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Community Psychology Practice Competencies in Undergraduate and Graduate Programs in Italy

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Abstract

In this paper we discuss several Community Psychology (CP) practice competencies learned in our existing undergraduate and graduate programs, which are similar to the ones taught in most international settings. We then describe some specific intervention methodologies that have been developed in Italy and in Europe. In the third part of the paper, we attempt to look at some of the challenges facing CP training programs in this time of crisis and uncertain future.

Key words: empowerment, practice competencies, community profiling, participatory multidimensional organisational analysis, small group skills

Introduction

We strongly agree with the editors of this special issue that “the development of CP Practice Competencies is important for further defining the “professional identity and practices of community psychologists,” especially in this period of crisis in which paradoxically community psychology interventions are more needed than ever, but difficult to realize because of diminishing public funds (Francescato & Zani, 2010).

Students who take community psychology courses often discover a “different perspective” about what psychologists might be and do, but just as often they wonder if in graduate school they will finally learn the main skills they need for community practice. We think community psychologists have made considerable progress in developing theory. However, we have not been as efficient in teaching coherent methodologies about how we can promote empowerment at the individual, group, organizational, local community and macro social levels and therefore, have not sufficiently promoted the professional empowerment of community psychologists. Training community psychologists to fare well as members of a professional minority is crucial.

Although community psychology has been growing in the last decades both as an academic and professional field, this branch of psychology still has a marginal status among psychological disciplines in all countries where it exists (Reich, Riemer, Prilleltensky, & Montero, 2007). Sometimes community psychology students face disempowering settings. Not only must they move beyond the worldview of traditional applied psychology, which emphasizes individualistic explanations of behaviour and individual strategies of change such as psychotherapy. They must also deal with the high status given in many psychology departments to neuroscientists and the biomedical

framework, which is focused primarily on the genetic foundations of psychological processes.

Moreover, many European psychology degree programs fail to take into consideration that two-thirds of their students are women, belonging to a population that the European Union considers deprived of equal opportunities. In Italy, females also have to overcome sexist socialization processes. Women’s cultural heritage pulls them toward the “caring professions” and motivates them to “help people.” However, the same cultural heritage pushes toward the “privatization” of social problems. In fact, many young women are very interested in introspection and in interpersonal relations and most psychology academic training programs help them to look even more inwards: while our current university psychology majors offer dozens of subjects related to clinical topics, very few require students to take subjects such as contemporary history, women’s studies, sociology, political psychology or political science which could offer female students different perspectives. Some CP practice competences we have developed in Italy, do widen the horizons and offer students the opportunity to look at social problems from different viewpoints.

Hoping to contribute to the professional empowerment of female and male community psychologists, in this paper we will therefore first outline what CP practice competences are taught in our existing programs, which are similar to those taught in most international programs. We then describe some intervention methodologies that have been developed in Italy and finally we attempt to look into the uncertain future.

Practice competencies similar to those acquired in international CP programs

Community psychology courses are taught in Italy, both at the undergraduate and graduate level. The practice competences learned in most of these

courses are similar to the ones acquired in many international programs. The main competence is variously called *action research*, or *participatory action research*. Another frequently taught skill is *program planning and evaluation*. Moreover students learn *quantitative and qualitative data analysis*. The depth at which these competencies are learned depends on the course level: undergraduate, master or doctoral programs.

Another core competence that is taught in all Italian community courses is *small groups skills*. In fact, some courses are called “Groups and community” to underline the importance given to understanding and empowering small groups. In community psychology, group skills are crucial since most of our interventions, from action research to program planning and evaluation, from consultation to empowering organizations and communities, are very often done in small groups. Networking among groups to promote bonding and bridging also requires an understanding of small group processes. In some universities, empowering group workshops are offered face to face and online to help students to evaluate the weak and strong points of group functioning and to understand which functions assist group processes and tasks, and which hinder group development. Students in these workshops also consider advantages and disadvantages of various methods of decision making, problem solving and conflict resolution. Students are supposed to share these group skills with members of established community groups aiming to empower them to function even better to meet their goals. Students also learn how to promote new self-help groups needed in the community and they learn to assist members in their first three or four meetings.

Finally, in most graduate programs student learn how to promote partnerships with public institutions at the regional and local level, and to network with unions, schools, police departments, and volunteer organizations of all kinds, to create and implement integrated intervention programs.

