

The history and current status of psychology in Barbados: Research and professional practice

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Abstract

The article outlines the history and the development of psychological research and practice in Barbados, in terms of its strengths and weaknesses. Strengths identified include the University of the West Indies' support of psychology as a discipline; high demand from students for the psychology programmes; good teaching in the undergraduate programmes; and government regulation of the profession. Weaknesses include that there are no laboratory facilities available at the major training institution, internship sites are scarce and few opportunities exist to be supervised by Ph.D. or Psy.D. psychologists. In conclusion, the future of psychology in Barbados looks promising, with the prospect of engaging Information Communications Technologies to aid supervision and reaching clients who would not otherwise have access to psychological services.

Keywords: Barbados, Psychology, Development

La historia y el estado actual de la psicología en Barbados: Investigación y práctica profesional **Abstracto**

El artículo describe la historia y el desarrollo de la investigación psicológica y la práctica, en Barbados, en términos de sus fortalezas y debilidades. Las fortalezas identificadas incluyen apoyo de la universidad local a la psicología como disciplina, la alta demanda de los estudiantes para las carreras de psicología, enseñanza de calidad en los programas de pregrado, y la regulación gubernamental de la profesión. Las debilidades son que no existen instalaciones de laboratorio disponibles en la institución principal de formación, los escenarios de prácticas son escasos y existen pocas oportunidades para supervisión por psicólogo/as con doctorado. En conclusión, el futuro de la psicología en Barbados parece prometedor, con la posibilidad de contratar Tecnologías de Comunicaciones de la Información para facilitar la supervisión y llegar a los clientes que de otra forma no tendrían acceso a los servicios psicológicos.

Palabras clave: Barbados, Psicología, Desarrollo

Psychology is a relatively young profession and discipline throughout the English-Speaking Caribbean, when compared with its history in Europe and North America. This is especially the case in Barbados where psychology as a profession took root in the 1960s and as a discipline of study much later. There are few practicing psychologists in Barbados, and there is a growing need for psychological interventions in a number of areas, such as health and education.

This paper endeavours to provide an overview of the history and current situation of psychology in Barbados, both as a discipline and profession; an analysis of the challenges that are hindering the development of

psychology; a discussion of the current needs for the training and practice of the profession; and a discussion of the opportunities for expansion of psychology insofar as practitioner training is concerned and for services to meet the needs of prospective clients. Future directions for psychology based on the developments and challenges prominent in contemporary Barbadian society will also be considered. In spite of its exclusive focus on the case of Barbados, this paper addresses issues common to most postcolonial societies within the Anglophone Caribbean as it pertains to the science and practice of psychology (Salter, 2000).

Need for Psychologists in Barbados

There is an increasing need for the services of psychologists in Barbados. The country is faced with psychological, social, health, and economic problems,

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along with environmental threats. Many of these problems are found throughout the Caribbean and originate from its colonial history. Barbados is still home to the remnants of a legacy of self-hate indoctrination by the slave masters to maintain order and obedience. Frantz Fanon (1967, 1986) provided a clear picture of the effects of the psychology of colonialism on the self-image of the colonised, as have many others (Memmi, 1965; Nandy, 1983). The stain of colonialism manifests itself in current day psychological issues of low self-esteem, confused identity, poor self-image, which are exhibited for example through behaviours such as, skin bleaching (Wallace, 2009), and excessive use of European-like hair extensions and weaves (Beckles, 2013). There are also the issues of abuse that include domestic violence, child abuse and incest (Handwerker, 1996). There is substantial need for applied and counselling psychologists in Barbados and the broader Caribbean region.

In terms of health; Barbados has a Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases epidemic; “Dr. Hennis, Head of the Chronic Disease Research Centre estimates that of the 190,000 Barbadians aged 20 years and older, 90,000 are overweight, 38,000 suffer from hypertension or high blood pressure, 19,000 are diabetic, and one person suffers a stroke every day” (Hassell, 2007, p.2). Non-communicable diseases are related to lifestyle issues, and behaviour change scientists such as psychologists can provide critical services to alleviate the many health problems dominant in Barbados. There is also a need for culture specific behaviour change programming to help combat HIV/AIDS (Williams, 2000), for which Barbados has a higher infection rate than the rest of the Caribbean (Joseph, 2008).

