WHAT IS SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY?

A Career That Makes a Difference

Adapted from Stephen Andrew (2004)
What is a School Psychologist?
School Psychologists link mental health to learning and behaviour to promote:

- High academic achievement
- Positive social skills and behaviour
- Healthy relationships and connectedness
- Tolerance and respect for others
- Competence, self-esteem, and resiliency
Why Children Benefit From School Psychologists

- Learning difficulties
- Behaviour concerns
- Fears about war, violence, terrorism
- Problems at home or with peers
- Depression and other mental health issues
- Attention problems
- Poverty
- Diverse populations with diverse needs
School Psychologists are team members

- Service teams, in school districts are made up of various specialists:
  - Reading Clinicians*
  - Speech-Language Pathologists*
  - Psychologists*
  - Social Workers*
  - Psychiatrists
  - Audiologists
  - Community Workers
  - *provincial grant supported
What Do School Psychologists Do?

- Assessment
- Consultation
- Prevention
- Intervention
- Education
- Research and program development
- Mental health care
- Advocacy
Assessment

School psychologists work with children, parents and staff to help determine a child’s:

- Academic skills
- Learning aptitudes and styles
- Personality and emotional development
- Social skills and behaviour issues
- Learning environments, school climate
- Special education eligibility
Assessment

- Most common types of school assessment:
  
  **Cognitive** (Intelligence; learning styles)
  **Adaptive** (life skills)
  **ADHD** (attention, hyperactivity, impulsivity)
  **Social/Emotional** (mood, affect, behaviour)
Consultation

• Help teachers, parents, and administrators understand child development and learning

• Provide positive alternatives for helping children with learning and behaviour problems

• Strengthen working relationships among educators, parents, and community services

• Refer to, consult with outside agencies
Prevention

• Implement programs to build positive connections between students and adults
• Identify potential learning difficulties early
• Design programs for children at risk
• Help adults to address problem behaviour(s)
• Foster tolerance and appreciation of diversity
Intervention

• Work face-to-face with children and families
• Develop individualized solutions for learning and adjustment
• Plan and implement crisis response
• Provide
  – Counselling
  – Social skills training
  – Behaviour management solutions
Education
Train teachers and parents in:

• Teaching and learning strategies
• Parenting techniques
• Classroom management techniques
• Working with exceptional students
• Strategies to address substance abuse and risky behaviours
• Crisis prevention and response
Mental Health Care

- Deliver school-linked mental health services
- Coordinate with community resources and health care providers
- Partner with parents and teachers to create healthy school environments
Advocacy

School Psychologists Encourage/Sponsor
- Appropriate education placements
- Education reform
- Legislative involvement
- Community services and programs
- Funding for adequate resources
Characteristics of a great school psychologist

– Excellent communication/persuasion skills
– Understanding/empathy for children and youth
– Excellent academic record
– Values: evidence-based practice, lifelong learning
– Excellent team-building/interpersonal skills
Characteristics of a great school psychologist

- Committed to the profession of school psychology
- Initiative to achieve goals
- Energetic and excellent work habits
- Willing and able to abide by professional codes of ethics and standards
UM School Psychology program

- Non-thesis Master’s program: 2 years
- 60 credit hours
- Thesis Master’s program: 3 years
- NASP competency based
- Two course-integrated practica
- Course/practicum/comprehensive exam or thesis model
1st year Non Thesis

• **Courses**
  – Foundations, ethics (6)
  – Assessment (6)
  – Learning and cognitive impairment
  – School/community/family systems
  – Childhood psychopathology
  – Teaching strategies, learning styles, and academic remediation
  – Social, emotional, and personality assessment

• **Junior practicum (spring)**

• **Comprehensive Exam (summer)**
2nd Year Non Thesis

- **Courses**
  - Behavioural assessment and intervention
  - Intervention – early/middle years
  - Intervention – adolescence
  - Development in Learning Environments
  - Consultation and supervision
  - Research methods and program evaluation
  - 2 electives

- **Senior practicum (6 cr)**

- **Comprehensive exam (summer)**
Thesis Program

- Same course requirements
- Arranged differently with
  - Graduate Statistics taken in the first of three years, and
  - Practica beginning in the second year
  - Thesis (no comprehensive exam)
• Preparation:
  – Honours degree in psychology (or equivalent)
  – Excellent academic record, GRE scores
  – Experience with children/youth
Applying to the UM School Psychology Program

- Deadline Dec 15th
- Transcripts
- GRE General
- Letters of reference
- Sample of written work (statement)
- Interview
- Criminal record and Child Abuse Registry check
• Masters Programs with Special Fees
• School Psychology
• Canadian Students
  – Program Fee $4,124.90 ($2,062.45 per term)
• International Students
  – Program Fee $8,249.80 ($4,124.90 per term)
• Continuing Fee $665.60 ($332.80 per term)
Income Potential and Job Prospects

- All School based Clinicians are equivalent to Teachers for purposes of the collective agreement.
- Manitoba Collective Agreements are here: https://www.mbteach.org/collective-bargaining/collective-agreements.html
Income Potential and Job Prospects

• Currently 98% of our graduates have been employed in school settings with 90% staying in Manitoba.

• School based vacancies are more restricted recently but the demographics still present favourably

• Alternative workplaces including private practice and forensics are possible.
QUESTIONS?