



Career Pathways and the Psychology Major

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AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

The opinions expressed in this presentation are those of the authors and do not constitute official policy of the American Psychological Association.

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Slides are available at the APA Center for Workforce Studies website under Presentations <http://www.apa.org/workforce/presentations/index.aspx>

Agenda



Introductions



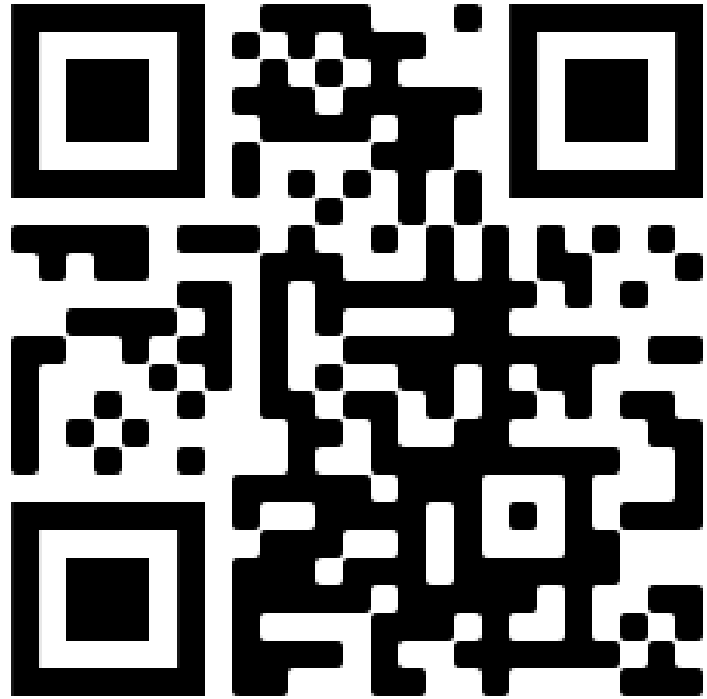
Psychology Degree Pathways



Careers in Psychology



Implications & Discussion



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APA Center for Workforce Studies

Quick Show of Hands

- Who is ...
 - An undergraduate student?
 - A graduate student?
 - An educator?
 - A clinician, practitioner, or health service psychologist?
 - A researcher?
 - An applied psychologist?
 - In a leadership, management, or administrative position?

Background on the Data Source: National Survey of College Graduates

Nationally representative of U.S. individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher

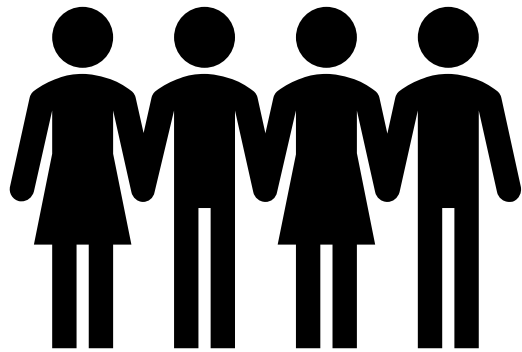
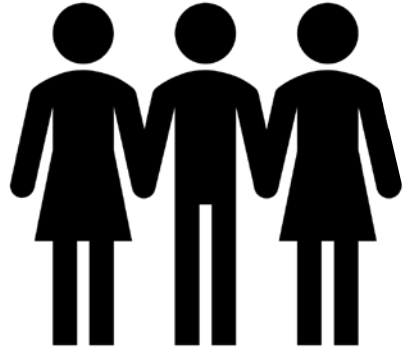
Analyses presented here included questions on highest degree earned, current occupation, job satisfaction, salary, and other job characteristics.

Results are based on weighted counts.



