



Overview of Psychological Research

Interactive Session

Time: 60 minutes

While psychological science is, at its core, focused on understanding human cognition, emotion, and behavior, it is a diverse discipline. In this session we will be discussing the field of psychological science, and we have invited some psychologists to share their field with us. The goals of this session are to:

1. Meet with psychological scientists to learn about domains of psychological science
2. Meet with other trainees who share your thematic interest to discuss how different domains of psychological science can inform your research questions

This session uses a *jigsaw* procedure wherein trainees are split into small groups to become experts on a particular subject. During a second part of the procedure, trainees are mixed into new groups with trainees who gained expertise in different subjects during the first part of the procedure. Collectively, their unique experiences will inform the group's discussion or completion of a task in the second part of the procedure. The number of groups can be adjusted based on the number of trainees and the availability of psychological scientists, however, we recommend approximately 4-5 trainees per group.

Part 1: In this session, trainees gain exposure to several different domains of psychological science. Trainees will be assigned to small groups and each small group will be paired with two psychological scientists. Trainees will spend approximately 25 minutes (or longer, if time permits) with their psychologists, learning about their specific branches of psychology, including the perspective they take on human functioning, what types of questions they typically ask, and how they usually do research. It's important that trainees ask questions and get a sense of the domains of psychology discussed by the scientists in their group, as they will be the experts on those domains in the second part of this session.

Trainees may find it helpful for psychologists to provide a handout or other set of notes providing information about their branch of psychology. A sample handout has been provided.

Domains of psychology discussed could include:

- Developmental
- Clinical
- Physiological/health
- Cultural
- Cognitive
- Industrial/organizational
- Social-personality

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Part 2: After spending 25 minutes (or longer, if time permits) with their psychologists learning about their domain, trainees will be reorganized into different groups. Trainees in these groups may have something in common with each other; for instance, trainees in each group may share similar research interests, preferred research methodology, or theoretical orientation. Regardless, trainees should be placed with others who were not in their group in Part 1. (Facilitators may find it easier to develop Part 2 groups, then place them into Part 1 groups.)

In their Part 2 groups, trainees should discuss a topic from the perspective of each psychological domain, comparing how each domain would study that topic. In their discussions, trainees should consider how each domain of psychological science inform the study of the topic at hand. These discussions should last at least 20 minutes, or longer if time permits.

For example, Part 2 groups may be divided by academic interest in themes of aesthetics, virtue, and suffering. Trainees in their Part 2 groups may be invited to consider the following discussion questions:

- Aesthetics
 - How would each discipline of psychology talk about beauty?
 - How would each discipline of psychology study beauty?
- Virtue
 - How would each discipline of psychology talk about pride?
 - How would each discipline of psychology study pride?
- Suffering
 - How would each discipline of psychology talk about suffering?
 - How would each discipline of psychology study suffering?

Wrap-Up: At the end of the session, each group should report back to the large group about their discussions on how the different perspectives on psychological science could help to inform research within their topic area. If time permits, trainees could be invited to engage in dialogue or ask questions of other groups.