

# Training To Be A Community Psychologist In The Age Of A Digital Revolution

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## Article abstract

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# Training To Be A Community Psychologist In The Age Of a Digital Revolution

**Sherry Bell, Martin van den Berg, Renato M. Liboro**

**ABSTRACT** Reflecting on pedagogy and curricula that have shaped the field of community psychology, we review the history of training community psychologists since the field's inception in the United States. We then examine relevant academic literature documenting how digital technologies in the 21st century have been successfully used in community-based participatory research (CBPR) studies conducted by community psychologists to promote engaged scholarship, the field's core values (e.g. sense of community, social justice, collaboration), and its commitment to social change. While early ideas for improving scholars' training emphasized adopting practices to meet changing community needs, our review of literature on CBPR and other community-engaged scholarly work by community psychologists in the last two decades has revealed that digital technologies' ability to promote the field's values and goals still needs to be fully harnessed. Lastly, we offer practical recommendations for community psychology undergraduate and graduate training programs to consider and implement so they can incorporate digital technologies into their programs and harness their potential to promote engaged scholarship, the field's core values, and its commitment to social change.

**KEYWORDS** community psychology, community-based participatory research, core values, digital technologies, training

Community psychology expands the scope and practices of clinical and applied social psychology to incorporate community input into addressing contextual barriers and facilitating mental health and wellbeing. While clinical psychologists have traditionally emphasized the study of individuals and personal choices from an expert level of analysis, community psychologists have historically explored human behavior and interaction using socio-ecological frameworks, system levels of analyses, and approaches that cultivate more interpersonal and interdisciplinary collaborative efforts (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Kloos et al., 2012). Similarly, while applied social psychologists have primarily focused on improving social services to offer assistance and support to those who need them, community psychologists have concentrated on the impacts of capacity building, community-led mutual aid, and self-help organizations (Nelson et al., 2007; Prilleltensky, 2001). Since the emergence of community psychology as a division of the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1967 (Reich et al., 2007), it has amassed a significantly large and active membership and offered numerous graduate and undergraduate community psychology training programs across the United States.

The origins of community psychology pedagogy and the development of its influential curricula have been traced to 10 key founders and the subsequent influencers who followed in their footsteps, e.g., founder James Kelly was influential for both Julian Rappaport and Edison Trickett (Fowler & Toro, 2008). For instance, after Kelly (1970) presented his early ideas for improving the training of community psychologists, Rappaport (1977) subsequently identified central values such as participation, collaboration, and diversity to guide community psychologists in their scholarship, research, and practice. Not long after, Trickett (1984) further expounded on these community psychology values, hoping to create a distinctive agenda for the field. These early fundamentals of community psychology curricula have not only been key to training scholars and turning them into active community practitioners and resources, but have also inspired generations of researchers to broaden their approaches when interacting with relevant stakeholders and essential partners in diverse communities (Kloos et al., 2012; Newbrough, 1973; Rappaport, 1977; Trickett, 1984).

While these archetypal ideas for improving community psychologists' training have remained relevant in the last five and a half decades, the main thesis of our article is that adapting the field's existing pedagogy to incorporate digital technologies into community psychology training would better prepare future community psychologists to address challenges in their research and practice, as they could maximize the potential advantages of using innovative technologies in their scholarly work. In this article, we will first present a brief review of community psychology training in the United States over the last five and a half decades. This review will include a discussion of the changing trends impacting community psychology training over the years, as well as its increasing emphasis on community-based participatory research (CBPR) as an ideal approach to promoting engaged scholarship and community psychology values. Next, we will define digital technologies for the purposes of our article's discussion and discuss the digital revolution's impact on healthcare, specifically underscoring how the rapid increase of digital technologies at the turn of the century has provided individuals and communities with greater capacities to gain social support through efficient networking, expanded health education, and increased anonymity (Bucci et al., 2019). Then, we will argue for the importance of incorporating digital technologies in the training of community psychologists, particularly in tandem with a sustained emphasis on using CBPR to bolster community engagement and meaningful stakeholder involvement, followed by a short commentary on the missed opportunities for improving community psychology training in recent decades. Finally, we will offer our recommendations on how digital technologies could be incorporated into community psychology training, especially to enhance the value of CBPR in promoting engaged scholarship, collaboration, and other community psychology values; ensure high levels of practice competencies among community psychologists; and support recommendations for community psychology education and training advanced by other community psychologists in the past decade.

