



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION



Career Transitions *Taking a New Path*

Table of Contents

Altering Course from Academia to Nonprofits, Public Sector 3

 Driven by a Government Career 4

 When Psychology is Good Policy: A Legislator’s Story 6

 Psychologists Navigate Change in Nonprofits 8

Crossing Over from Clinical/Counseling to Business 11

 A Fresh Start in Startups 12

 Forging Connections Between Clinical and Corporate. 14

 Entrepreneur Finds Niche in Women’s Leadership 16

Making an Impact in Industry. 19

 Applying Academic Skills to Industry Innovations 20

 Seeking a Wider Sphere With Multidisciplinary Research. 22

Emerging Trends in Psychology 25

INTRODUCTION

There is a tremendous shift taking place in the mental health sector as world challenges and pandemic-related stresses ratchet up the need for psychological services. These and other innovations in research and technology are prompting many psychologists to think outside the box to develop new career paths.

Increasingly, psychologists are becoming key players in startups, mental health applications, marketing ventures, and research consultancies. Some are making their own forays into business as psychologist-entrepreneurs, helping to shape the mental-health tech boom.

This publication features impactful stories of several PhDs/PsyDs who have made a course change and breaks down some of the practical steps required to do so. Whether transitioning out of academia, entering the business realm, or switching to research in the private sector, these stories represent psychologists across disciplines who are reinventing their careers in compelling and sometimes surprising ways.

Altering Course from Academia to Nonprofits, Public Sector

A growing number of psychologists are transitioning from traditional academic career tracks to positions in nonprofits, foundations, state and federal agencies, and policymaking entities – as calls for evidence-based social and institutional change prompt them to make a wider impact.

Whether responding to the shrinking landscape of tenure-track positions – or driven by a passion to address social issues or apply a scientific approach to real-world problems – more psychologists are finding meaningful careers in human rights organizations, think tanks, government agencies, and independent research entities. And as mental health becomes a greater part of the public discourse, psychologists' roles in these spheres is likely to increase.

One of the most common opportunities for PhDs in nonprofits is directing research on social issues or conducting programmatic evaluations. Applied research outputs often range from internal reports to policy briefings to peer-reviewed academic articles. Skills that come into play for those functioning in organizational roles may include grant writing, communication, leadership, hiring, clinical/programmatic research, and oversight. ■

COMMON JOB TITLES

- Executive Director
- Study Director
- Director of Research and Evaluation
- Director of Government Relations
- Clinical Director
- Education Officer
- Director of Programs
- Policy Analyst
- Program Evaluator



Photo: Stacy Balk Photo

Stacy Balk

Driven by a Government Career

By Stacy Lu

If your car's automatic braking system saves you from a fender bender, you might want to tip your hat, in part, to psychologists like Stacy Balk, PhD.

Balk is chief of the Human Factors/Engineering Integration Division at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in Washington, DC, where her team conducts and funds research on some of transportation's most pressing safety issues.

Balk's team assesses how human factors such as decision making, attention, and performance under various conditions will affect the way people interact with new technology, including fully autonomous vehicles and cars with automatic braking systems. It's a job with a tangible and critical mission, as their research results inform the nation's laws on vehicle manufacturing.

"In my position I have a direct ability to impact the safety of people throughout the entire country. We can save lives, and we work incredibly hard to reach that goal," Balk says.

Balk studied applied psychology and received her PhD in human factors psychology from Clemson University in Clemson, SC. Assuming she would have a future career in academia, she taught for a few years – mainly virtual courses – but wasn't able to find a full-time job that was a good research and lifestyle fit. Options were much more plentiful in industry and government, where her background is in high demand.

According to a joint [APA and CGS study](#), one in four psychology PhDs moved across education, government, and private settings when they last changed jobs.

Careers By the Numbers

For current data and analysis of psychology careers, visit:

[Non-Linear Career Pathways](#)

[Essential Skills for PhDs](#)

[Psychology PhDs Preparation for Many Careers](#)

[APA Center for Workplace Studies](#)

[Management Career Trajectories of Psychology Graduates](#)

Balk first went to work for an information technology and engineering research contractor, the Science Applications International Corporation [later renamed Leidos], where she handled roadway safety projects for the Federal Highway Administration. She joined NHTSA in 2019, after nearly a decade in private industry. Throughout her career, she says, her main goal has been to do hands-on research in the same general field.

Human factors research in cognition, learning, sensation and perception, development, and accessibility issues is pivotal to the design of a wide range of machines and environments to make them safe and user friendly. Working with engineers and ergonomics experts, human factors psychologists – who are also often called human factors engineers – provide input into health care, computer, and transportation systems; consumer products; and office design, among other areas.

There's been a recent surge of interest in the field. According to [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics \(BLS\)](#) estimates, jobs for health and safety engineers, which include human factors engineers, could increase by eight percent between 2019 and 2029 – a four percent increase from pre-pandemic estimates.

“Human factors is sexy again!” as Balk says. That may be due to an influx of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and vehicle automation, or increased computer interaction due to the COVID-19 pandemic, says Nancy Stone, PhD, professor at Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, MO, and president of [APA Division 21](#), Applied Experimental and Engineering Psychology.

“There's a lot of psychology that goes into making things more functional. People are starting to realize the need for human factors specialists to design things people will use [and trust],” Stone says.

Private industries are top employers, but so are government agencies, including the Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Transportation, NHTSA, Federal Avi-

ation Administration, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The BLS reports that [about 10% of psychologists](#) worked in federal, state, or local government in 2020.

Learning New Research Protocols

Balk, who has straddled several realms in her career path, says there are some very specific ways in which governmental work differs from academia and the private sector. One of the main learning curves, she notes, are the processes around grant proposals and research.

A government research-management job is laden with ethical and procedural guidelines, she says, and there is a goodly amount of pressure to get them right. “The slow deliberate process to get where you need to be is a big change [from the private sector].

Balk, who supervises research projects on vehicle safety, issues contracts, and oversees research protocols, says she appreciates NHTSA's focused approach to research. Her team prioritizes issues with pressing safety needs and responds to lawmakers' directives for research into specific issues, such as the [dramatic increase in traffic deaths in 2021](#).

“In the continuous cycle of competing for grants, finding your funding, and doing research [in contracting or in academia], it's harder to find the payout. Where's your impact on the world?” she says.

So too, the relative stability in government is more predictable than in contracting work, where the loss of a client can translate to job losses for yourself or for a sizable number of staff.

There isn't one set path to a government job in human factors psychology, she notes. Staff psychologists come from industry, academia, or – as in Balk's case – both. “[In hiring], I just look for people who have a really good understanding of human factors; of human perception and performance,” says Balk. “You really have to know how to be a good researcher. Beyond that, where you come from isn't all that important.” ■

When Psychology is Good Policy: A Legislator's Story

By Stacy Lu

As the lone psychologist in Kentucky's state legislature, Lisa Willner, PhD, is a singular – and vocal – proponent for improving youth mental health and education.

A Democrat in a predominantly Republican House of Representatives, she has been fighting an uphill battle for her legislative priorities since her election in 2018. Kentucky passed a bill this spring banning transgender girls and women from competing in school sports matching their gender identity, against her strong objection that it posed a threat to the mental health of an already at-risk group. The lawmakers also banned abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy, even in the case of rape or incest; Willner had pre-filed a bill with another representative in an attempt to protect abortion rights.

