

EXPLORING CAREERS IN AGING

Advanced Graduate Activities (3rd year and above students)

The purpose of these activities is to help students at varying levels of knowledge, skill, and development gain an understanding of and have tools to pursue careers in aging.

The activities are separated by student developmental level, and they are further divided by area of interest at the advanced levels (e.g., practice, research).

They are designed to be used in conjunction with the Exploring Careers in Aging Roadmaps, developed by the American Psychological Association's Committee on Aging.

Please refer to the website: on.apa.org/careers-in-aging

ACTIVITY 4.1**WANT TO BE A CLINICIAN? UNDERSTANDING MEDICARE
AND MENTAL HEALTH COVERAGE**

Developed by Kelly M. Trevino, PhD, Assistant Attending Psychologist, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

CONCEPT

Advanced graduate students who want to provide clinical services to older adults can work in a variety of settings such as independent practice, a mental health clinic, outpatient medical settings (e.g., primary care offices), and inpatient medical settings (e.g., acute care and nursing homes). Medicare is the primary insurance provider for older adults. Across clinical care settings, it is important for psychologists to understand Medicare coverage for their services including the amount of reimbursement received for services, cost to the patient, and the role of supplemental insurance plans. The purpose of this assignment is to improve students' knowledge of Medicare coverage of psychological services in the setting in which they hope to practice.

This assignment has two parts. First, students will research Medicare coverage of psychological services in their setting of choice. Students will then interview a provider or administrator in that setting regarding the impact of Medicare coverage on their services.

The product of this activity could be either a paper, a presentation, or a report of a group discussion. This activity could be completed in classes of varying sizes, and done in person or online. Some sharing of results from different students, whether in an in-class discussion or online discussion board, will help students learn from the experiences of others.

MATERIALS

1. Careers in Aging: A Guide for Graduate Students
on.apa.org/careers-in-aging-graduate (see “Starting a Practice” resources)
2. Resources for Interdisciplinary Career Possibilities
on.apa.org/aging-resources-interdisciplinary
3. Sample interview questions:
 - a. How does Medicare reimbursement impact your clinical services?
 - b. How does Medicare impact patients’ ability to receive psychological services?
 - c. How do you determine and manage your budget based on Medicare reimbursement?
 - d. What would you change about Medicare to improve psychological services for older adults?
4. Sample topics for students to discuss in their paper, presentation, or discussion groups:
 - a. What are the pros and cons of Medicare coverage for psychological services?
 - b. How does Medicare reimbursement impact the services psychologists provide?
 - c. How do supplemental insurance plans impact older adults’ access to psychological services?

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Before beginning the project, the student should identify the clinical setting in which they would like to provide psychological services. They will focus on the role of Medicare in this setting for the activity.
2. Students should be alerted that the Roadmap web pages include resources for exploring their preferences for different care settings.
3. The instructor can decide the parameters of the assignment based on the size and nature of their class.
4. Students should be instructed to research Medicare coverage of psychological services prior to conducting interviews. This research will inform the interviews.
5. Students should be encouraged to generate additional interview questions based on their research into Medicare.
6. For the interviews, students should select a psychologist or administrator who works in their preferred clinical setting. Ideally, the interviewee will have some knowledge of and exposure to insurance coverage in their clinical setting.