### Training to Be a Community Psychologist: Then and Now

Since the inception of community psychology in the United States at a momentous Boston Conference on the Education of Psychologists for Community Mental Health held in May 4-8, 1965, at Swampscott, Massachusetts (Bennett et al., 1966), universities across the country have gradually developed their own undergraduate and graduate courses in community psychology (Kloos et al., 2012). By the mid-1970s, a tradition of conducting surveys to assess community psychology training programs across North America had begun and has continued to the current decade as a useful tool for critically examining and improving the training of aspiring community psychologists (Barton et al., 1976; Feis et al., 1990; Kornbluh et al., 2019; Meyer & Gerrard, 1977; Nelson & Tefft, 1982; Roehrle et al., 2020). Additionally, the development of community psychology as a field in the United States has led to a divergence of community mental health and community psychology trainings, as community psychology increasingly leaned towards a greater focus on social change and social justice (Kloos et al., 2012).

The early community psychology writings of the 1960s and 1970s were largely visionary, focusing on the education and training needs of early community psychologists and presenting historic recommendations, many of which were perceived as ahead of the times (Bennett et al., 1966; Jimenez et al., 2016; Kelly, 1970; Libo, 1974). For example, Kelly provided recommendations for the socialization of a new profession, advancing seven ideas for improving the training of community psychologists: (1) incorporating field assessment when selecting community psychologists, (2) emphasizing continuous interagency interaction, (3) developing a longitudinal perspective, (4) mixing theory and practice, (5) taking advantage of community events, (6) identifying community resources, and (7) updating the community psychologist. These earliest visionary writings paved the way for the development of fundamental concepts and frameworks, core values, training models, and practice priorities and competencies for community psychology in succeeding decades by setting up critical ideologies and commitments for the field that distinguished community psychology from other divisions of psychology and related fields of study (Iscoe et al., 1977).

The 1980s and 1990s led to an even sharper focus on training in community psychology practice (Jimenez et al., 2016). Ecological frameworks introduced in the 1970s continued to be well received and espoused in the field, and additional community psychology values were proposed to guide scholars in training (Barton et al., 1976; Kelly, 1971; Trickett, 1984). New roles for community psychologists (e.g., as consultants, academic partners, industry specialists, and advocates) were also explored during these decades, along with the introduction of fresh training models to develop novel expertise and community-driven interventions (Meyers, 1984; Weinstein, 1981).

In the 2000s and 2010s, three notable events significantly impacted community psychology training: the 2007 publication of Reich et al.'s *International Community Psychology: History and Theories*; Dalton and Wolfe's 2012 column in *The Community Psychologist*; and a boom in publications on CBPR and community-driven scholarship. Realizing how American-focused and ethnocentric community psychology training was in the United States at that time, Reich et al. began a journey that eventually resulted in the publication of *International Community*

*Psychology: History and Theories*. Not only did their book highlight community psychology's diverse roots, rich histories, and global scale, it also provided significant opportunities to learn more about distinct local and indigenous theories, research, and culturally appropriate practices of community psychology scholars in countries from North America, Latin America, the Asia-Pacific, Australia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (Montero, 1996; Montero & Varas Diaz, 2007; Nelson et al., 2007; Nelson & Tefft, 1982; Reich et al., 2007).