Competences developed by Italian or European Community Psychologists

In this section, we will briefly describe some theory driven intervention methodologies, which have been developed mostly in Italy that can increase the professional competences of community psychologists. Elsewhere (Amerio, 2000, Francescato & Tomai, 2001; Francescato, Arcidiacono, Albanesi & Mannarini, 2007; Francescato, 2007; Francescato, 2008; Francescato & Zani 2010, Ornelas, 2008; Orford, 2008), researchers have described how European community psychologists have tried to develop some theoretical principles that should guide community psychology practice. CP interventions should:

- Encourage pluralistic interpretations of social problems that integrate objective and subjective knowledge, and broaden the viewpoints from which a given situation can be considered.
- Examine the historical roots of social problems and the unequal distribution of power and access to resources in the social context.
- Give voice to minority narratives, and promote the production of new metaphors or new narratives that help “imagine” new scripts and roles for individuals and social groups.
- Create ties among people who share a problem.
- Identify the points of strengths to obtain a change.
- Spread psychological knowledge and competencies.

Here we describe in some detail four specific intervention methodologies, which building on these theoretical premises are taught in some community psychology courses in Italy. Local communities are made up of individuals, families, small groups and organizations that can provide empowering experiences, but also hinder the empowerment of others, especially women and minority groups. First, we present *Community profiling and network building*, and *participatory multidimensional organizational analysis*, which focus on both individual and collective empowerment processes. They increase the capacity to read power dynamics of contexts, seen from different perspectives, and to perceive obstacles and opportunities in each. They enable participants, especially women and minority members, to reach desired personal and social changes. Then we discuss two other crucial methodologies aimed at planning the future and increasing personal social political empowerment: *Socio-political Empowerment Training and Future Labs*.

Community profiling and network building

This is a structured participatory action research, that can be used to find out what particular problems and strengths characterize a local community in the eyes of different groups of residents and what are their most desired changes.

Community profiling and network building, initially developed in Italy by Martini & Sequi (1988), then modified by Francescato, Tomai, & Ghirelli (2002) and further redefined in Austria (Ehmayer, Reinfeldt, & Gtetter, 2000), is a methodology that views a local community from different perspectives, which encourages pluralistic interpretations of local problems that integrate objective and subjective knowledge and allows interpretations of the specific issues. This technique integrates tools from different disciplines and activates forms of participation that acknowledge the importance of “local knowledge.” Eight profiles

are included. In five of them, “hard” data are generally available and gathered focusing on territorial, demographic, economic, service and institutional factors. Three of the profiles are called “soft” because they are based primarily on anthropological and psychological perceptions and visions of the future of the community.

Community profiling has been used to enhance sense of community, social capital and participation in decision-making in local programs sponsored by the European Union to promote better health (Healthy Cities). Variation of this technique of community assessment has also been used to protect the environment (Agenda 21) and to help local municipal officials assess the needs and wishes of community residents (De Piccoli & Lavanco, 2003; Mannarini, 2004; Prezza & Santinello, 2002; Santinello, Dallago, & Vieno, 2009; Zani 2012).

Community Profiling begins with the formation of a core group of citizens made up of at least one local expert for each profile, the community psychologists involved and representatives of the service agency or the political body sponsoring the research. This core group, through a brainstorming technique, performs a preliminary analysis, listing what they think are the strong and weak points of their community. They also furnish access to people who are interviewed as key witnesses. Evaluations by these experts are then compared with the perceptions of the weak and strong points of the community identified by focus groups. Focus groups are chosen to represent both dominant and marginalized community groups. To examine the anthropological, psychological and future profiles, we use a variety of more subjective small group techniques from community narratives to movie scripts. For example, one might ask different target groups to develop a plot for a movie script about their community based on issues uncovered in the five “hard” data profiles. They have to pick a genre of movie (e.g. historical, science fiction, comedy or detective) and come up with a title, a plot, main characters and dramatization, if they wish, for particular relevant scenes. Most groups choose to present their “movie” in front of the other groups whose members are then encouraged to say what emotions they felt watching the performance. It seems that emotional sharing in a protected environment promotes bonding and bridging by building a climate of trust in which even conflicts can be openly expressed and accepted. During a final meeting of all the people who participated in the research, the interactions among main strengths and weaknesses that emerged from all eight profiles and priorities for change are discussed.