Psychology Degree Pathways

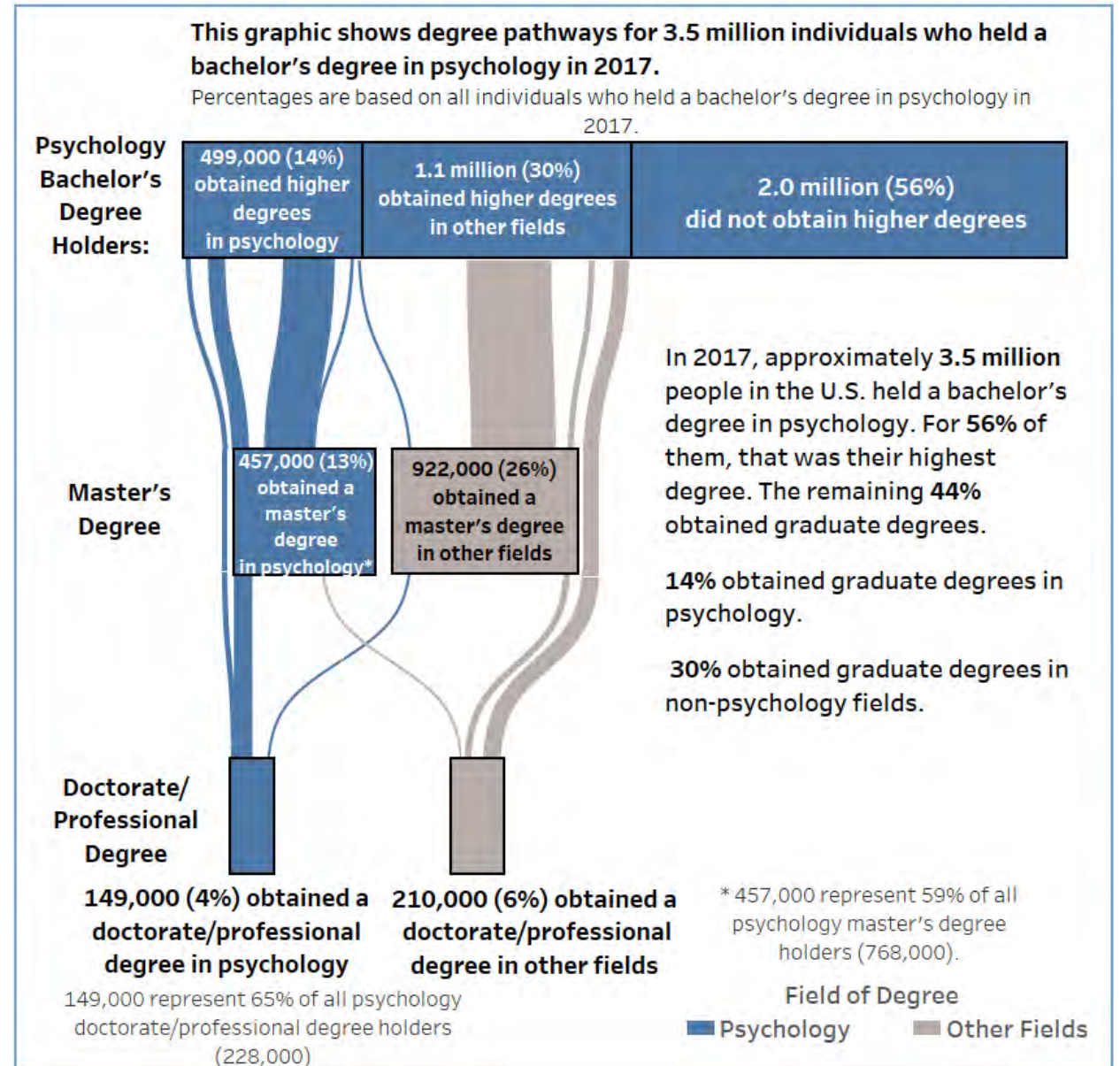




I need 7
volunteers to
make a live
infographic

Degree Pathways

- 2 million (56%) of psychology bachelor's degree holders do not obtain graduate degrees
 - Majority are in the workforce
- 1.6 million (30%) earn a graduate degree
- ~1/2 million (14%) go on to earn a graduate degree in psychology