“There's been a public denigration of science,” she says. “We saw it so clearly with the pandemic. How weird was that? It's been exhausting and it can be demoralizing at times. We're really operating in some uncharted territory here.”

Willner has been standing up for health and education her entire professional life. She taught adolescent and child development at Bellarmine University in Louisville for more than two decades and was vice-chair of Kentucky's largest school board for several years. She served as executive director of the Kentucky Psychological Association (KPA) from 2009 to 2019, where she supported a bill mandating a trauma-informed approach in all Kentucky schools – and was awarded a [2018 APA Presidential Citation](#) as a Citizen Psychologist for her public service and commitment to community.



Lisa Willner

In 2017, there were approximately 187,000 PhD or PsyD psychologists in the workforce:

- 35% in education
- 55% in private settings
- 10% in government

Ninety-seven percent believed their jobs were related to psychology.

From [Bridging Education and Career: Essential Skills for Psychology PhDs](#)

A Call to Action

She was stirred into action to run for state office after the 2016 presidential election, she says, galvanized by a campaign that was “based on hatred and fear ... It was such a time of national, state, and local division,” she says, that she felt compelled to try to make a difference.

Her decision to run for office was bolstered by the fact that her state representative, who was retiring after 28 years, was a social worker by training. Willner threw her hat into the ring and handily won the seat. She credits the support she received, in part, with her experience as a psychologist and teacher, which “really resonated with people.”

Politics was a seismic career shift. Willner went from a job where she was surrounded by like-minded, similarly educated psychologists to trying to write major legislation with lawmakers who have little, if any, training in or understanding of mental health concerns. Bringing these to the fore and explaining the science behind her proposals has been a monumental and challenging undertaking. As she says, wryly, “I went into this current gig hoping to affect the culture more profoundly than has perhaps been the case.”

Yet her training in psychology prepared her well for dealing with what Willner calls the “wackiness” of political life. Relationship building is

critical to building consensus in a legislature, she points out, and “there’s a big distinction between people who are maybe not exposed to science versus folks who outright are hostile to it, so you have to look for openings to have a one-on-one conversation.”

Her training, she says, helps her to connect with constituents, fellow representatives, and others of varied backgrounds, and to consider a situation from multiple angles. As a former professor, she also knows how to efficiently analyze and explain complex and evolving information, a necessary skill for making an evidence-based case for a proposed new law.

Making a Difference

Willner was tenacious and made gains. She co-sponsored an update to [Tim’s Law](#), which expands assisted outpatient treatment for people struggling to access treatment for mental illness. Building on a student-led initiative in the state, she sponsored a bill that will allow students to take excused absences for mental health issues. Willner also dove into legislative areas beyond mental health, including co-sponsoring bills on restoring voting rights to felons after their release from incarceration and upping Kentucky’s minimum wage.

For psychologists with an interest in running for office, Willner says a good first step is to get involved, as she did, in boards on professional asso-

ciations, religious organizations, or community organizations. She was able to learn firsthand about policy-making and its consequences, and to hone her leadership skills. Campaigning involves a unique set of work plans and skills, so she suggests finding like-minded local candidates and getting involved with their campaigns to see how it works.

Willner says her main message to other psychologists is to join her in policy advocacy at whatever level they can: “We have more research that shows how much of a factor policy is to population health and health disparities. Issues are being lifted up in ways they were not before. As psychologists we have the training, expertise, and perspective that is badly needed in the world right now,” she says. ■

Take Action

There are lots of opportunities for psychologists to provide evidence-based solutions for today’s most pressing policy issues:

[The Psychologist’s Guide to Advocacy](#)

[APA Advocacy Resources](#)

[APA Advocacy Initiatives](#)

[APA Advocacy News](#)

[APA Advocacy and Member Webinars](#)

Psychologists Navigate Change in Nonprofits

By Stacy Lu

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) issues are [top of mind for many organizations](#) but for Vanessa Hintz, PsyD, they are the deepest fiber of who she is and what she hopes to bring to the nonprofit world – and to the field of psychology.

APA's new senior director of EDI Engagement and Outreach experienced her own share of challenges growing up as a biracial woman searching for an identity within several cultural contexts. In graduate school at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Hintz began to filter her lived experiences through the lens of racial identity theories, formally learning through psychology studies how they influence human interactions.

"Many of my personal experiences were validated," she says. "Equity, diversity, and inclusion teaches you to lean in to that, and to build a platform for a conversation. EDI became my love language."

Finding Channels for Change

Hintz had also noted the racial inequities in the field of psychology, including a lack of diversity when she began grad school. There was a disheartening lack of Black psychologists represented in Hintz's curricula, she says, and her EDI courses were electives, not required learning. (The racial gap persists: As late as 2019, Black/African American psychologists were [just three percent of the](#)

[workforce](#), according to APA's Center for Workforce Studies.)

After graduating, Hintz worked hard to bring multicultural theory and practice into as many contexts as she could. She taught graduate psychology courses at Alverno College in Milwaukee, WI, while providing therapy to youths in a residential treatment center nearby and maintaining a private practice.

She also started a consulting business to educate individuals and groups about race dynamics and how they manifest in clinical

practice, as well as in daily interactions in the workplace.

But when she spied the job opportunity at APA, Hintz saw the chance to consolidate her considerable energies into one role while making a broad impact. "The change I want to see is dismantling racism using a system, rather than an individual, perspective," she says.

Communication is Key

Because she had never worked in the nonprofit sector, Hintz said there was an adjustment period involved in bringing EDI principles to a wider audience. It required a higher level of strategic thinking.

"As a consultant, I would do the work myself on an interpersonal, micro level, versus what I do at the APA, which is to develop blueprints for the work," Hintz says. "Now I have to think about how we are going to affect the entire organization."

Day-to-day differences also include operating within the organizational structure of a large nonprofit, versus the relative professional freedom of academia. Colleagues helped her learn how to channel her



Vanessa Hintz

Industrial-organizational (I-O) psychology, an applied psychology subfield, is predicted to be one of the fastest growing jobs over the next decade.

[Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

energies into a new environment.

The communication skills Hintz developed while consulting serve her well in her new role, she says. During public speaking events she learned how to engage with a variety of people, and to communicate her expertise in flexible, dynamic ways – all critical to her job in engagement and outreach.

Hintz suggests that academic psychologists pondering a similar move might volunteer or consult with a nonprofit to explore the many ways their expertise can be applied to potential roles in it. As she says, “Being a tenured professor is not that different from being a grassroots organizer. We’re all trying to work for the greater good. The opportunities for psychologists are limitless.”

Hintz had the opportunity to witness what a large-scale organizational shift looks

like shortly after joining APA, when the organization released a [statement of apology](#) about its role in perpetuating racism throughout its history. Hintz says she has been particularly gratified to be involved in conversations with many APA members about a deepened commitment to dismantling racism in all forms, within the discipline itself, and in important systems and sectors of society.

“As a Black psychologist, I felt seen and validated [by the statement]. But I also know how much work we have to do as psychologists,” she says. “We can’t boil the ocean. We can’t fix everything overnight. But people are recognizing the value of psychological science for EDI.”