Developing the diverse specific professional competences (individual and group interviewing; facilitating focus groups through brainstorming and other creativity techniques; helping participants

evaluate the emotions they feel toward their communities through movie scripts production and analysis; facilitating large group discussion and mediation among different groups, to promote the individuation of final change projects which can be empowering; etc.) required to perform community profiling and network building increases the professional efficacy of community psychologists. Community profiling and network building moreover adhere to most of the theoretical principles that we believe should guide community interventions. They encourage pluralistic interpretations of social problems that integrate objective and subjective knowledge, and broaden the viewpoints from which a given situation can be considered: in fact they nudge participant to look at a community from eight viewpoints, each of which can examine a different aspect of the social problems and of the strengths to be found in the particular context. Furthermore the first five profiles focusing on territorial, demographic, economic, service and institutional dimensions give more emphasis to “objective data” such as degree of air or water pollution, etc., while the last three, rely more on subjective data, on anthropological and psychological perceptions of residents and on their visions of the future of the community. It is in these last three profiles that in fact may emerge both old narratives on the historical roots of social problems and new narratives that give voice to minority viewpoints. New narratives help “imagine” new scripts and roles for individuals and social groups in the community. The entire process of community profiling encourages networking among different associations, institutions, small groups that create ties among people who share a problem and who can together, in the final meetings where results of the profiles analyses are discussed, identify the points of strengths to obtain a change.

Performing a community profiling can take from two to six months, depending on how many interviews are conducted with key community experts and how many focus groups of dominant and marginalized members of the community are included in the process. This intervention methodology can be taught in small groups, seminars or labs lasting about two months, and has been offered both online and face-to-face. Case studies of different community profiling can be found in Italian in several books and articles (De Piccoli & Lavanco, 2003; Francescato, Tomai, & Ghirelli, 2002; Francescato & Tomai, 2002; Lavanco & Novara 2012; Mannarini 2009; Martini & Sequi, 1988, 1995; Prezza & Santinello, 2002; Santinello, Dallago, & Vieno, 2009; Zani, 2012). Description of this methodology can be also found in Spanish (Francescato, Tomai & Mebane, 2006) and in English (Francescato & Ghirelli, 1992; Francescato & Tomai, 2001; Francescato 2007; 2008; Francescato 2010a).

Participatory Multidimensional Organizational Analysis (PMOA)

Organizations are crucial for our wellbeing since most of us live a large portion of our lives in them. An empowering organization can increase: *personal wellbeing*, augmenting workers and service recipients' knowledge of the various aspects of organizational functioning, and involvement in decision-making; *relational wellbeing*, improving communication among different stakeholders, promoting bonding and bridging social capital and giving voice to marginalized and less powerful groups; and *collective wellbeing*, when members of the organization become aware of political, economic and social forces impinging on their organization. Also, frequently, one has to promote organizational as well as personal or group changes in order to implement durable modifications. Therefore, several European community psychologists have attempted to develop strategies to promote organizational empowerment (Francescato, Tomai, & Ghirelli 2002; Stark 1996).

One of these strategies (Francescato et al. 2002, 2004, 2006a, Francescato et al., 2010) is called participatory multidimensional organizational analysis (PMOA) and involves individuals on all hierarchical levels in a specific organization. For instance, students, parents, teachers, janitors and office staff from a school might analyze their organization across four dimensions (structural-strategic, functional, psycho-environmental and cultural). These four dimensions are assessed on a continuum that varies from dealing with "hard" objective variables (market share, increase or decrease in number of students, legal forms, age and educational level of staff, etc.) to "soft" subjective perceptions (unconscious representations of work settings, attitudes toward power, inter-group conflicts, level of satisfaction, etc.).

The core group starts a PMOA by having an experienced member narrate the strategic history of the organization (i.e., when it was born, what goals and visions it had, how strategic goals have changed over time). Then members evaluate how their organization has fared, choosing various criteria with which to assess their organization's performance in the recent past. Sometimes, we divide the core group into smaller homogenous subgroups (students, teachers, parents, etc.) to see what each different subgroup selects as criteria for evaluation. Then the subgroups come together and confront their visions. Taking into consideration legal, economic and other structural limits, the core group defines strategic objectives for the immediate future and for next five years. Then the functional dimension is examined by reviewing what tasks have to be completed to meet goals. We use different methodologies taken from sociology and

organizational disciplines to examine activity flows and detect where problems and assets may lie.