Barbados is one of the most rapidly ageing countries in the Caribbean region (Quashie & Zimmer, 2013). Mental and behavioural health problems often afflict older adults as well as those who care for them. For example anxiety and depression arising from having to cope with physical health problems, grieving the death of loved ones, loneliness, and worrying about source(s) of income, are common place among the elderly population in the Caribbean (Braithwaite, 1990; Rawlins, Simeon, Ramdath, Chadee, 2008). Springer (2011) noted that in Barbados there are proportionately “more persons in the older age groups within the population than in the younger age groups”(p.7). The large ageing population is further increased by the relocation (back to Barbados) of the Caribbean Diaspora in their retirement years (Potter & Phillips, 2002). Referred to as “returning nationals”, like their counterparts throughout the Caribbean, they often encounter the many challenges of resettlement, such as coping with new systems, social adjustment, and

dealing with issues of loss (Hickling, 1991; Plaza, 2008; Taylor, 1976).

Environmentally, in the Caribbean there is always the threat of hurricane, volcanoes erupting, and more recently earthquakes, the prospect of such natural disasters can serve to be anxiety provoking. Barbadians also have to cope with the trauma experienced throughout the Caribbean when neighbouring islands experience such crises, resulting from the environment.

The Caribbean region is used as a transshipment point for the importation of illegal drugs (Harriot, 2002), coupled with Barbados’ notorious rum production, it is not surprising that it is home to the many symptoms of drug trafficking and substance abuse, which include alcohol addiction and marijuana use (Harvey, 1997; Mansoor & Edwards, 1991), along with an increase in criminal activity and violent behaviours. In addition, the down turn in the economy worldwide continues to have detrimental effects on peoples’ well-being in Barbados.

The education system in Barbados is good with a strong history of academic success. However, education for those children with learning disabilities, as well as developmental challenges and sensory disabilities has been slow to develop. In addition the introduction of technology in mainstream education, and assistive technologies in special needs education, has been introduced without psychological support for both the students and the teachers.

The need for psychology is evident; the people of Barbados are battling with issues related to infidelity, intimate violence, child abuse, chronic non-communicable diseases, HIV/AIDS, alcohol and drug addiction, an aged population, the imminent threat of natural disasters and the crises resulting from them. In spite of this, the establishment of psychology in Barbados was not a response to the needs of the country.

History of the Development of the Discipline of Psychology at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill

The origins of psychology in Barbados did not emerge from a philosophical basis, nor from a scientific study of consciousness as was the case in Europe and North America. Unlike Wilhelm Wundt’s institution of psychology as an autonomous university speciality (Leahey, 2003), psychology in Barbados began as a complementary area of study in the University of West Indies, Cave Hill Campus’ former Faculty of Education, and Faculty of Social Sciences. In relation to the history of the Caribbean region this birthing of psychology especially within the home of education was not surprising as education was considered to be

of high importance after emancipation of the slaves in Barbados, as it afforded ex-slaves to redefine their working conditions and family life (Aleman, n.d.). Hence, getting the work of education right continues to be a priority in the Caribbean and the science of psychology can provide much guidance in this area.

The field of psychology in some ways transcends disciplinary boundaries; it can provide a liberating element on both a personal and cultural level for the individual pursuing studies in psychology, since it affords the opportunity to explore aspects of the mind and behaviour that have often been questioned, but never addressed scientifically in one's schooling. The discipline of psychology helps students connect to themselves as individuals, the wider historical and cultural development of humankind, and relate their studies to contemporary issues. Hence, psychology is a very popular area of study at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill.

Undergraduate Programmes. Psychology as a major in an undergraduate degree programme was established at the University of the West Indies (UWI), Cave Hill Campus, Barbados in 2000 (Ward & Hickling, 2004). It had previously been introduced as a major area of study to the UWI; Mona Campus, Jamaica in the 1990s (Leo-Rhynie, 2009), and then at the St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad and Tobago (Ward & Hickling, 2004). At UWI-Cave Hill, psychology was originally offered as undergraduate courses supporting the programmes in the former Faculty of Education, and the Faculty of Social Sciences. The courses were later packaged and offered as a minor in psychology. Eventually, two programmes emerged with a major in psychology: a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) out of the Faculty of Humanities and Education and a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) from the Faculty of Social Sciences.

During the past eight years there has been a rapid growth of psychology student majors and minors across the B.A. and B.Sc. programmes at the UWI-Cave Hill campus, with an average of 200% increase in enrolment from 2000 to 2008. This explosive increase is not only related to a need for psychological services in Barbados, but can also be attributed to the psychology programme's multifaceted curriculum. The programme provides students with a substantive theoretical, statistical and applied background; development of critical thinking skills; the necessary knowledge and skills for conducting, analyzing and reporting ethical psychological research, and a range of transferable skills, such as interpersonal and communication skills, numeracy, information technology, and the ability to work with others.