Careers in Psychology



Careers in Psychology – Bachelor's Degree Holders

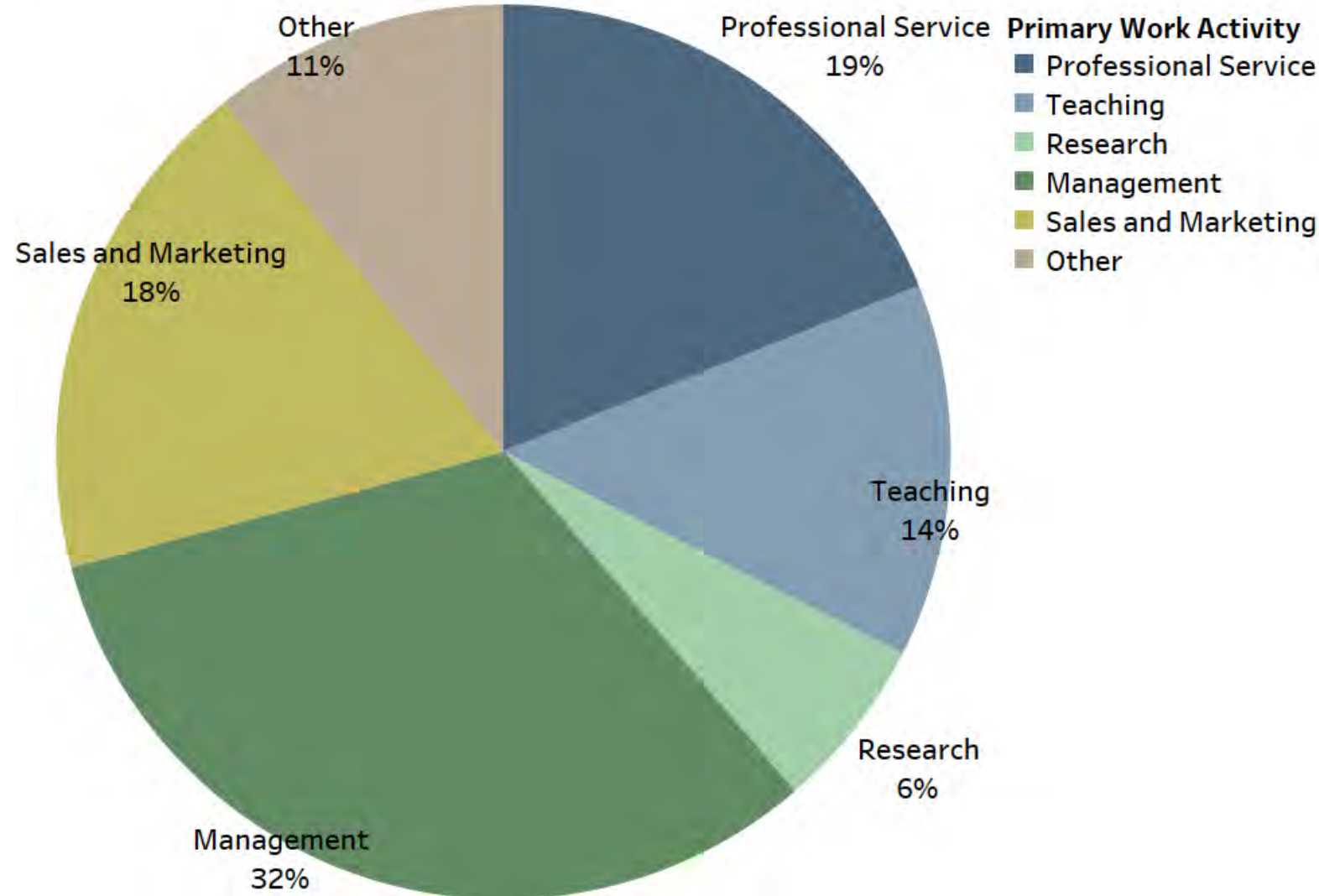
Represents 92 out of 129
different occupational
categories