Five years later, another crucial influence on community psychology training was published, this time as a joint column in *The Community Psychologist*. In their article, Dalton and Wolfe (2012) described the earliest iteration of what was later to be established as the 18 competencies for community psychology practice, which were reviewed, ratified, and made more accessible to scholars and to community psychologists in training by the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA, Community Psychology, APA Division 27). Today, these 18 community psychology practice competencies continue to be accessible on SCRA's official website, along with teaching and training resources such as graduate and undergraduate syllabi, sample course projects and papers, evaluation templates, and community service learning materials (SCRA, n.d.).

Finally, in the last decade, numerous community psychologists focused their attention on producing academic and empirical work emphasizing the value of CBPR to successfully conducting community-driven and engaged scholarship that upholds the long-standing core values of the field (Kaufman et al., 2016; Kornbluh et al., 2019; Kloos et al., 2012).

### **Using CBPR to Promote Community Psychology's Engaged Scholarship and Values**

To help guide decisions for community psychology research and action; monitor the match between the field's values, action plans, and items; better understand diverse communities; and foster a shared sense of purpose, Kloos et al. (2012) proposed seven core community psychology values for scholars in the field: (1) individual and family wellness, (2) sense of community, (3) respect for human diversity, (4) social justice, (5) empowerment and citizen participation, (6) collaboration, and (7) empirical grounding (2012). They described these values as crucial to promoting engaged scholarship, particularly to collaboratively developing research questions and sustaining community partnerships.

Some of these core values overlap with Kelly's (1970) highly cited ideas for the training of community psychologists. For instance, Kelly called for researchers to increase interagency and interdisciplinary interactions to gain collaborative experiences with those outside of the social sciences. Similar calls for interdisciplinary work have highlighted the importance of achieving a systematic change in health services, and research has suggested that strategic partnerships should be fostered across discipline silos, such as those in the health and social sciences (Dooris, 2013), particularly in their CBPR work. A recent review of vital researcher qualities conducted by community psychologists noted the additional importance of creative resourcefulness among researchers to build stronger relationships with community partners and other collaborators in CBPR projects (Liboro & Travers, 2016).

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In the next section of this article, we will review the use of innovative digital technologies in CBPR projects as an exemplar of creative resourcefulness that we believe should be incorporated in the current and future training of community psychologists.

### **Digital Technologies and CBPR**

Broadly, digital technologies are defined as a wide array of technologies, tools, services, and applications using various types of software and hardware that facilitate activities and the use of other services by electronic means to create, store, process, transmit, and display digitized information (Rice, 2003). All electronic instruments, technical equipment, automated systems, and online or virtual resources that produce, process, or store digitized information are included in this definition of digital technologies. For the purposes of this article, we will refer to this broad definition when discussing digital technologies, but we will also focus on specific technologies that are most relevant to our discussion, including (but not limited to) the internet, academic and professional websites, online platforms and campus learning management systems, personal computers, smartphones, social media, social networking, video conferencing, video streaming, and other virtual services.

In the past several years, digital technologies have dramatically revolutionized almost every aspect of human existence, including communication, entertainment, travel, banking and finance, healthcare, social services, education, and research. Digital technologies have progressed faster than any other human invention in history, reaching more than half of the world's population in just two decades and forever changing our civilization (Pew Research Center, 2021). Recent data have shown a growth in internet usage among adults in the United States from 52% in 2000 to 93% in 2021 (Pew Research Center, 2021). Furthermore, in the United States the percentage of adults with broadband service at home has grown from 1% in 2000 to over 75% in 2021. Similar rates of growth have been observed in smartphone usage among adults in the United States, which was at 85% as of March 2021 (Pew Research Center, 2021). Global reports of internet and smartphone usage have shown a similar growth pattern in developing countries (Poushter et al., 2018). The increased access to home internet and the availability of smartphones globally have provided researchers and clinicians with innovative avenues for developing communication tools, sharing information, increasing accessibility to services, and identifying local needs (Jimenez et al., 2016; Liboro et al., 2021). Drawing from the evidence on the prevalence of internet usage and other digital technologies both nationally and globally, we will discuss the significant power, potential, and role of digital technologies in CBPR and the promotion of engaged scholarship and related community psychology core values (e.g., the promotion of wellness, sense of community, civic participation, collaboration, empowerment, social justice, and respect for human diversity). We will also discuss the importance of incorporating digital technologies into community psychologists' training.