The psychology programme is producing versatile graduates who may apply their knowledge of psychol-

ogy in many diverse careers, including teachers, counsellors, administrators, managers, human resources personnel, researchers, probation officers, advertising, sales and marketing professionals. In addition, students are adequately equipped to undertake postgraduate studies in a variety of psychological sub-disciplines, particularly in areas that will have a positive effect on advancing Caribbean societies, such as health psychology, clinical psychology, environmental psychology, occupational psychology, neuropsychology, geropsychology, and cyber psychology to name a few. Psychology at UWI-Cave Hill campus also affords mature human service professionals (e.g., nurses, police officers) the opportunity to matriculate into a programme that complements their profession.

In 2007 the psychology students across both the B.A. and B.Sc. programmes formed a student psychological association named the UWI-Cave Hill Psychological Society, with the main objective being to foster and promote student involvement in psychology on the UWI Cave Hill campus. More recently in 2012 the UWI Cave Hill campus established a Chapter of Psi Chi, the leading international honours society in psychology, an affiliate of the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Association for Psychological Science (APS). This development has a number of benefits for the student body. It provides international recognition for academic excellence in psychology; a forum for obtaining information and developing perspectives about the field of psychology; access to professional networking; and, opportunities for student to present their research (Psi Chi, 2013).

Strengths and Needs of Psychology Undergraduate Programmes. The psychology programmes offered at UWI-Cave Hill underwent a quality assurance review in 2008, conducted by the University of The West Indies' Quality Assurance Unit (QAU). The psychology QAU review team consisting of a professor of counselling psychology from a North American University; a senior lecturer in psychology from the UWI-St. Augustine campus; and, a Barbadian practicing clinical psychologist trained in North America, engaged in a rigorous review of the psychology programmes delivered at the UWI-Cave Hill campus.

The recommendations that emerged from the QAU review exercise included the development of a specialization in psychology with a compulsory set of courses coherently organized to ensure that the fundamental areas in psychology are covered to better prepare students for graduate school. As a result of the review, courses in research methods in psychology; developmental psychology; historical issues in psychology; cognitive psychology; and, the psychology of ageing were developed and added to the undergraduate programme. The

capstone of the degree programme remained intact; the programme culminates in an academic year-long (two semesters) independent research project in psychology.

The programme is now a B.A. /B.Sc. specialization in Psychology, and shares identical core psychology courses for the first two years; moving from a major with only 12 courses in psychology to now consisting of 18 psychology courses. The core courses are the essential content areas in psychology required for an undergraduate degree programme as indicated by the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major (American Psychological Association, 2007) and British subject benchmark for psychology (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2007). Those areas that form the core are: physiological psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology, historical issues in psychology, personality theory and research methods. In the final year of the programme a variety of applied psychology courses are offered, these include, for example: clinical psychology, forensic psychology, environmental psychology, and industrial/organisational psychology.

Selection of applied psychology courses is based on enrolment in the B.A. or B.Sc. degree programme. The underpinning philosophy is that the B.A. degree would be more suitable for those students who currently have, or are planning to enter jobs in the public sector, and the B.Sc. degree for those entering the private sector job market. This distinction between the B.Sc. and B.A. degrees is rooted in the fact that the two faculties of the university from which psychology is delivered; Humanities and Education, and Social Sciences, have established strong ties with the public (e.g. primary and secondary school system), and private sectors (businesses, entrepreneurs), respectively, and therefore their constituents would be best served by them.

A major flaw in the psychology programmes, identified by the review team was the lack of laboratory facilities. This had been recognized by psychology faculty who understood the need for fully equipped and functional psychology laboratory facilities so as to enhance students' learning about practical application of theories (e.g., cognitive, memory, sensation), and to train students to do experimental research in psychology. Faculty was urged to submit a proposal for laboratory facilities identifying students and faculty equipment needs, software, hardware, space and human resources as soon as possible. This recommendation was followed through by the School of Education and the Department of Government, Sociology and Social Work submitting proposals for psychology laboratories. More recently, a space identified in the School of Education has been utilized as a provisional psychology laboratory for the purpose of students who requested to

conduct social psychology experiments for their final year research project.

Students in Barbados have largely been exposed to westernised psychology. North American textbooks are the principal resources used for university teaching in psychology at UWI. At present students are forced to relate to the North American examples that are presented in the texts, which are often foreign to their reality, along with exposure to the largely European theorists in psychology. Therefore, much of the classroom discussion centres on the relevance and or application of Eurocentric psychological theories to the people of Barbados. Hence, there is a dire need for psychology texts which address the psychology of Caribbean people.

In addition, the UWI-Cave Hill has a student exchange agreement with the University of California which has over the years enrolled U.S. students in the psychology courses at Cave Hill. The engagement of exchange students has enriched the delivery of psychology. Through discussion exchange students have been able to help the Barbadian students to recognise specific behaviours, often taken for granted by Caribbean students (due to their familiarity with those behaviours), as being indicative of Caribbean culture. For two consecutive years students from Pace University's cross-cultural psychology course have visited and participated in the personality theory course. The students reported that the content of lectures was very similar to what they experienced at Pace University in New York, which is a reflection of Caribbean lecturers largely North American education, training, and reliance on North American textbooks.