The competences needed to facilitate the analysis of the structural and functional dimensions include therefore the knowledge of some tools used by political scientists, economists, sociologists and management consultants. One of these tools for instance is "positioning" the organization, comparing it to similar organisations on a number of criteria. In for profit organisations the criteria are well established (for instance market share, sale volumes, etc.) and these data are continuously gathered and discussed. In non-profit institutions such as voluntary organisations or even schools, sometimes we have to spend quite a considerable amount of time brainstorming about possible criteria of comparison and give participants time to gather these kinds of data, which are not immediately available for evaluation. The professional competences needed in this part of the analysis are mostly based on small and large group facilitating skills, including the capacity to integrate different contributions coming from the various small groups, to mediate, to offer support and encouragement, to help participants verify suppositions through data analysis, to agree on what were the major strategic goals in the past and which ones should be chosen for the future.

Then the group examines the cultural or psychodynamic dimension using a variety of tools drawn from cultural psychology, cultural anthropology and socio-analysis. This dimension explores group and individual emotional variables that are often not consciously discussed. This is done by analyzing group drawings, recurrent jokes, pictures hung on walls, etc. To capture problem-solving styles, we again use the movie script technique, described in the community profiling section, only in this case the movie is about the target organization.

The competences needed here are those acquired generally in clinical psychology, the capacity to detect the emotional meaning of non-verbal and verbal behaviours, to help groups face conflicts and arrive at some creative solutions, to explore the relationships between the type and contents of movie scripts, and drawings produced by the groups and problems and areas of strength of the organisation to which they formally belong. For instance if in a movie script is titled "Titanic" or "Climbing Mt Everest" or "Fun and games" we ask participants how their title may relate to the emotions prevalent in their work setting. Or if only negative emotions prevail we may suggest to further explore some small positive emotions they experienced in their work.

Finally, the psycho-environmental dimension is explored which basically measures the fit between individuals' expectations and organizational

pressures. Generally, we use tools drawn from organizational psychology to measure perceived leadership styles, communication and conflict resolution patterns. We use both group and individual interviews focused on exploring the congruence between individual preferences, competences and desires and the organisational functions to be performed to reach strategic goals, formulated during the analysis of the structural and functional dimensions. In some cases, each person gets to say what preferred function he/she may want to exercise in the future and whether he/she has the necessary skills to perform it and finally, how he/she may learn them.

We also use organisational well-being scales to assess preferred and existing leadership styles, communication patterns and conflict resolution strategies. Here the competences needed are related to the ability to choose the best existing measures for the specific organisation we are working with, to analyze and report results, and to promote open discussion of divergent or minority opinions. After the various organizational actors have identified weaknesses and strengths in all four dimensions and the connections among dimensions -(for instance a lack of procedures on how to best go about a task -- functional dimension) may have negative effects both in the psychodynamic dimension (workers feel anxious and confused) and in the psycho-environmental dimension (insufficient communication among colleagues)-they formulate different narratives and preferred visions of the future.

In this crucial part of the analysis community psychologists have to be expert in facilitating the identification by participants of connections between both problems and areas of strengths that appear in one dimension but may affect other dimensions. Experience in conducting many organisational analyses in different work settings develops this specific competence as we describe in a book that include case studies in more than 50 small and medium business firms, public administration structures, and non-profit organisations (Francescato, Tomai & Solimeno, 2008).

At the end of the analysis, participants formulate plans to affect desired changes that can be achieved through the resources available within the organization. They also outline the problems or solutions that cannot be tackled without intervention at a different level. Focusing on feasible change necessarily promotes empowerment and increases the capacity of organizations to foster creative change. Evaluation of the efficacy of this tool has been carried out on more than 140 organizations ranging from unions to schools, from volunteer organizations to hospitals, from small family firms to governmental organizations. It takes at least 6 meetings, lasting

about three hours each to conduct a PMOA. Between meetings, normally scheduled every two weeks, members of the organisation can gather missing data. This intervention methodology can be taught in small groups, seminars or labs lasting about two months, and has been offered both online and face-to-face. More information about this methodology can also be found in Italian, Spanish and English in the following sources: Francescato et al., 2004; Francescato et al., 2006b; Francescato, 2007, 2008, 2010a; Francescato et al., 2007; Francescato et al., 2008; Lavanco & Novara, 2012; Morganti, 1998; Zani, 2012.