A Good Cultural Fit

Among the many types of organizations in which psychologists can apply their knowledge and skills, nonprofits are an especially good option, says Dennis P. Stolle, JD, PhD, APA’s senior director of the Office of Applied Psychology.

First, nonprofits are a good cultural fit, he says. Training in psychology includes ethical and sociocultural values that often are central to the nonprofit world. “There’s a mindset to how you approach your day-to-day work, an opportunity to think about the breadth of the impact you are having,” he says.

Most nonprofits are complex organizations with a range of diverse goals – from

public events and policy advocacy to fundraising. Navigating them demands a range of skills in which psychologists are well trained, Stolle says. With their abilities to be active listeners who can assess people’s motivations and goals, psychologists often make good leaders and can help teams reach collaborative solutions in workplaces that may have multiple interests.

Stolle himself came to APA in early 2022 after spending more than two decades as a litigation attorney, and as a consultant in trial psychology and jury selection. He enjoyed the work but says he had a lingering thought that “it would be a nice way to have an impact on more people’s lives than a single client who was paying me to put their interests first,” he says.

Developing Collaborative Solutions

“In a nonprofit you have the opportunity to advance collective opportunities, to represent under-represented groups, and reach collaborative solutions that are going to make things better for everyone,” says Stolle.

One of the ways APA’s [Office of Applied Psychology](#) is supporting efforts to further the field of psychology is by helping to establish partnerships among organizations in diverse industries, government, or other nonprofits who have similar missions.

Currently, Stolle and colleagues are working with employers across the nation to advance psychological and emotional well-being in the workplace by offering resources developed with experts from APA’s membership and calling upon employers to make a commitment to strive for mental health excellence in their workplaces. [Read more.](#) ■



Photo: A. Nadelson Photography

Dennis P. Stolle

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

The Complete Practice Management System for Health Therapists



Launching a new health practice doesn't require multiple apps and programs. Let Power Diary help manage your practice with an all-in-one system that gives you over 100 features; appointment scheduling, client messaging, SOAP notes, Telehealth portal, payment integrations, and so much more to streamline your day-to-day operations! Make the smart choice and see how Power Diary can help put the pieces together for you. **Join a live demo or start a free trial today.**

**JOIN A
DEMO
TODAY**



**AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION**

CORPORATE
SUPPORTER

Crossing Over from Clinical/ Counseling to Business

Educational tracks for clinical psychologists don't typically focus on the transition from clinical or counseling practice to a business setting, but with the exponential growth in mental health technologies more psychologists find themselves scaling up and branching out into private enterprise – or defining a niche practice where they can market their expertise in a specific area.

Private equity funding for mental health enterprises has skyrocketed as investors respond to the booming need for mental health supports brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, an ongoing shortage of providers, and the proliferation of telehealth and other tech options.

The business sphere isn't necessarily an either-or scenario: Clinicians and researchers alike often diversify their primary work with differing practice-revenue streams that are independent of insurance reimbursement or grants. Many are developing new working models, transitioning from full-time practice to part-time consulting, interdisciplinary startups, marketing ventures, and research consultancies. Others are helping businesses roll out products or services using psychological insights and research.

Psychologists trained in I-O or business psychology are educated in structured business practices, marketing, and a wide range of crossover skills, but psychologists trained primarily for clinical practice will likely need to beef up their business acumen before making a leap – or be prepared for a steep learning curve on the job. ■

COMMON JOB TITLES

- Research Psychologist
- Medical Liaison
- Clinical Director at Mental Health Startup
- Behavioral Science Consultant
- Corrections Consultant
- Assessment Psychologist
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Consultant
- Chief Executive Officer

A Fresh Start in Startups

By Charlotte Huff



Merilla Scott, PhD, credits her move in 2021 from the nonprofit world to clinical director at [Ayana Therapy](#), a mental health tech startup, with her perennial willingness to take career risks, even if they're daunting in the short term.

"I am the type of person who will say 'Yes!'" Scott says. "It's jumping in and saying, 'Okay, I will do it.' I have grown so much by being out of my comfort zone – it's been painful, and it's been full of joy."

Scott had only been working for a few years as a therapist when she was approached to move into management to coordinate the child-abuse treatment program at Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services in Culver City, CA. "I think they saw my team-building skills, which I wasn't even aware of at the time," she says.

That job led to a series of managerial roles, all within the nonprofit mental health community, as well as a high-profile stint in public service, serving as commissioner of the Los Angeles County Mental Health Commission from 2015-2020.

The Value of Mentors

It was a mentor from her Didi Hirsch days who recommended her for the commissioner position. That role, she says, was part of her ongoing leadership-training curve: "How do you find the common ground and build relationships, even when there is animosity or just different opinions?"

Scott hadn't been contemplating a career change when a graduate school friend sent her an email about Ayana Therapy's search for a clinical director. Based in Los Angeles, the startup mental health platform matches people to compati-

Merilla Scott

ble therapists, based in part on their answers to profile questions about their therapeutic preferences and background, including race/ethnicity, religion, and gender identity.

The mission of CEO and founder Eric Coly to better meet the therapeutic needs of marginalized and underserved individuals resonated with Scott. She's now building a team of contract therapists – more than 170 and counting as of Spring 2022 – to address the needs of their diverse client mix.

Ramping Up for a Startup

Her move to the Los Angeles-based startup required a hard shift from her nonprofit background, and she had to ramp up her sales and fundraising mindset and abilities. “When I first graduated, you didn’t even talk about money – you talk about service,” she says.

Hindsight is always 20:20 and Scott now regrets that she didn’t enroll in more than one industrial-organizational (I-O) psychology class in graduate school. Earning an MBA degree also would have grounded her more firmly in budgets, strategic planning, and other business concepts, she says. But subsequent training has paid off, including a leadership development program offered by the [Center for Nonprofit Management](#).

Jessica DiVento, PsyD, YouTube’s global head of mental health, similarly expressed a need to brush up on I-O knowledge as she moved up the career

ladder. “I would say you don’t need a background in it but being abreast of I-O approaches and the research in that space helps,” she said during one of APA’s “How Did You Get That Job?” [online seminars](#).

Harnessing Skills for Leadership

While graduate school instilled the clinical sciences, it didn’t necessarily teach leadership, including “walking into a corporate environment, dealing with executives and a pretty complex system in which to work,” DiVento said. But those skills can be honed in other ways, she said, noting that she’s benefited from a background of nearly two decades in competitive public speaking and theater.

When Scott senses that she’s stretched against the limits of her comfort zone, she taps into her approach as a therapist. She learns about the players, gets up to speed on concepts where she has less familiarity, and then listens to others – reading the room.

In the corporate setting, psychologists hold a high card by bringing emotional intelligence to the table, Scott says. With business, she says, “there is a lot of reactivity and a lot of agendas.

“It’s being able to keep grounded and really try to listen for commonalities and common language, to be able to move teams forward,” she says. “I feel like the background in psychology helps a lot – the listening to information without reacting to it immediately.” ■



Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles

Invites your interest in the position of

MENTAL HEALTH CLINICIAN (FAMILY COURT SERVICES SPECIALIST)

Salary Range: \$89,473 - \$111,168 (Annual)

Benefits: Additional monthly allowance for medical, dental, disability, life and AD&D insurance, and health and dependent care spending accounts. Deferred Compensation Plan (457) with 4% match. Vacation, sick leave, 13 holidays, and retirement plan.