Postgraduate Programmes. There are three Master's programmes at the UWI-Cave Hill: M.Ed. Educational Psychology in the School of Education, and the M.Sc. Applied Psychology and M.Sc. Counselling Psychology in the Department of Government, Sociology and Social Work, the latter programmes largely cater to students from the countries in the Eastern Caribbean region: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts/Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines (UWI, Quality Assurance Unit, 2008).

Unfortunately, the two M.Sc. programmes in counselling psychology and applied psychology, designed by the UWI for practitioners in the field, were found by the review team to be deficient in providing an appropriate period of supervised practical experience and adequate curriculum content (UWI, Quality Assurance Unit, 2008). However, the internship requirements and the practicum contact hours have since been increased, and two new courses (substance abuse theories and counselling, and vocational counselling) have been added to the programme at the expense of the research

project. Hence, in the M.Sc. Counselling Psychology programme students can opt to do either a research project or the two new courses.

Taking into consideration the dearth of research in psychology in the Caribbean, there is most definitely a need to build a strong corpus of practitioners who engage in research to help develop the field of psychology so that future practice will be guided by Caribbean theories and techniques. Nonetheless, a deficiency exists regarding Ph.D. programmes that provide professional training in psychology in the Caribbean. Thus, a major challenge is that there are not enough practicing psychologists with either Ph.D.s or Psy.D.s in professional psychology coursework and adequate training in supervision to serve as site supervisors for the practicum component. However, psychologists with Ph.D.s can adequately provide supervision for those postgraduate students pursuing research in psychology.

An additional shortcoming is that there are not enough positions or appropriate sites in government or elsewhere for psychologists, which also limits the training ground for future and current students' practica (UWI, Quality Assurance Unit, 2008). Although in some cases students in the M.Sc. programmes have fulfilled their practicum hours at sites in North America.

The QAU review team proposed that the UWI establish a School of Psychology that integrates and incorporates the psychology programmes, faculty, and associated resources. They suggested that a School of Psychology would be optimally positioned to best serve the various stakeholders and consumers of psychology in Barbados and the wider Caribbean from where many of the UWI-Cave Hill students are drawn. Hence, they envisioned a School of Psychology that would achieve an integration of psychology on campus, and promote psychology in Barbadian society. The review team suggested that a conglomeration of resources into a School of Psychology would make the Cave Hill campus the leader of Psychology in the English Speaking Caribbean (UWI, Quality Assurance Unit, 2008).

Postgraduate psychology at the Cave Hill campus has a number of strengths. The teaching is of a good standard, and topics are contextualised within the Caribbean reality. Nonetheless, North American textbooks and journals are largely used. There is one Caribbean Psychology book: *Perspectives in Caribbean Psychology* (Hickling, Morgan, Gibson & Matthies, 2008), and UWI, Mona in Jamaica publishes the Caribbean Journal of Psychology and the West Indian Medical Journal.

There is an established UWI Institutional Review Board that ensures that ethical practices in research occur, "faculty and students who conduct research involving human participants follow international standards protecting the safety and dignity of persons."

(UWI, Research Ethics, 2013). All graduate researchers in psychology are required to complete the mandatory principal investigator training, an online tutorial managed by the University of Miami, called the CITI Course in the Protections of Human Research Subjects (UWI, Approval Process, 2013). On completion of the training, students can submit their research proposals to the IRB and receive approval prior to data collection.

Research. It is necessary to note that professional practice requires both explicit knowledge (knowing that) and implicit knowledge (know how). No theories are above revision, they are a working instrument for us to relate to reality, and can be used to guide our action. Research therefore is an inherent and essential component in the practice of psychology.

The UWI has the responsibility to train new researchers. Engaging in psychological research is a challenge for Barbadian researchers, for there is limited opportunities to obtain funding to support research in the field. Also, as a developing country there are frequent requests from governmental agencies to participate in consultancies with a view to advancing social systems in the country, rather than developing knowledge that has applicability beyond the shores of Barbados. Considering that there are only a few Ph.D.-level psychologists in Barbados, engagement in such consultancies makes it even more challenging for the advancement of the science of psychology in the region.

Furthermore, the majority of research that does occur involves utilizing the survey methodology and large group testing with an aim to validating instruments on a Caribbean sample (e.g. Campbell, Roberti, Maynard, & Emmanuel, 2009; Lipps & Lowe, 2006; Maynard, Campbell, Devonish, Leon, Emmanuel, & Roberti, 2010; Maynard & Springer-Proverbs, 2010). Having provided a brief overview of the development of psychology as a discipline at the UWI-Cave Hill, the history of psychology as a professional practice in Barbados will now be addressed.