Socio-political Empowerment Training

This intervention strategy integrates concepts and tools from the affective education movement and feminist consciousness raising groups, and is taught to both undergraduate and graduate students. In small group workshops, participants meet about ten times for three hours. Students first participate in consciousness raising activities by exploring how their needs and wishes are influenced by mass media. In this setting, students talk about their favourite songs, movies, Internet sites and what values they convey. They also discuss their political socialization in the family, peer groups and school. Finally, they discuss political socialization that occurs through mass media.

These workshops aim also to help students become aware of how different branches of psychology are mainly the product of specific historical Weltanschauung and of the values and interests of their practitioners. Students are invited to imagine themselves working as community psychologists in settings of their choice. In pairs, students have to reflect on whether they possess the skills needed to do their desired jobs. Then students are asked to use the schema developed in the labs and in their community courses to detect the strong and weak points of the small groups of which they are members (family, class, work and/or volunteer) and how these groups impact on their personal, relational and collective well-being.

Then, they do the same using the PMOA schema for an organization of their choice. Finally, using the profiling methodology discussed previously, they explore what they know and do not know about the community where they might want to work. They also discuss how the organization or community where they may work might be affected by broad cultural, economic and/or political changes. In the final two meetings, they assess the congruence between their desires and competences and what the outside world seems to offer and require as they identify priorities for personal change that they can manage on their own. For desired collective changes, they identify other people, groups and/or institutions with which they

have to network to achieve these wider goals (Francescato, 2010b).

Other Italian community psychologists help students acquire competences in promoting the civic and political participation of young people, women and minority groups (Zani, Cicognani, & Albanesi, 2011; Zani, 2012). They use, for instance, a participatory action research methodology to train a small group of high school students, teaching them specific techniques like Photo voice and team work. Then these trained youngsters work with their fellow students in a peer-to-peer educational framework (Cicognani & Albanesi, 2013). Another set of techniques can be used to activate empowerment processes in a participatory action research like the Theater of the oppressed, the Open Space Technology, the narratives Lab (for a discussion and presentation of such techniques, see Nicoli, & Pellegrino, 2011).

Most of these competencies can be taught through Computer Supported Collaborative Learning as we have verified in several pilot studies available in English (Francescato, Porcelli, Mebane, Cuddetta, Klobas, & Renzi, 2006b; Francescato, Mebane, Porcelli, Attanasio, & Pulino, 2007b; Mebane, Francescato, Porcelli, Iannone, & Attanasio, 2008; Solimeno, Francescato, Mebane, & Tomai, 2008). These studies have been summarized in a chapter of a book in English available online (Francescato, Mebane, Tomai, Benedetti, & Rosa, 2012). In fact, we strongly recommend that we take into account the opportunities provided by virtual communities to train community psychologists. These opportunities include teaching community psychology online to promote social capital and socio-political empowerment in educational and professional settings. In Italy, we have an undergraduate degree in psychology, taught entirely at distance and community psychology was one of the courses included in the three year Bachelor's degree program. In several Italian universities social networks and virtual communities have been chosen as potential intervention settings. (Arcidiacono, Procentese, & Baldi, 2010; Matteucci et al., 2011).

Future labs

In some Italian universities students are taught to organize and conduct Future Labs. In small groups participants first take part in a critical session, in which a social problem is selected and they are encouraged to explore all the possible negative consequences if the specific problem persists in time and to vent all their fears for the future. In a second "utopic" session they learn to explore through creative techniques, both verbal and nonverbal, all possible solutions to the problem, even the most unpractical ones. They discover and express their deepest desires. Finally, in the last session, they try to integrate their desired changes

with the possibilities existing in the contexts, finding the best possible solutions and, agreeing on some actions to be taken to begin to realize desired changes. For a description of different kinds of community labs focused on future planning see also: http://assr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/it/aree_attivita/partecipazione-innovazione-sociale/comunita-equita/progetti-internazionali/community-lab/intro

Looking at the uncertain future

To become empowered, young professionals need to learn modalities of intervention that can help them to be identified as "practicing community psychologists." This will also allow them to earn a decent living. Teaching action research, program evaluation procedures and data analysis (currently the common "practical" offering in most community psychology graduate schools) is important but not sufficient. These professional skills, in fact, are most useful to those who want to publish and pursue academic careers. The other practical competences described in this article are now being taught only in some Italian community programs. We think they represent a step in the right direction to help community psychologists become respected practicing psychologists. As we have argued elsewhere (Francescato & Zani, 2010) we desperately need them in our world today.