Increased access to the internet and other digital technologies has created many exciting opportunities to solve community-level problems using digital technologies. The most powerful of these digital technologies are smartphone applications, online communities, virtually accessible healthcare or service resources, social networking sites, and software that can provide



broadband services to resource-limited communities. For example, smartphone applications specific to community needs have been developed to increase Latiné families access to parenting strategies (Doty et al., 2020), provide accessible health information for people with disabilities (Russ et al., 2020), map community resources and share local street knowledge in food deserts (Akom et al., 2016), and inform African American communities of culturally relevant health practices to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease (Brewer et al., 2019). Additional innovative uses of digital technologies to conduct community-level interventions have included creating and using videos to aid in HIV prevention (Hswen & Bickman, 2018), redesigning health literacy websites to provide culturally relevant content (Smith et al., 2014), and developing new online platforms to facilitate community conversations and actions (Ohmer et al., 2021). While online networking platforms can be vulnerable to cyberbullying or other aggressive behaviors, researchers using this form of technology have successfully navigated these spaces and issues (Kornbluh et al., 2016; Lichty et al., 2019). For instance, researchers collaborating with secondary school teachers in a CBPR study have successfully monitored a youth Facebook group shared across three schools aimed at developing student-led civic participation and solutions to mental health disparities (Kornbluh et al., 2016).

The increased availability of digital technologies has also changed how researchers and clinicians approach communities today. Notably, this shift has been highlighted by healthcare and teaching professionals who pivoted to digital technologies during the COVID-19 pandemic to improve the accessibility and quality of health information and services for communities that have historically had limited access to such services. To illustrate, during the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth visits (e.g., virtual clinical services from healthcare facilities and providers) increased by 135% because of public health guidelines (Koonin et al., 2020). A similar shift in how service providers engage with communities has been observed among teaching professionals. A review of the literature shows that institutions that have offered online courses with more flexible schedules have been better able to reach underserved populations (Li & Irby, 2008). This applies to both synchronous and asynchronous courses, as well as web-based (pre-recorded) and web-live (real time) courses.

However, there are some growing pains. While telehealth services have resulted in increased access to personalized health care, there are issues such as limited broadband service in rural communities and other barriers to navigating digital technologies (Koonin et al., 2020). Additionally, the challenges associated with the online delivery of services have not been limited to telehealth providers but have also surfaced in the context of educational systems. A review of online classes has found that teachers lack access to resources to help navigate new online services and meet the specific needs of diverse students (Kebritchi et al., 2017). In light of these challenges, efforts have been made to promote engaged scholarship and incorporate digital technologies in CBPR approaches (Gibbs et al., 2020; Unertl et al., 2016). The use of CBPR approaches has provided researchers with opportunities to address social inequalities and promote sense of community and wellness by drawing on local knowledge to create meaningful collaborations with communities (Kloos et al., 2012).

While CBPR projects uphold the community psychology values guiding those training to become community psychologists, additional recommendations for trainees and training programs have been presented in recent years (Jimenez et al., 2016; Liboro & Travers, 2016). Building on Liboro and Travers' (2016) call for creative resourcefulness in community psychology work and CBPR, we believe that researchers training in community psychology would benefit from considering and evaluating digital technologies as potentially powerful and creative resources.

By using digital technologies in their CBPR studies, academic researchers and their community partners have successfully promoted engaged scholarship and community psychology core values. Used judiciously and skillfully, digital technologies in CBPR studies (1) increase community engagement, (2) disseminate findings more widely, and (3) expand the knowledge of relevant stakeholders, as discussed below.