Development of the Profession

The profession of Psychology has been government regulated in Barbados since 1975, at which time psychologists would have received their training in North America. Prior to 1975 psychological services could be provided by anyone who chose to call themselves a psychologist, as was the case in much of the English-speaking Caribbean (Barnard, 2000). The Paramedical Professions Council; a statutory body appointed by the Minister of Health in Barbados, consisting of a multidisciplinary committee of persons selected every two years, regulates and registers the profession of psychology in three branches of psychology: Clinical, Counselling, and Educational. Current leg-

isolation includes many allied health professions under the Paramedical Professions Act CAP. 372C. The CAP.372C Act is administered by the Council.

In the first schedule of 1975(-24) clinical psychology was the only sub-discipline in psychology that a practitioner could be registered, described as:

The study and psychotherapeutic treatment of human behaviour in all its aspects including the deviations from normal behaviour based upon a psychological assessment of the existence or non-existence of psychiatric or psychoneurological abnormality and the causal relationship thereof to overt behaviour (Laws of Barbados, CAP.372C Paramedical Professions Act, 2008, p.24).

In many countries in the Caribbean clinical psychology dominates, it constitutes the primary deliverer of psychological services, both in number and in status. This is largely due to the fact that it is very closely tied to the medical model and is viewed as being one step away from a psychiatrist, a well-established profession.

In 1997 the Paramedical Professions Act was amended to include counselling and educational psychology (Pan American Health Organization, 2011). In the second schedule 1997 Counselling Psychology and Educational Psychology were added and defined as:

17. Counselling Psychology – the study and treatment of maladaptive human behaviour, including emotional behaviour and the study and application of career and vocational assessment and adaptation.

18. Educational Psychology – the application of psychology to education, especially to problems of teaching and learning (Laws of Barbados, CAP.372C Paramedical Professions Act, 2008, p.25)

Individuals intending to practice under the designation of Psychologist in Barbados are required to register with the Paramedical Professions Council. A Master's degree in psychology, in addition to Council's approval of an applicant's training (based on a requirement that the candidate has had at least 500 hours of supervised practicum), comprise the criteria necessary for registration (Laws of Barbados, CAP.372C Paramedical Professions Act, 2008, pp.10-11).

To date, there are no local or regional professional psychology associations or societies that accredit academic programmes in psychology. However, this has not hindered graduates of the B.A. or B.Sc. Psychology programmes in Barbados from successfully gaining

entry to graduate psychology programmes in North America nor has it stopped them from gaining graduate basis for chartered membership registration with the British Psychological Society in order to access accredited postgraduate psychology training courses in the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, the UWI-Cave Hill is currently in the final stages of the institutional accreditation process with the Barbados Accreditation Council, and if successful this will, at the very least, assure that the psychology offerings are being provided by an accredited institution.

Psychologists Practicing in Barbados. The first clinical psychologist was appointed in Barbados in 1965 (Land Marks in Mental Health Services: Psychiatric hospital n.d.) to work in the government-run psychiatric hospital. Bernard Heydorn was a Guyanese national with a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Louisiana State University; he also served as a research fellow at the UWI St. Augustine in Trinidad (Frey & Black, 2012). Today, the psychiatric hospital employs four psychologists; of which three have M.Sc. degrees in Clinical Psychology and one has a Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology. Between 2003 and 2007 there were seven registered psychologists working in the public health sector in Barbados, of which three were registered as clinical psychologists and the remainder were registered as psychologists (Clinical Research Management Inc., 2009). There is a psychologist at the Ministry of Education, one at the Child Care Board, one in the Ministry of Health's Children's Development Centre, and two are currently working in the government corrections facility, all of which are qualified at the Master's level.

The government is the largest employer in Barbados, but yet there are few positions available for the employment of psychologists. The general hospital and the Ministry of Education contract psychologists to work with children. A few large private organizations retain the services of a psychologist mostly to work with their staff in the event of crises, and sudden loss of staff members (e.g. Caribbean Development Bank, Barbados Light and Power Company).