The recent economic crisis has worsened the lot of the poorest and most marginalized groups of citizens, increased the number of people unemployed and underemployed, and augmented fears for the future in many segments of the population, living in contexts already beset by environmental, social and political problems (Orford, 2008; Zani, 2003). As community psychology theorists have postulated, human problems have a social side, because most problems are born in social contexts and in them one can find the cultural and material tools to their solution, but they have also an individual side because it is a person who suffers and who must cope with them (Amerio, 2000). Given our hierarchical social contexts, which offer opportunities and obstacles in an unequal manner for different groups of persons, it is likely that most obstacles, and most suffering will be faced by less empowered groups, who will also have less access to services, have more health problems and suffer more family disruptions.

Moreover, more personal, interpersonal and family conflicts will erupt along social divides already pre-existing the present crisis: between natives and immigrants, women and men, young and old, who will be pitted against each other to compete for fewer resources, and will find it hard to live together. 'Living together' in a peaceful and respectful way seems to have become the real issue

and the challenge of the present days. The poor-rich, migrants-natives differences and the generational and gender gaps create multilevel problems that are best handled with a community psychology oriented approach. At the core of these divides there is the issue of how to relate to the 'other', how to build positive relations. These complex problems could best be tackled through community psychology interventions that are based on the guiding principles that problems have to be faced simultaneously on several levels since transactions among individuals and the hierarchical social contexts are multidirectional and occur at multiple levels (other individuals, small groups, organizations, local and virtual communities (Francescato & Tomai, 2001). Community psychology programs, however, are less likely to be financed, deepening the social justice imbalance already prevailing in most European countries, including Italy.

In the near future community psychologists in Italy will have to face some challenges which require us to act on many different levels, both within academia and within the profession: developing new strategies for securing funds, promoting innovative partnerships with other disciplines in academia and other stakeholders in the community and, above all, making our achievements more visible - becoming more media savvy. To make community psychology more visible outside academia is particularly crucial in this period of economic crisis, since the way problems are tackled could be modified utilizing a community psychology perspective. In fact, community psychologists underline that structural and economic interventions, which are generally implemented when countries face economic crisis, are needed but are not sufficient.

We have also to work with people, by rebuilding their trust, and rekindling interpersonal and social ties. Community psychologists therefore, have to increase the visibility of data that evidence that policies and intervention based on community psychology's values of empowerment, participation and social justice produce more collective and individual well-being than those deriving from predominant neo-liberalistic, competition-oriented and consumerist values (Montero & Sonn, 2009). Community psychologists need to become more media oriented, using radio, TV and above all the Internet to make community psychology more known.

How to secure funds through private and public new sources is another key issue. We still hope that the European Union will keep financing action research in the health and social domains. The initiatives launched in the 7th framework programme still favour cooperative programs among European nations and their key concepts seem to be derived from community psychology

basic principles; moreover all research programs have to show their social relevance. However, we need to find other sources of private funding besides the European Union (foundations, unions, ethical banks, professional associations, etc.). Making our discipline more visible could help in securing new sources of funding.

How to exploit the opportunities provided by virtual communities to promote social capital is yet another challenge facing community psychology in general. Different action studies have shown that integrating CSCL (Computer Supported Collaborative Learning) and community psychology interventions can increase social efficacy, socio-political empowerment, bonding and bridging social capital in university and high school students (Mebane et al., 2008; Tomai et al., 2010) We need to study how belonging to Facebook and other online settings affects the social capital of users, and how sense of community, and other key constructs can or cannot be applied in virtual communities.

We need to provide compelling evidence that community psychologists have the competencies to tackle (with other professionals) today's complex problems. Community psychologists should document that they can act as successful facilitators in increasing: (a) Social ties and trust, and individual, small groups, organizational and community empowerment; (b) promoting active participation; (c) helping people solve conflicts constructively; (d) consolidating social networks and (e) promoting sense of community.

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