THE OPPORTUNITY – Mental Health Clinicians (Family Court Services Specialists) mediate and evaluate child custody disputes and provide recommendations to court in evaluation cases involving parties who are divorcing, legally separating, establishing paternity, obtaining legal guardianship, or establishing restraining orders in domestic violence cases. Incumbents must demonstrate knowledge of family law and court policies while utilizing applicable interviewing, counseling, evaluation, and referral skills.

THE COURT - Los Angeles has a multi-ethnic population and is a trendsetting global metropolis with a fascinating history and a rich cultural heritage. Los Angeles Superior Court consists of 38 courthouses located across Los Angeles County. The Court comprises over 580 judicial and 4,600 full-time employees working in 38 courthouses across the County, as well as employees working remotely.

FIND MORE INFORMATION AND
APPLY ONLINE AT:

[GOVERNMENTJOBS.COM/CAREERS/LASC](https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/lasc)

Forging Connections Between Clinical and Corporate

By Charlotte Huff

It can take a dose of derring-do and lots of networking for clinical psychologists to translate their skills to the private sector. But for some psychologists who achieve this career leap, the rewards have been worth the risks.

Clinical psychologist Andrea Niles, PhD, always believed in the potential for digital mediums to connect as many people as possible to more affordable therapy. Even while in graduate school at UCLA she worked as a statistical consultant for its [Institute for Digital Research and Education](#). Spreading her net wide as she wrapped up her doctorate, she pursued a career in academia,

while working on her own to build several mental health applications based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to target anxiety, depression, and PTSD.

But she soon recognized that creating an app requires three core components – content, technology, and design – not all of which she possessed. “My expertise was in the content, so I had to figure out how to get the tech and the design pieces.”

The Value of Networking

Niles sought to develop contacts and familiarity with the tech world by attending networking events focused on digital mental health. Meanwhile, she continued to apply for tenure-track faculty positions geared toward her clinical research.

Through someone she met at a networking event Niles learned about a job posting at [Youper](#), an artificial intelligence-powered telehealth platform that incorporates cognitive behavioral techniques to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. The company was searching for a clinical psychologist. “It looked like exactly what I was doing research wise,” Niles says.

She snagged an interview at Youper and became the top candidate for the position of clinical product and research lead. But as fate would have it, after she had been offered and accepted the Youper job, she got a faculty job offer from her top-choice university.

Tough Choices

It proved to be a challenging fork in the career road, she says. But Niles was loath to continue to fly solo in chasing her app-development dreams.

“With academia everything feels hard,” says Niles, who is now a Youper co-founder and chief science officer, working with the CEO Jose Hamilton, MD, a psychiatrist. “Getting money is hard. Publishing is hard. Then, having to make this app by myself just felt so incredibly hard – like I would constantly be pushing a boulder up a hill.”

As of April 2022, Youper had about 8,000 active users and was growing, according to Niles.

To work in the tech field, clinical experience can provide a leg up, but isn’t vital, Niles says. Some tech companies, she notes, prefer psychologists with a research background to study the efficacy of their products. In Niles’ case, she was hired for her clinical expertise and learned about the business side on the job.

As a first stop for other clinicians interested in working in tech, Niles highly recommends joining the group [Therapists](#)



Andrea Niles

in Tech to start networking and gain better insights into opportunities.

Dressing the Part

In other circumstances it can be preferable to learn the language and dress the part before transitioning from clinical to corporate psychology, says Teraesa Vinson, PhD.

Roughly a decade ago, Vinson was teaching counseling psychology classes at Columbia University, a job that she enjoyed. Then a colleague walked into a faculty meeting wearing a tailored suit that was far removed from the relaxed academic garb of “clogs and pigtails,” as she puts it.

Her colleague, whom she later learned had been interviewing that day at Korn Ferry, a global executive-search firm, soon alerted Vinson to another opening at the company. “And she said, ‘You can make twice the money and you don’t have to do as much assessment.’” (In clinical psychology notes Vinson, “the rigors of psychodiagnostic assessment batteries can take many hours.”)

Intrigued by the fast-moving corporate environment, she saw that her assessment skills would be an asset, but only part of her work mix. Vinson soon left her academic post to move to Los Angeles and take the post at Korn Ferry. Meanwhile, she kept up a small private practice. When Vinson applied for the job, she laid out how her skills as a counseling psychologist would meet their executive search needs.

Positioning For a New Environment

“I pitched myself as someone who had assessment chops, who understood how to use and interpret a variety of assessment tools,” she says. “But also as a clinician,



Teraesa Vinson

somebody who could use my clinical experience to size people up quickly.”

In 2017, she moved to [Heidrick & Struggles](#), a top recruiting firm for Fortune 1000 companies where she is now a partner. In that role, Vinson strives to land recruitment deals, and then works with a team to search for the next executive at top-tier companies.

Vinson, who only recently put her private practice on hiatus due to time constraints, says those clinical skills can’t be discounted in the business world, particularly amid the interpersonal dynamics of a high-stakes search process. As a clinician, Vinson says, “you are comfortable having really difficult conversations. A clinician is used to sitting in a room with someone and getting them to tell you anything.”

Making the Crossover to Corporate

To prep for the public speaking, promotional aspects of corporate work, Vinson

recommends gaining practice in making presentations – ideally to non-psychologists who aren’t familiar with the field’s concepts and jargon. For instance, give a talk to a high school group or the local chamber of commerce to learn to speak more plainly and answer basic questions, she says.

The corporate opportunities are out there, stresses Andrea Niles. But don’t fall into the mental trap that moving from academia to business requires giving up one’s idealistic aspirations in pursuit of monetary goals, she says. In her case, she feels like the move has only expanded her clinical reach.

“There are really cool careers now in tech for psychologists that are extremely fulfilling,” she says. “Where I can, in my opinion, make a much bigger impact than I ever could have made in academia.” ■

“Private investors ... poured \$3.1 billion into mental health ventures by the third quarter of 2021 alone. That represents a third of all digital health funding for 2021.”

From [Monitor on Psychology](#)

Entrepreneur Finds Niche in Women's Leadership

By Charlotte Huff

For ambitious women, juggling career and family can feel daunting, particularly when they want to pursue more than a few work passions. For years, clinical psychologist Mira Brancu, PhD, has informally mentored women who face such a dilemma – strategizing how they can build that balance without clipping their career wings.

Now she's launched her own entrepreneurial effort to assist even more emerging and under-represented women, as well as to coach those company leaders committed to supporting and promoting them. Brancu, a long-time speaker about women's workplace issues, is CEO of [Brancu & Associates](#), an executive coaching and team development firm in Carrboro, NC.

The psychologist is the first to acknowledge that building her firm – still a side gig to her Department of Veterans Affairs day job – has forced her to stretch her own skillset, including marketing and business planning.