Careers in Psychology – Primary Work Activity

For psychology bachelor's degree holders, the most common primary work activity is management, followed by Professional Service

Primary Work Activity for Psychology Bachelor Degree Holders



Job Characteristics

- Top 3 Occupations
 - Social Workers
 - Other management related occupations
 - Other administrative occupations
- 62% reported their jobs are somewhat or closely related to psychology
 - Only 27% say their jobs are closely related to psychology
- Overall job satisfaction is high (85% from poster)
- Median salary is \$41,000 (also from poster)



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Data Tools from the Center for Workforce Studies

The Center for Workforce Studies produces data tools to present information on the psychology workforce and education pipeline. Use the following data tools to generate custom tables and figures to answer your questions about the psychology workforce.

Have questions about how to use the data tools? This tutorial will help.



GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF LICENSED PSYCHOLOGISTS

A county-level interactive map on the distribution of licensed psychologists, drug overdose mortality rates, and suicide mortality rates.

[GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION >](#)

JOB ADVERTISEMENTS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Characteristics of job advertisements in psychology posted to APA psycCareers, including trends, geographic distribution, employment and qualifications.

[OVERVIEW >](#)
[QUALIFICATIONS >](#)

PSYCHOLOGIST WORKFORCE PROJECTIONS

Supply and demand projections of the psychologist workforce between 2015-30.

[OVERVIEW >](#)[STATE LEVEL MAPS >](#)



DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE U.S. PSYCHOLOGY WORKFORCE

A demographic snapshot of the U.S. psychology workforce and overview of demographic trends over the past decade.

[DEMOGRAPHICS >](#)



DEGREE PATHWAYS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Overview of degree pathways across psychology bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees.

[DEGREE PATHWAYS >](#)



SALARIES IN PSYCHOLOGY

Salaries for psychology doctorate and professional degree holders by career stage, position type, sector and geographic area.

[SALARIES >](#)



CAREERS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Overview of occupations and other employment characteristics for psychology bachelor's, master's, doctorate and professional degree holders.

[CAREERS >](#)

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CWS Data Tool: Degree Pathways in Psychology

Pathways from a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology

Pathways to a Doctorate in Psychology

Degree Pathways from a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology A Snapshot in 2017

Please use a desktop or laptop to use this interactive data tool.