According to WHO-AIMS Report on Mental Health System in Barbados (2009) there were twenty-four psychologists working in mental health facilities and private practice in 2007 in Barbados. Currently, there are six psychologists in full-time private practice; approximately eight maintaining a part-time practice while holding a full-time position as lecturers at the UWI, tutors at the Barbados Community College, or working within a government position (see Table 1). There are approximately thirty-five registered psychologists; however, it is worth noting that everyone who is registered may not be currently residing in or working

Table 1
Breakdown of the number of Psychologists Employed in Barbados

Institution	Department	Amount
Ministry of Health	Psychiatric Hospital	4
	A.C. Graham Children's Development Centre	1
Ministry of Social Care	Child Care Board	1
Ministry of Education	Student Services	1
Barbados Community College	Division of General Education	1
*UWI, Cave Hill	Faculty of Medical Sciences	1
	School of Education	3
	Faculty of Social Sciences	2
	Office of Student Services	1
Ministry of Security	Prison and Government	2
	Government Industrial Schools	
Private Practice	Individual, group, child, marriage and family, therapy. Consultants.	6

**There are six full-time psychology faculty members, one Professor of Educational Psychology, four of whom hold the Ph.D., with specialty areas in clinical, counselling, developmental; industrial/organizational, physiological, mental health, and experimental psychology (UWI, Quality Assurance Unit, 2008).*

in Barbados. There are at present nineteen companies, business names, charities and societies registered to provide psychological services in Barbados (Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property Office, 2013).

The Barbados Association of Psychologists (BAP). Established on 19th April 2001 the association provides a united voice for psychologists practicing in Barbados. Individuals were originally accepted into the association following registration by the Paramedical Professions Council, which registers individuals after giving consideration to and approval of the candidate's documentation from reputable graduate schools once the applicant has successfully completed a Master's degree in psychology. This meant that only those individuals who held a Master's degree in clinical, counselling, or educational, psychology were eligible to join the Association. However, as of 2012 BAP revised its membership requirements to enable those individuals who had returned to Barbados with a Master's degree in other sub disciplines of psychology such as forensic, and health, to be eligible for registration as full members, prior to this they were only able to register as affiliate members and did not have the right to vote at the association's general meeting.

The association supports the development of psychology as a science and as a profession, and promotes

mental health, education and human well-being. The membership includes clinicians, researchers, educators, consultants and graduate students, and serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas and dissemination of information, including public education and professional development (The Barbados Association of Psychologists, 2013). In 2008 BAP adopted the Jamaican Psychological Association's Code of Ethics (an adapted version of the APA Code). The association has hosted a number of panel discussions, participates in the Secondary Schools National Career Showcase, and on occasion provides a mental health segment on the national television breakfast show.

A major goal of BAP is to host continuing education courses to enhance the professional development opportunities available to psychologists in the Caribbean region. Such professional development programming would also be of benefit to psychologists in North America and Europe who work with people of the Caribbean Diaspora.

Challenges to the development of psychology in Barbados

There are a number of challenges that serve to impede the development of psychology in Barbados, they include lack of public awareness of psychological science

and practice, conflicts with religious beliefs, stigma surrounding mental illness, cost of therapy, relationships in a small society, limited funding sources for research, lack of infrastructure for training needs, and the threat of other mental health professionals trained in psychotherapy.

Public knowledge of psychology continues to be limited; hence it is difficult for employers to understand the benefits of hiring someone with qualifications in psychology. Employers need to be educated with respect to the transferable skills that are acquired through the study of psychology and how they can be of benefit to both an organization's productivity and human relations (UWI, Quality Assurance Unit, 2008).

With the exposure to numerous portrayals of North American psychologists in "made for TV movies" one would be justified in believing that psychology has become an accepted part of popular culture in Barbadian society. However, this is not the case; the Barbadian culture is very much that of old England, one must keep a stiff upper lip when going through difficult times. Mental distress of any kind is viewed as a sign of weakness or a lack of faith in God and to have to seek help from anyone other than your pastor is gossip worthy news.

Due to the nature of Caribbean culture, in Barbados people experience challenges both at the individual and the organisational levels. Mental health continues to be stigmatized (Alleyne, 2010), and the perception that you literally have to be "sick" to seek psychological help is reinforced throughout society. The lack of human resources and a true understanding of what psychology is, results in many psychologists having to fulfil multiple roles within an organization and very often they become mislabelled or they lose their identity as a psychologist.

There is a certain degree of confusion between the public's understanding of counselling and psychology. Many consider psychology and counselling to be synonymous. Due to a lack of public education there is not much acknowledgement of the difference in the philosophical tenets that underpin the profession of counselling which are markedly different from those of psychology. The introduction of the profession of counselling psychology only serves to create further confusion between the two disciplines.

Clients have questioned the variation of the cost of therapy among psychologists; there is no standard pricing system established by psychologists in Barbados. Many variables factor into the cost of therapy, such as where psychologists were trained; their own personal philosophy of charging for helping services; their willingness to enter into a bartering arrangement and be paid via some other means than money; and

whether or not the psychologists can afford to carry a pro bono caseload. In addition, seeking private mental health services in a developing country appears to be a luxury that most can ill afford, hence an unfavourable picture emerges in terms of the likelihood of those in need seeking psychological services.