Business development requires no small degree of personal development, not easy for the risk adverse, she points out: “It pushes you to question a lot of things about yourself,” she says, “and to take risks that are very uncomfortable. [You] put yourself in situations



Mira Brancu

where you can experience rejection or worry about your income.”

Drawing Strategies from Life

Luckily for Brancu, adaptation and flexibility have become acquired skills. She moved to the United States at age six from Romania, then a communist regime, learning not just a new language but also a new culture.

When discussing the book that she recently co-authored, [Millennials' Guide to Workplace Politics](#), Brancu highlighted how her emigration experience forced her to recognize relatively early that cultural savvy is vital to achieving success in work and life. “Understanding the language and being book smart doesn’t mean you understand the underlying culture, right?” she asks.

Turns out, Brancu proved to be a quick study. After earning a PhD in clinical psychology from Catholic University in Washington, DC, she promptly moved into management. She first assumed the role of managing director at the VA Mid-Atlantic Mental Illness, Research and Education Center at the Durham VA Medical Center, assisting with a study looking at post-deployment mental health. That job led to others within the VA and related collaborations with Duke University, including her current post as a senior organizational development psychologist.

Germinating a Dream, Finding a Niche

Still, Brancu craved a business of her own – some way that she could pursue the work she already did informally. She hadn’t considered, or even heard about, executive coaching until she enrolled in a leadership program about a decade ago, one that

offered a leadership analysis and a few sessions with a coach, who also happened to be a psychologist.

The coach looked at Brancu’s leadership results and asked if she had ever considered the executive coaching field. “She planted a seed that stuck and just kept growing over time,” Brancu says. In 2018, she opened her firm.

Along with helping men and women to cultivate their individual leadership skills, Brancu collaborates with teams to work on improving organizational outcomes. As a psychologist works to identify underlying dynamics in a client’s behavioral issue, Brancu assesses factors that might underpin an organizational challenge.

For instance, she recently was hired by a healthcare system to conduct team coaching within a clinical department. But upon further scrutiny, Brancu determined that some structural issues, such as clarifying roles, needed to be addressed first.

Building a Brand

As Brancu shifted into an entrepreneurial mindset, she toyed with returning to school for an MBA, but soon decided that she could gain sufficient grounding and practical concepts through an online certificate program from the [Kenan-Flagler Business School](#) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

In the early days, Brancu tapped the free resources of [SCORE](#), a non-profit organization that pairs small business owners with volunteer mentors and other experts. She also turned to [APA's Division 13](#) for information and networking for consulting psychologists. For marketing and branding insights she recommends a book by an execu-

tive talent expert, “[Ready to Be a Thought Leader?](#)”

Psychologists typically are not wired to promote themselves, she points out: “We are a service-oriented people; we are helpers. Thinking about talking about ourselves in some ways is almost painful,” she says.

To promote her expertise, Brancu pitched a [blog series to Psychology Today](#) that looks at women’s leadership through a psychological and organizational lens. “The point was to quickly gain credibility in a field that people didn’t really know me for at all at a national level,” she says.

In the Psychology Today series, which Brancu shares through various social media channels, she’s written about everything from how [to make difficult career decisions](#) to tapping emotional intelligence and other skills needed [to navigate office politics](#).

Taking a Calculated Risk

From the start, Brancu had a 10-year plan to build her firm, while still working for the VA. (The leaders there, she says, were fine with her business plans, as long as she didn’t clock any hours on government time.) Her target goals for the first decade: match her VA salary, learn about business development, and explore various types of consulting work, to figure out what she most enjoys.

“My risk taking is calculated, and my financial security is important to me,” Brancu says, noting that her children were 12 and 8 when she started the firm.

For others contemplating a similar path, Brancu suggests asking oneself the following question: “How willing are you, and how much do you like stretching yourself into unknown territories?” ■



INTRODUCING THE NEWLY REDESIGNED

APA Membership Directory

Take advantage of your exclusive member benefit—
The recently enhanced Directory helps you connect with
members and build your network.

Personalize your listing with improved features:

- Areas of Interest
- Licensure and Certifications
- Social Media Links
- Your Photo
- And More

BUILD COMMUNITY, GET CONNECTED

Personalize your listing today



APA Membership Directory community.apa.org

How Did You Get That Job? *Careers in the Mental Health App Sector*

Psychologists have
a role to play in the
mental and behavioral
health app field—as
developers, user
research experts,
and subject matter
experts.



Watch Now!

<https://on.apa.org/career>

Making an Impact in Industry

More research psychologists are joining the private sector as discoveries in cognitive and behavioral science fuel innovations in fields including tech, marketing, engineering, genetics, and human-computer interaction.

Since [digital therapeutics](#) and [user experience design \(UX\)](#) are booming industries where psychologists are in high demand, this transition is becoming much more common among early-career psychologists and post-docs who are steeped in advanced statistic techniques – especially those who have some internship or industry experience under their belts.

The siloed aspect of academic research has some seasoned researchers transitioning to private industry to have a wider, more direct impact with their work, and psychological scientists are being sought by recruiters increasingly to work within cross-functional teams of information specialists and engineers. ■

COMMON JOB TITLES

- *Research Analyst*
- *Clinical Director*
- *Data Scientist*
- *UX Specialist*
- *Human Factors Scientist*
- *Consumer Experience Researcher*
- *Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics Psychologist*
- *Product Manager*
- *Chief Science Officer*

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, clinical psychologist Zeeshan Butt, PhD, seemed destined, if not driven, to continue a galloping academic career that included 100 peer-reviewed articles, major grants and contracts from Federal funders, and worldwide presentations of his research on patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs).

He was a leading researcher and faculty member at Northwestern University, renowned for his investigations into the quality of life of patients following organ donation and transplantation, and his leadership among early-career health psychologists earned him an [APA Presidential Citation in 2014](#).

But as the pandemic took hold, Butt began to assess his own quality of life. “I felt like the world was going into a dumpster fire. And here I was focusing on grants and

writing papers,” he said.

Butt had long been frustrated by the protracted timeline in academic research, from publishing to implementation – years that can pass between obtaining a grant, collecting data, and getting published. More frustrating than anything, he said, he wasn’t seeing his work being employed in actual healthcare systems.

In the past, he’d pushed these thoughts aside, but during the pandemic, time began to feel more precious; Butt began to have more serious doubts about whether academia was the right pathway for helping to give patients greater voice. That’s when a recruiter called.

A Recruiter Comes Calling

[Phreesia](#), a healthcare technology company, was looking for a psychologist to help them develop their digital-intake products that gather patient data in waiting rooms across

Zeeshan Butt

Applying Academic Skills to Industry Innovations

By Isobel Whitcomb

the country. This information can be vital for engaging patients and screening for a wide array of physical and mental health conditions.

It wasn't the first time he'd been courted by industry. In the past, Butt had entertained the calls but most of them came from pharmaceutical companies, which didn't interest him. The job with Phreesia couldn't have come at a better time. Not only did the position seem like a perfect fit for his expertise in patient-reported outcomes, but it would allow him to have a direct impact on the care of hundreds of thousands of patients at a time when the healthcare system was strained to the point of crisis.

While Butt jumped at the opportunity, he said he still had some major hesitations about leaving academia. What if he changed his mind and had no option of return? Worse yet, what if he failed? It didn't help that he didn't know anyone who had made a similar transition.

