabilitation centers, sports venues, and exercise facilities. The degree required to be a sports psychologist is a Ph.D. in sports sciences, psychology, or clinical/counseling psychology, and the degree required is dependent upon the clients with whom you work and the desired work setting. The average yearly salary for a sports psychologist is around \$55,000, and is also dependent on the work setting. The future of sports and exercise psychology is very promising. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “jobs for all types of psychologists will increase by 12% from 2012 to 2022, although there will be variations based on the specific discipline” (University Alliance, n.d.). This is a growing field, and there is still a lot to be discovered about the psychological aspect of sports and exercise.

According to Douglas Bernstein, author of *Psychology: Foundations and Frontiers*, developmental psychologists describe how our behavior and thinking changes throughout our

lives. In addition, they try to understand what causes these changes and their effects. This research is being applied in concepts such as parenting, day care evaluations, and the preservation of mental capacity in the elderly (Bernstein 2014). Developmental psychologists may work in a variety of settings, including schools, government agencies, and healthcare facilities. To become a developmental psychologist, one must have an undergraduate psychology degree, a master's degree in psychology, and a doctoral degree in developmental psychology. This typically takes around 8-10 years. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average yearly salary of a developmental psychologist is around \$86,500. The future is bright for those who are pursuing a career in developmental psychology or are currently in the field. "Job opportunities for developmental psychologists in the U.S. are expected to grow about as fast as the national average, according to the BLS, with 11 percent employment growth projected between 2012 and 2022" (Boyle, n.d.). As we find out more about the role that psychology plays in our development, the field will continue to expand.

Industrial organizational (I-O) psychologists apply psychological principles and research to the workplace to improve the overall quality of the workplace itself. They figure out ways to solve problems and they help plan the future of the workplace. In addition, they study how the employees work, improve organizational aspects of the company, and much more. I-O psychologists may work in all types of work settings, including manufacturing industries, commercial enterprises, healthcare facilities, labor unions, and more (American Psychological Association, n.d.). The educational path to becoming an I-O psychologist is very similar to that of the other two psychology professions previously mentioned. A doctoral degree is usually required for an I-O psychologist. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, I-O psychologists

make somewhere around \$77,000 annually. However, those in the private sector may make upwards of \$100,000 per year. The future of I-O psychology holds potential for growth as research continues and the field expands. The employment rate of I-O psychologists is expected to grow 19 percent through the year 2024 (“I-O Psychology,” n.d.). There will always be a demand for I-O psychologists as long as there are companies that seek out their help.

The field of psychology is a very diverse, ever-expanding field, with so many different careers associated with it. Among these are sports, developmental, and industrial organizational psychologists. Sports psychologists work directly with athletes and coaches of virtually any sport, developmental psychologists describe how our behavior and thinking changes throughout our lives, and industrial organizational psychologists apply psychological principles and research to the workplace to improve the overall quality of the workplace itself. Each career is unique, yet they all contribute to the growing field of psychology.

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