In addition, Caribbean people would be more likely to seek treatment from a medical doctor for a "physical illness" as it is considered more acceptable than a psychological complaint (Gopaul-McNicol & Brice-Baker, 1997). This is further cemented by the fact that Barbados is a very Christian society. Many Barbadians, even those who do not actively attend church, engage in faith-based practices, and hold a religious view of mental illness. As noted by Adkinson-Bradley, Maynard, Johnson, and Carter (2009) "many Caribbean women understand their troubles from a Christian context" (p.69). Hence, mental illness is often viewed as indicative of a loss of faith in God or some kind of demonic possession of the mind. Therefore Barbadians would feel more comfortable seeking the counsel of their priest or pastor than that of a psychologist. However, this is not the case when children are in need of help (Gopaul-McNicol & Brice-Baker, 1997), especially when they are not performing as expected within the school system, there is very little fear exemplified in seeking a psychological assessment for a child.

The social context within which the practice of clinical/ counselling / educational psychology occurs in many Caribbean societies may also serve to turn people away from seeking those services. The boundaries of the professional relationship can become distorted, as the likelihood that the client may come in contact with the psychologist outside of the therapeutic relationship is heightened due to the small size of the society, and the fact that social interaction is so interwoven in Caribbean culture (Hickling, Morgan, Gibson, & Matthies, 2008).

Clearly, psychology in the Caribbean context has unique challenges; the reality is that in the Caribbean a psychologist could have a client who may later become a student, an in-law, even an employer or the client and psychologist may end up in the same parent teachers association or on the same church committee. These dual relationships present challenges that require psychologists to confront ethical dilemmas of confidentiality and social interactions (Hickling et al, 2008).

Furthermore due to Barbados' small size and population there is easy access to professionals' faults and flaws. Psychologists are often an active participant in the community, hence people may feel uncomfortable going to them because they are too familiar: with them, their background or their connections. Separating the profession from the individual is challenging within the Barbadian context.

The concept of confidentiality is quite “foreign” to many in the Caribbean, hence psychologists have to be even more vigilant when consulting with others or making referrals due to the interlinked nature of people not only in Barbados but throughout the Caribbean. Anecdotally psychologists have shared experiences with clients who had some type of relationship with everyone that they were considering referring them to. What is clear from these challenges is that Caribbean psychologists need to address the issues of multiple relationships within the context in which they provide services.

Funding sources for research. In Barbados the value of research is often appreciated after the fact. There are very few funding sources available for psychological research within the Caribbean. Hence, psychological research is most often housed in the universities and colleges outside of the Caribbean and authored by Caribbean students studying abroad and the Caribbean Diaspora. There has been much psychological research done using Barbadian samples that are stored in various North American and European university libraries, unfortunately they are not housed in one place, or on one database (CRCP, 2011).

There is a need to be creative, partnering with academics in North American Universities and collaborating with them on grant proposals. In terms of publishing there is only one Caribbean Journal of Psychology and many Caribbean psychologists publish psychological research in the Interamerican Journal of Psychology (e.g. Barnard, 2000; Campbell et al., 2009; Grant, Williams, & Hunt, 2000) and the West Indian Medical Journal (e.g. Campbell, Maynard, Roberti, & Emmanuel, 2012; Lipps et al, 2010). It is difficult to publish in North American high impact factor journals. Caribbean psychologists are in need of more journals to publish in. The reality of African Caribbean people living in the postcolonial Caribbean does not translate to the experiences of African Americans as an ethnic minority in the U.S., therefore the utility of the research in the Caribbean for North America is limited.

Infrastructure for supervision of practica and Ph.D. programming. Caribbean psychologists understand that they have a responsibility to advance and enhance the field of psychology through providing supervision for psychologists in training. The challenge here is a combination of the fact that few psychologists are trained in clinical supervision; and those that are trained often tend to be inundated with responsibilities and heavy demands on their time. Psychologists in private practice are willing to provide supervision, however the experience has been that the psychologist-in-training does not come with a strong enough skill set to take on their own caseload. Hence, the supervision

task becomes heavily weighted with teaching. Graduate students often have to be placed to work with someone who is not a qualified psychologist. There is also the challenge with regard to fulfilling the required number of practicum hours. Many Barbadian students are in full-time employment while studying; hence completing a thousand practicum hours becomes difficult to add to an already packed schedule.

Embracing Technology. With the advances in technology and increased accessibility of communication technologies the total landscape in which psychologists work has become more complex. For example, the typical adjustment issues faced by young people are no longer related to drugs, alcohol and gambling alone, but now include Gaming, Internet, online social networking, and general information and communication technology (ICT) addictions (Maynard, 2011). In order to reach today’s Caribbean clientele psychologists may have to consider changing the nature of traditional psychological practice – to benefit from the success of social networking. It is time to consider integrating virtual/distance psychological practices into face-to-face practice, in a similar way to how higher education has incorporated blended programming in its delivery. Taking into consideration that information technology is bringing about openness, accessibility, connectivity and networking, and as a result, social change across the world. Through this medium some of the negative factors involved in seeking therapy in a small state may be diminished.