"I tell my kids, there are very few mistakes that you can't recover from," Butt said, "but I wasn't sure whether leaving academics was going to be a mistake that I couldn't recover from."

The Rapid Pace of Tech

From the moment the recruiter asked Butt to distill his 50-page CV into two concise pages, he knew he would face a learning curve. The main culture shock he confronted at first

was the sheer pace of the tech world, he said. "Many times, academics are trained to be careful, studied, and slow," Butt said. "In an environment like technology or health technology, that's just a nonstarter." To stay apace with the industry, Butt needed to always think three steps ahead – if he didn't, he was already behind.

Once he settled in, Butt found that many of the skills he'd developed as an academic gave him a leg up in industry. When a large pediatric hospital began working with Phreesia to help them manage a waiting list that was hundreds of families deep, Butt was able to use his experience in clinical care and research to help the hospital determine how to screen patients and triage those waiting for care.

Butt also has been able to facilitate communication among colleagues of different disciplines, skills he developed through years of writing grant applications. "Part of my goal, even when I was at Northwestern, was to talk about science in a way that my grandmother could understand," Butt said.

Speaking the Language, Making Connections

His fluency in the jargon of patient-reported outcomes combined with his experience writing for those with different backgrounds have helped him translate complex academic texts for his colleagues, most of

whom are engineers and businesspeople. "Here, it just doesn't fly to parrot the language that appears in science publishing," Butt said.

At first, some of his colleagues' language felt equally foreign, as did many business concepts. To catch up, Butt immersed himself in industry texts recommended by colleagues and learned to get comfortable about asking for people to explain unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts: "It's like fish swimming in a school. Everyone is moving quickly in the same direction. And everyone assumes that everyone has everyone's background knowledge," Butt said.

If Butt has any regrets about his career path so far, it's that he didn't explore the option of private industry earlier. In his current role, he says he finally feels able to do what he always wanted: to directly facilitate conversations between patients and providers. "I know that decisions that I make can impact patient care in a positive way, in relatively short order," Butt said.

Thinking of making a similar transition and unsure where to look? Butt strongly recommends searching outside the field of behavioral health. "Psychologists have a unique training in both research and communication," Butt said. "If they're clinically trained, they have skills that can go quite far in a technology company that may not be laser focused on emotional wellbeing." ■

Leaving Academia

Get practical tips on how to use your PhD in other fields from psychologists who have made the jump from academia to industry or practice.

From *Monitor on Psychology*

Seeking a Wider Sphere With Multidisciplinary Research

By Isobel Whitcomb

As a doctoral student at Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore, MD, psychologist Joseph Sala, PhD, was fascinated by neuroscience and the cognitive processes behind working memory. He took pleasure in coming up with new questions and research methods to probe these topics, especially when his research led him to study an unfamiliar topic.

But during his postdoctoral work at Stanford University, Sala began to quietly question whether aca-

demia was right for him. In addition to fierce competition for shrinking tenure-track positions for early-career psychologists, he said he was concerned he might be siloed in one narrow area of research: “I saw myself drilling further and further into the minutiae of scientific data. My work was quickly becoming divorced from what excited me about the science.”

It was then that Sala began a different kind of research – making inquiries into psychology careers outside of academia. He watched two colleagues take jobs in human factors – and as someone who’d dedicated years to understanding how people process information, human factors seemed like it might be an ideal application of his skill sets.

Leaping from Grad School to Industry

Sala sent his CV to the scientific and engineering consulting firm, [Exponent](#), and was hired straight out of Stanford. Immediately he was thrown into his first consulting project.

The client was a fitness-equipment manufacturer who wanted to understand why its consumers weren’t using the information provided to them in safety displays. For Sala the answer

was easy: “Failures of attention and limited capacity for information processing. There was too much information, and it was cluttered.” It seemed like basic psychology to Sala, but to his clients this information was an illuminating insight into how consumers think.

On Exponent’s human factors team, Sala soon found himself in the company of colleagues from dozens of different disciplines – from anatomy to mechanical engineering – the majority of whom also had PhDs. A colleague with expertise in kinesiology, for example, might analyze how human gait and balance could lead a person to become injured while running on a treadmill. To the same project, Sala would bring his knowledge of human psychology: How did that runner’s capacity for memory and attention impact their ability to use the machine safely?

Calling on Colleagues

In his work there Sala also has had to become fluent in the language of litigation. A portion of the work that he conducts involves advising companies in the middle of, or preparing for, lawsuits. Legal teams call him in as a consultant to help them understand how human perception and



Joseph Sala

performance play a role in accidents or injuries. This work often involves investigating a specific person's interaction with a product.

To bring himself up to speed, Sala turned to colleagues with years of experience working these litigations. Many of them hadn't come in as legal experts – like Sala, they had learned the ins-and-outs of litigation while on the job – so they were empathetic to the learning curve he faced. On the flip side, Sala found himself a resident expert in psychological terms and concepts and has learned to translate this terminology for lay people, including clients and colleagues from different disciplines. There, his teaching experience has been particularly helpful.

Initially, Sala said he was concerned that his decision to leave academia would close the door on his professional and personal associations there and would let down colleagues and collaborators. “It couldn't have been further from the truth,” Sala said. “They see me as someone who left but is still accessible.”

Sala says he has no regrets about his decision to leave academia but does acknowledge that there is a tradeoff in the kind of research he is able to do in industry. While he still publishes, the work is more targeted, appearing in industry-specific journals and in line with clients' interests.

He says his work still feels impactful, despite a lessened output of research, because it directly affects and shapes the products and systems with which consumers will interact.

“It's this idea of being that bridge,” he says. “It's helping the science inform and improve the real world.”

The Impetus of Large-Scale Impacts

The collaborative, multidisciplinary research environment of private industry also can have a strong pull for psychologists at more mature points in their academic careers – especially when it provides them an opportunity to expand their work to national scale.

Psychologist Abram Rosenblatt, PhD, exchanged a 20-plus year career in academic-based research for the chance to contribute to a national child mental-health initiative when he joined the leading private research firm, [Westat](#), in 2015.

As a professor in the Department of Psychiatry at UCSF, Rosenblatt had been deeply steeped in evaluating how well public mental-health agencies were adhering to evidence-based standards of care for children struggling with emotional disturbances. Among his influential research was a [study that tracked outcomes](#) for children who received mental healthcare versus those who ended up in the California juvenile-justice system.

But when Rosenblatt learned that Westat had been awarded a contract by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to help conduct the [Child Mental Health Initiative's National Evaluation](#), his antennae went up.

The study, which was released in 2018, analyzed the efficacy of Systems

of Care, a federal system of coordinating behavioral healthcare for children and teens with severe mental illness. And Westat just happened to be looking for someone to direct the project.

Seeking a Wider Sphere

“It was a dream project for me, to be plugged into the policy world in a different way than I could be in an academic environment,” Rosen-

blatt said. “Academic institutions tend not to do those contracts ... that directly inform federal and state policy recommendations.”



Abram Rosenblatt

blatt said. “Academic institutions tend not to do those contracts ... that directly inform federal and state policy recommendations.”