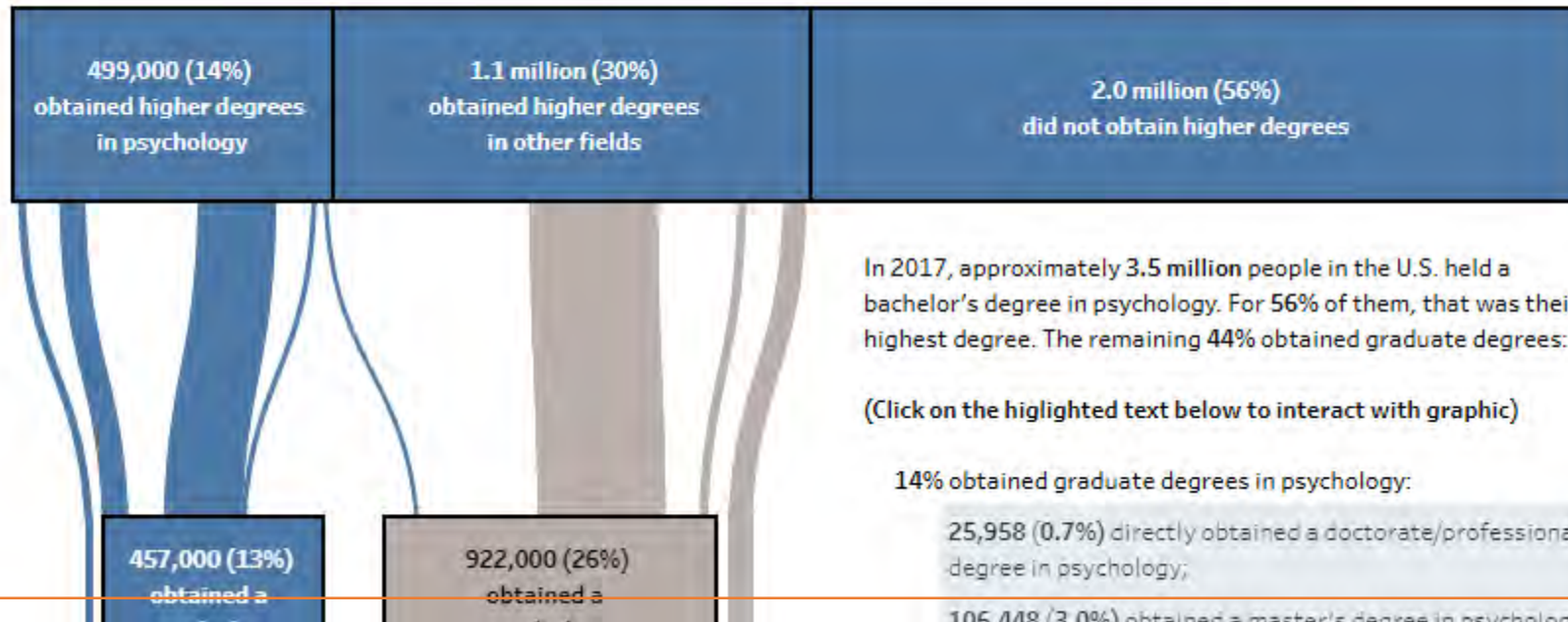
This data tool is based on the 2017 National Survey of College Graduates and includes individuals with a bachelor's degree in psychology.

Click on the text to interact with the graphic, or slide right to see pathways to a doctorate/professional degree in psychology.

For more information, check out our website at <http://www.apa.org/workforce/>

Psychology Bachelor's Degree Holders:

This graphic shows degree pathways for 3.5 million individuals who held a bachelor's degree in psychology in 2017. Percentages are based on all individuals who held a bachelor's degree in psychology in 2017.



In 2017, approximately 3.5 million people in the U.S. held a bachelor's degree in psychology. For 56% of them, that was their highest degree. The remaining 44% obtained graduate degrees:

(Click on the highlighted text below to interact with graphic)

14% obtained graduate degrees in psychology:

25,958 (0.7%) directly obtained a doctorate/professional degree in psychology;

106,448 (3.0%) obtained a master's degree in psychology;

Master's

CWS Data Tool: Careers in Psychology

Careers in Psychology: What do you do with a psychology degree?

Please use a desktop or laptop to use this interactive data tool.

This data tool is based on the 2017 National Survey of College Graduates and includes any individuals whose highest degree is in psychology.

Filter results by level of highest degree, hover over graphics for details, and click on "download" at the bottom right corner to download the dashboard as PDF or image.

For more information, check out our website at <http://www.apa.org/workforce/>

Choose Level of Highest Degree:

- ☒ Doctorate/ Professional Degree in Psychology
☐ Master's Degree in Psychology
☐ Bachelor's Degree in Psychology

Choose Year:

- ☒ 2017
☐ 2015

In 2017, an estimated **227,800** individuals held a Doctorate/ Professional Degree in Psychology as the highest degree, of which 15% were not in the labor force, 2% were unemployed, and **82%** were employed.