There will certainly be some challenges in using the technology in psychological practice. Potentially psychological services could be offered to clients who would just not have access to face-to-face services, for example psychologists in Barbados could be working with those who reside in islands where mental health resources are limited such as St. Kitts or Anguilla in the Eastern Caribbean. Caribbean psychologists should consider Martin Seligman’s positive psychology (2002) and take a strengths-based approach by extracting what works well in the social networking environment, and see how it can be integrated in the practice of psychology.

To a large extent the North American psychological practice has been transported to the Caribbean shores. Yet in Barbados and indeed the Caribbean there are some cultural contexts that still need to be addressed. There is a need to redefine confidentiality for clients in the Barbadian context. The cultural nuances of the Caribbean have to be acknowledged and explained as to how within this profession psychologists behave differently due to the necessity for a therapeutic relationship based on trust and confidentiality, mutual respect and informed consent.

The Way Forward

Next I offer a number of suggestions, based on experience and research, to help move psychology forward within the Caribbean. Many of these suggestions could also apply to similar small states across the world.

It is essential that the focus of the psychology programme at the UWI-Cave Hill remains on the scientific study of psychology, as this is the way forward for Psychology to develop in the Caribbean, rather than continue with the heavy reliance on North American and European theories and research. Research exploring psychological constructs and theories outside a North American framework need to be undertaken. This can be addressed by establishing collaborative research projects with psychologists in other parts of the world.

Public education must be employed to help change the mindset as to what psychology is all about, and to help shift the perception of it from the crisis talk-therapy or extreme medical model to a developmental wellness model with a scientific basis. Psychology in Barbados should turn its focus from mental illness to mental health. This would help to open up the offerings in the job market. Employers need to be introduced to a different perspective of psychologists.

Stigmatization should also be addressed through education, bearing in mind that the made for TV movies are often the first “contact” with professional psychology that people in Barbados have. Hence, it is essential that teachers and school guidance counsellors are well informed, for the responsibility lies on their shoulders to demystify psychology for the future generations.

The professional body (BAP) need to lobby for strict guidelines for the profession and registration under a Psychological Professions Act of Parliament, separate and distinct from the present Paramedical Professions Act, because the profession is markedly different from the many allied health professions (e.g. reflexology, chiropody, orthoptics) registered by the Paramedical Professions Council. Therefore psychologists regulating their own profession would best serve psychology. In addition, forensic psychology, health psychology, sport and exercise psychology, and occupational psychology are current areas of professional practice in psychology that cannot be registered with the Paramedical Professions Council. Hence, this means that there are psychologists in Barbados who are trained, and are working with clients without being able to legally use the title. Hence BAP is not afforded the power to determine who can claim to practise the therapy in question, for unless BAP has protection of title for all of the areas of professional practice in psychology, there is little control over the practitioner

who has no training, or has training and has been taken off the register.

In addition, BAP needs to revise the ethical code of conduct so as to create and establish culturally appropriate ethical and legal guidelines that would help psychologists gain the confidence of prospective clients. Psychologists need to ensure and communicate that although they may be familiar with the client’s family member or friend that because of the nature of this profession – the client can report the psychologist if he or she acts unprofessionally, and that action will be taken. Clients should continue in full confidence with the knowledge that whatever they share will remain confidential. Without the client’s consent their family member or friend would never know that they have this therapeutic relationship.

Technology needs to be used more effectively and there is a need to engage in research of the use of information communication technologies such as SKYPE, ooVoo, FaceTime and iChat that can be accessed via wireless devices such as: iPods, iPads, cell phones, and laptops, in effective psychological practice, so that psychologists can provide interventions anytime, everywhere and anywhere.

Psychologists must not lose contact with their new client base. The client is very different today. Caribbean psychologists need new models of psychology; adapting existing models of psychology for our specific cultural contexts can do this.

As a small region, which is still relatively new to psychology, we need to advance psychology. This can be achieved through international collaborations and capitalising on the use of information communications technology. For example through the use of video recording, video conferencing, and webinars psychologists in other countries could assist with clinical supervision within the Caribbean region, at a distance.

Psychology is in its early stages of development in Barbados. The challenges that lie ahead centre on the need to refocus psychology in the Caribbean, moving it toward a holistic wellness model and reaching out to the clientele in their world – whether it be in person or virtually through the use of information communications technology.

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Received 03/23/2013

Accepted 07/27/2013

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