It was Rosenblatt's visit to Westat that sealed the deal: “I was struck by the range of people I could work with,” Rosenblatt said. He witnessed psychologists and statisticians, graphic designers, and editorial staff all working closely together. Never in his

career had he experienced that intensity of collaboration. “In academic [science] teams are generally built around principal or lead investigators and their research program,” he said. After that interview the career transition was a no-brainer – the position of senior study director offered him the collegial research atmosphere he wanted, and the large-scale research projects he couldn't take on

without that structure of collaboration. Most importantly, he would have the potential to have a direct impact on federal policy.

Bridging Many Worlds

Right away, Rosenblatt's background bridging the public and university spheres gave him an advantage at the company, which frequently partners with universities in addition

to federal, state, and county governments. “I understand how to merge these environments,” Rosenblatt said. Additionally, his expertise in child and adolescent mental health helped him understand what questions to ask and how to interpret data.

Still, he had plenty to learn. While his extensive publishing background helped him clinch his new position, it did not prepare him for a brand-new style of writing or for the business side of Westat’s research. Suddenly, he was expected to turn around 60-page proposals in a matter of weeks, write research reports aimed at policymakers, and collaborate on book chapters – all completely different styles of writing than academic publishing.

To do so, he needed to learn the language of contracts, how to pursue business leads, and about the interaction between the federal government and its various agencies. Rosenblatt’s strategy was to launch himself headfirst.

Collaboration, Not Competition

Like Sala, Rosenblatt learned by doing and worked under the tutelage of a colleague with more experience in a particular task – for example, writing a budget or putting together a proposal. “I would go off and write something and they would come back and say, ‘This is beautifully written, but it doesn’t work for what we’re doing,’” Rosenblatt said, “Then I’d say, ‘Okay, tell me what you need.’”

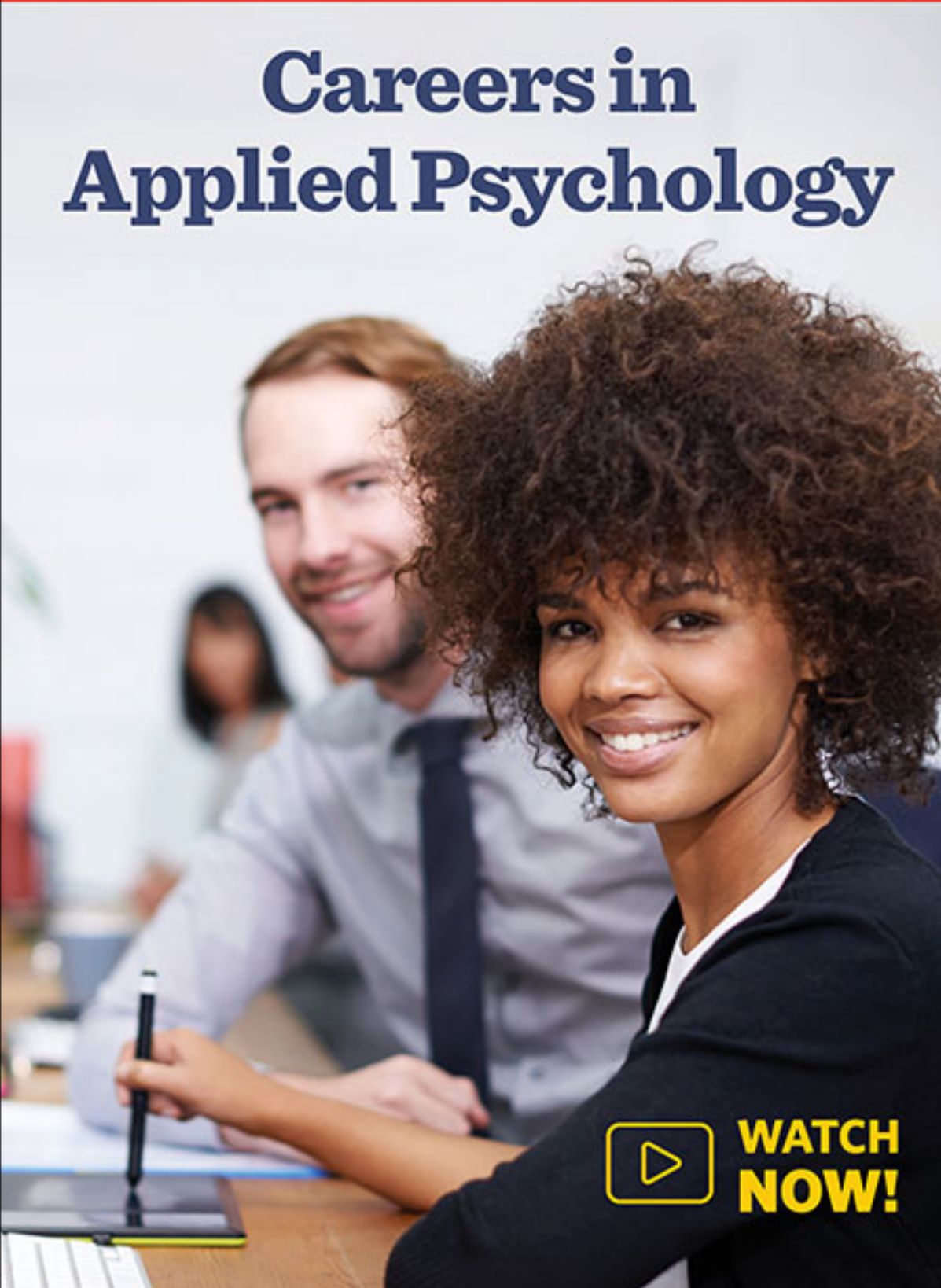
The newness and volume of work was balanced out by the support that Rosenblatt experienced among his colleagues, he said: “Without that kind of cooperation you can’t write a 60-page, complicated proposal in three weeks.” He’d experienced a collegial atmosphere in academia, he added, but there had always been an underlying sense that you were competing with those same colleagues. Here, competition would hinder productivity.


Initially his own publishing dropped off, but over the past seven years it has picked up again. Rosenblatt, who is now vice president and associate director, says he now publishes a wider range of writing than he did as an academic – from book chapters to raw data. The parameters around the research he conducts also have changed: “When we do work for the federal government it’s perfectly normal for us to have restrictions on what we can share and how we can share it,” he noted.

Currently, Rosenblatt is principal investigator on a project that will help clinics within the National Institute of Mental Health’s [Early Psychosis Intervention Network](#) (EPINET) collect and share data on interventions for first-episode psychosis. “My hope and expectation is that EPINET will contribute to delivering effective early intervention services for persons with psychosis and promote improvements in quality of life ... and functioning over the life span,” he says. ■

NEW APA VIDEO SERIES

Careers in Applied Psychology




WATCH NOW!

Emerging Trends in Psychology

Reporters and editors for *Monitor on Psychology* (Vol. 53 No. 1) spoke with more than 100 psychologists to compile APA's annual trends report. Following are summaries of some of those emerging trends, many of which are springboards for new and expanded career pathways for psychologists at all stages of their careers.