These employed psychology degree holders worked in **61** out of a total of 129 different occupation categories:



Choose Level of Highest Degree:

- ☐ Doctorate/ Professional Degree in Psychology
- ☐ Master's Degree in Psychology
- ☒ Bachelor's Degree in Psychology

Choose Year:

- ☒ 2017
- ☐ 2015

In 2017, an estimated **1,910,800** individuals held a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology as the highest degree,
of which 24% were not in the labor force, 4% were unemployed, and **72%** were employed.

These employed psychology degree holders worked in **92** out of a total of 129 different occupation categories:

Education administrators Postsecondary Teachers: OTHER Social Sciences Electrical, electronic, industrial, and mechanical technicians Political scientists Medical and health services managers Computer engineers - software
Actuaries Software developers - applications and systems software Secretaries, receptionists, typists Other computer information science occupations Construction and extraction occupations
OTHER mathematical scientists Teachers: Special education - primary and secondary Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations Transportation and material moving occupations Clergy and other religious workers
Computer system analysts Statisticians Computer & information scientists, research
Secondary Teachers: Sociology Other service occupations Other mid-level managers Sales- retail Accounting clerks and bookkeepers Sales- Commodities ex
Insurance, securities, real estate and business services Other administrative occupations Lawyers,
archivists, curators Top-level managers, execs, admins Writers, editors, PR specialists, artists, entertainers, broadcasters
OTHER OCCUPATIONS Sociologists Other management related occupations Marketing and sales occupations
Economists Teachers: Pre- kindergarten and kindergarten Personnel, training, and labor relations specialists Teachers: Secondary - other subject
scientists Accountants, auditors, and other financial specialists Food preparation and service Postsecondary Teachers: Mathematics and Statistics
Other health occupations RNs, pharmacists, dieticians, therapists, physician asst, nurse practitioners Computer programmers (business, scientific, process control)
Psychologists Postsecondary Teachers: Health and Related Sciences Aeronautical/aerospace/astronautical engineers Web developers
Other engineers Teachers: Secondary - computer, math or sciences Social Workers Teachers: Elementary Counselors Postsecondary Teachers: Education
Computer and information systems managers Health technologists and technicians Technologists and technicians in the physical sciences Precision/production occupations
Postsecondary Teachers: Psychology Other teachers and instructors Network and computer systems administrators Protective services

Hover over occupations for details. Occupation categories are mutually exclusive.

For occupation crosswalk, refer to <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/ncf13302/pdf/tabb2.pdf>

For data underlying this word cloud, refer to <http://www.apa.org/workforce/data-tools/careers-psychology.pdf>

For these psychology degree holders who worked in a variety of occupations,

62% believed that their jobs are related to psychology, and

27% believed that their jobs are closely related to psychology.

See their employment characteristics below:

Some Key Points



A **minority** of psychology undergraduates are going on to earn higher degrees in psychology



There are a wide range of opportunities for psychology bachelor's degree holders in the workforce



The most common activity for bachelor's degree holders is **management**

Implications & Recommendations



More accurate and extensive knowledge about career options is linked to **better career outcomes, higher levels of satisfaction** with the department, and **better adjustment** within the workforce (Landrum, 2018)



A 'warm handoff' from a faculty advisor to a **career services professional** could point psychology undergraduates toward realistic information about employment options



Improving in these areas will ultimately prepare a more **confident, satisfied and successful workforce**

Follow the link below to explore our data tools



<https://www.apa.org/workforce/data-tools>

- Workforce Projections
- Analysis of Job Advertisements
- Salaries in Psychology
- And more...

Questions or Comments?

Contact kstamm@apa.org or cws@apa.org

Thank you!



References

- American Psychological Association. (2018a). *Careers in psychology*. [Interactive data tool]. <https://www.apa.org/workforce/data-tools/careers-psychology>
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- Landrum, R.E. (2018) Affordances and Alignments: Continuing challenges in advising undergraduate psychology majors. *Teaching of Psychology*, 45(1), 84-90. doi: 10.1177/0098628317745462