

Series Editor's Foreword

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The field of consulting psychology has blossomed in recent years. It covers the applications of psychology in consultation to organizations and systems, but also at the individual and team levels. Unfortunately, there are very few graduate training programs in this field of specialization, so consulting psychology roles are mostly populated by those who came to the field after having trained in other areas of psychology—including industrial–organizational (I-O), clinical/counseling, and school psychology. Yet such training is rarely focused on consulting psychology and psychologists, and graduate students have to learn through on-the-job training, reading books and articles, attending conferences and workshops, and being mentored in the foundational competencies of the field as they seek to transition into it.

After a number of years of editing *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, the field's flagship journal, I felt that an additional type of educational product was needed to help those transitioning into consulting psychology. The Society of Consulting Psychology therefore partnered with the American Psychological Association (APA) and worked with an advisory board (initially consisting of Judith Blanton, Dale Fuqua, Skipton Leonard, Edward Pavur, Jr., and myself) to create a new book series describing the specific, fundamental skill sets needed to practice in this area of specialization. Our goal in this book series has been to identify the major competencies needed by consulting psychologists and then to work with qualified authors to create short, accessible but

evidence-based texts that would be useful both as standalone volumes and in combination with one another. The readers would be graduate students in relevant training programs, psychologists planning a transition into consulting psychology, and practicing professionals who want to add to their areas of expertise.

What constitute fundamental skills in consulting psychology? The educational guidelines created by the Society of Consulting Psychology and approved by the *Guidelines for Education and Training at the Doctoral and Postdoctoral Levels in Consulting Psychology/Organizational Consulting Psychology* (APA, 2007) and the *Handbook of Organizational Consulting Psychology* (hereinafter, *Handbook*; Lowman, 2002) provide useful starting points. Both of these contributions were organized around the concept of levels (individual, group, and organizational) as a taxonomy for identifying fundamental skills. Within those categories, two broad skill sets are needed: assessment and intervention.

As with many areas of psychological practice, the foundational skills that apply in one area may overlap into others in the taxonomy. Interventions with individuals, as in executive coaching for instance, usually take place in the context of the focal client's work with a specific team and within a specific organization, which itself may also constitute a client. Understanding the systemwide issues and dynamics at the organizational level usually also involves work with specific executives and teams. And multicultural–international issues suffuse all of our roles. The APA Guidelines and the *Handbook* concluded, properly, that consulting psychologists need to be trained in and have at least foundational skills and experience at the individual, group, and organizational levels, even if they primarily specialize in one of these areas.

In inviting you to learn more about consulting psychology through this book series, I hope you will agree that there is no more exciting or inherently interesting area of study today. The series aims not just to cover relevant literature on timeless topics in consulting psychology but also to capture the richness of this work by including case material that illustrates its applications. Readers will soon understand that consulting psychologists are real-world activists, unafraid to work in real-world environments.

Finally, as one who trained in both I-O and clinical psychology, I should note that consulting psychology has been the one area in which I have felt that all of my training and skill sets were both welcome and needed. In a world where organizations and the individuals and teams within them greatly need help in functioning effectively; in bridging individual, group, and organization-level needs and constituencies; and in coping with the rapid expansion of knowledge and escalating competition and internationalization, this book series aims to make a difference by helping more psychologists join the ranks of qualified consulting psychologists. Collectively, we can influence not just an area of specialization in psychology, but also the world.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

The senior author has published widely on ethical issues in the practice of I-O and consulting psychology (see, e.g., Lefkowitz & Lowman, 2017; Lowman, 2006, 2011a, 2011b, 2013a, 2016b).¹ The second author has also published on this topic (Cooper, Newman, & Fuqua, 2012; Cooper & Shullman, 2012). Together, the authors of this book have been training psychologists in ethical practices in consulting psychology for a number of years and together we have written on some of these issues (see, e.g., Cooper & Lowman, in press).

In our workshops on consulting psychology ethics, we usually ask participants to submit cases they have encountered in their own practice for confidential discussion. We have always been struck by the breadth of the ethical issues represented in these cases, as well as how deeply professional psychologists consider them. For many participants, this may be one of the few times that they have had the opportunity to discuss these issues with their peers, and it is often cathartic to share what happened and what they did about it.

Whenever we discuss ethical issues with consulting psychologists, we are soon confronting the questions that concern multiple levels of practice—individuals, groups, and organizations—and the complexities of who can consent, who is the client, what is the status of the others who

¹ Portions of this section were contributed by coauthor Stewart E. Cooper.

are not defined as clients, and what happens when the organization itself is a client. Consulting work is typically done in the context of organizations, which raises questions about whose ethical standards apply—the psychologist's, the organization's, or both?

We write this book after almost two decades of high-profile corruption in large corporations (see, e.g., Lefkowitz, 2004), making this one of the most ethically challenged periods in business history. We therefore discuss some of the ethics challenges of the first decade of the 21st century and how those have affected organizational expectations and pressures to behave in particular ways and the implications of that for psychologists (see Chapter 5). We also discuss some of the limitations of psychologists' ethics codes, primarily APA's (2017) *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (hereinafter referred to as the APA Ethics Code), when applied to consulting psychology and suggest improvements.

This book aims to integrate theory and practice, and we intentionally include a number of cases. This is because, in our experience, it is more effective for people to learn about ethics by thinking about case material. (All case material is fictional but representative of the types of case material we have encountered over the years.)

In determining the ethics context in which our cases should be considered, we have mostly used the APA Ethics Code as the criterion against which to evaluate behavior and actions. This is because the APA Ethics Code is among the most advanced psychology codes yet developed. However, we also include other ethics codes when doing so adds value to the discussion and also consider some ethics codes of other professional groups.

We hope this book will be valuable to practicing consulting psychologists and those in training. We also hope that the book will find an audience among practicing managers because they also help to determine whether behavior in organizations will be exemplary or challenged.