Adapted from *The Rise of Psychologists, and 14 Emerging Trends in Psychology*.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI)

Amid a nationwide reckoning on race—and a 71% increase in EDI roles at organizations over the past 5 years—psychologists are increasingly being tapped to serve as chief diversity officers and act in other similar roles. But the field is also at an inflection point, being called upon to be more introspective about its own diversity in terms of the people who choose to become psychologists, the people who are the subjects of psychological research, and the people who have access to psychological services. (See APA's [Racism, Bias and Discrimination resources](#).)

REWORKING WORK

Industrial and organizational psychologists are helping employers and employees navigate as COVID-19 reshapes the world of work; finding ways to improve remote work has been a key priority. When workplaces sent many workers home in 2020, psychologists

were able to collect a wealth of real-time data about how employees were responding. [Analyses revealed](#) many upsides, such as increased productivity, no commute, and the ability to structure workdays as desired. But while workers may have enjoyed not sitting in cubicles all day, many—especially parents—reported that working from home was stressful because of blurred boundaries and competing demands from family. Psychologists are continuing to research and work with managers to understand the complexities of new work paradigms, especially since the pandemic has led many workers to realize their jobs no longer align with their broader goals. [Read the full article.](#)

NEW FRONTIERS IN NEUROSCIENCE

To better grasp the mental processes that undergird thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, psychologists have long worked together with the neuroscientists who study the structure and processes of the brain and nervous system. Psychology and neuroscience overlap now more than ever as technology such as neuroimaging advances, which means psychologists have more opportunities to improve people's lives by understanding how nervous system activity drives complex thoughts and behaviors linked to mental health treatment and prevention. Neuroscientists, too, can learn more about their field through the work of psychologists.

Thanks to recent advancements in the field of genetics, psychologists are

seizing on new opportunities to study the specific genes associated with susceptibility for certain behaviors and, more important, how to use this knowledge to help people. A more comprehensive approach to research known as genome-wide association studies uses algorithms to study the entire genome and identify genes that could contribute to specific behaviors using a scoring model called polygenic scoring, which means psychologists have more basis for understanding risk factors that contribute to hereditary behavioral patterns. [Read the full article.](#)

MENTAL HEALTH MEETS VENTURE CAPITAL

On the technology front, the delivery and data collection of psychological services is gaining increased interest from venture capitalists. Private equity firms are expected to pour billions of dollars into mental health projects this year—psychologists working on these efforts say greater investments will help bring mental health care to millions of underserved patients. All kinds of tech companies have hired psychologists for years—big names like Microsoft, Google, and Facebook have plenty on staff—but more people with psychology backgrounds are now finding a niche at startups.

According to Forbes, investors provided a record-breaking \$1.5 billion to mental health startups in 2020 alone. Not all those startups employ psychologists, but many companies are very serious about getting the psychological science right ... and psychologists often find themselves working on multidis-

ciplinary teams. The new investments support a wide array of technologies, including apps, telehealth, or a combination of the two-target a wide range of conditions, including anxiety, depression, insomnia, trauma, and substance use. [Read the full article.](#)

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

The urgent need for mental health services will be a trend for years to come ... and that is especially true among children: Mental health-related emergency department visits have increased 24% for children between ages 5 and 11 and 31% for those ages 12 to 17 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While federal funding has provided schools with money to support students' well-being, psychologists have been seeking additional long-term solutions to address the mental health problems revealed and exacerbated by the pandemic, from building mental health into school curricula to training teachers in prevention strategies to supporting students based on psychological science.

The American Rescue Plan Act, passed in March 2021, included \$170 billion for school funding, and many schools used the funding to hire mental health workers, including psychologists. Other federal and state funding is being allocated toward training more psychologists. Many schools are hiring mental health providers on a short-term basis, as well as taking a preventative approach focused on training teachers in psychological principles. [Read the full article.](#)

BURNOUT AND STRESS

From longer work hours to increased demands at home, the COVID-19 pandemic introduced new stressors to nearly every domain of life. As the world heads into the 3rd year of the pandemic, these stressors have become persistent and indefinite, heightening everyone's risk of burnout. Anyone exposed to chronically stressful conditions can experience burnout, but human services employees, first responders, and those in educational services are at an even higher risk, especially as the public continues to resist COVID-19 prevention measures.

Teachers and health care workers are uniquely prone to high rates of burnout, as was the case even before the pandemic. Issues like the politicization of masks and vaccines and feelings of lack of support from the government and workplaces have caused workers—especially those in public-facing jobs—to become cynical about their jobs and about the public in general. Companies of varying sizes and in many industries are finding new ways to ensure employee well-being, from increased time off to offering such services as after-school tutoring and childcare. In health care, psychologists continue to explore how to create better balance for front-line workers. [Read the full article.](#)

HELPING WOMEN RETURN TO THE WORKFORCE

The pandemic has dealt a significant blow to women in the workforce. The majority of pandemic-related job losses have been experienced by women, according to a 2021 report from the [National Women's Law Center](#). Women have suffered the majority of

pandemic-related job losses: since February 2020, women have lost over 5.4 million net jobs, and account for 55.0% of overall net job loss since the start of the crisis, according to the report.

Even as the economy rebounds and some sectors face labor shortages, millions of women are continuing to stay home. Industrial and organizational (I/O) psychologists are researching—and speaking out on—ways to bring women back into the workforce and keep them there. Among [their short-term strategies](#) are calls to state and local decision-makers to use federal funds to mitigate COVID's impact on women workers, including supporting caregivers via financial help, improved childcare infrastructure, and family-supportive policies, and supporting workforce development via training programs for women, greater access to male-dominated jobs, and mental health services. [Read the full article.](#)

BIG DATA UPS ITS REACH

A growing number of psychologists are learning how to construct and make use of large data sets, or “big data,” to gain new insights into human behavior. To do that, they're learning analytic techniques and applying tools that go hand in hand with big data, in particular artificial intelligence (the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines) and machine learning (computers' ability to learn from data without being explicitly programmed to do so).

For behavioral scientists, big data can come from a wide variety of sources, ranging from traditional large-scale databases to medical records to unstructured data gleaned from cell phones,



Employers in Psychology are Hiring

900+ open positions—start applying today

APA psych Careers

www.psycCareers.com

social media, and wearable technology. These data and related methodologies allow researchers to study more types of constructs and variables than ever before and to be much more exploratory than traditional methods allow—to take a speculative approach to generating hypotheses rather than testing given ones. Learning programming languages such as Python, R, or SQL, for example, can be foundational support for this work, allowing for extremely rapid data collection. [Read the full article.](#)

TELEHEALTH PROVES ITS WORTH

Even after the pandemic ends, telehealth appears poised to stay, according to APA's 2021 COVID-19 [Practitioner Survey](#) of U.S. psychologists who are either APA members or prospective members.

A whopping 96% of psychologists who responded said that telehealth is effective therapeutically, and 97% said that it should remain post-pandemic. The number of clinicians using telehealth with at least some patients also continues to grow, from 33% in 2020 to 50% in 2021. More clinicians practicing telehealth will lead to increased access to much-needed care. According to the survey, demand for psychological services has jumped over the past year. Forty-three percent of the psychologists surveyed reported an increase in their number of patients, and 68% reported that their waiting lists had grown since the pandemic's beginning. [Read the full article.](#) ■



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

Connect with the Best in Psychology.

JOIN APA TODAY