### ***Increasing Community Engagement***

Several studies have demonstrated digital technologies' ability to increase community engagement. Researchers working with African American populations to facilitate citizen participation and collaboration noted that access to online services via personal computers or smartphones increases community engagement and promotes culturally diverse and relevant interventions (Brewer et al., 2019; Hergenrather et al., 2013). Current literature has also explored the benefits of digital technologies in CBPR conducted in developing countries. For instance, Veronese et al. (2019) have conducted interviews and focus group discussions about barriers to accessing HIV testing and prevention services for men who have sex with men in Myanmar. Their results indicate that concerns about maintaining anonymity are a key barrier. Veronese et al. have concluded that there is a critical need for community-based approaches that use anonymous and confidential online spaces when developing HIV prevention programs and providing access to prevention services.

Recent challenges brought to light by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic have pushed community-based organizations and community psychologists towards developing virtual services and using digital technologies to keep individuals and communities engaged in CBPR. Researchers collaborating with community-based organizations have shifted in-person protocols to online formats to better fit the needs of their participants (Teti et al., 2021; Valdez & Gubrium, 2020). For instance, Valdez and Gubrium (2020) have described their experience transitioning from an in-person to a virtual Photovoice approach as convenient and beneficial: Photovoice's virtual format allows researchers more opportunities to actively engage with communities that lack adequate transportation or childcare (Lichty et al., 2019; Valdez & Gubrium, 2020). Likewise, using Photovoice in private blog platforms helps develop a sense of community and supportive relationships due to the perceived safety of speaking freely in an online environment (Lichty et al., 2019).



***Disseminating Findings More Widely***

Digital technologies also help to disseminate findings more widely. For example, researchers have explored how access to the internet and digital technologies has impacted Indigenous communities in North America. Across the United States, over half of American Indians and Alaskan Natives reside in remote and rural areas (Deweese & Marks, 2017). Comparable findings have been reported in Canada where 60% of Indigenous peoples reside in rural areas (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2020). Additionally, while Indigenous communities in rural areas have typically had trouble accessing internet services, CBPR approaches have revealed Indigenous communities' preference for online health information and services to scale up and disseminate findings (Craig Rushing & Stephens, 2012). To illustrate, Craig Rushing and Stephens (2012) have collaborated with American Indian and Alaskan Native tribes to develop guidelines for technology-based health interventions aimed at reducing HIV risk among youth. With 91% of participants reporting the importance of computer and online services, subsequent interventions have incorporated online platforms that are popular with youth. Youth-developed suggestions have underscored the importance of developing age-appropriate content for online platforms that would widely disseminate health information (Craig Rushing & Stephens, 2012). Additional support for leveraging the power of online platforms has been highlighted in Canada among First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth who have collaborated with researchers to investigate strategies for scaling up youth engagement, information sharing, and empowerment in youth-led programs (Halsall & Forneris, 2016). Results from a needs assessment and Photovoice exploration in a CBPR study by Halsall & Forneris (2016) revealed the potential power of social media to not only increase youth participation and engagement, but also facilitate the rapid dissemination and use of information. Support for this strategy of scaling up youth participation through social media applications has also been documented by previous youth participatory action research, where findings have emphasized the importance of social media to increase civic participation and socially just knowledge dissemination among youth who are geographically isolated from peers (Frasquilho et al., 2018).

While rural areas often lack easy access to internet services, using a CBPR approach to collaborate with communities has unearthed new strategies to overcome internet access barriers, resulting in the increased dissemination of studies that incorporate digital technological components. (Friedline et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2020). Native American youth collaborators have guided researchers in adapting tools and survey methodology to their studies' rural environments (Kim et al., 2020). Specifically, the lack of internet access has encouraged researchers to use software that can function offline for collecting and storing mobile technology survey data, as well as disseminating information.

***Expanding the Knowledge of Relevant Stakeholders***

Finally, digital technologies can help expand stakeholders' knowledge. Among adult populations in rural communities, CBPR approaches to developing HIV prevention interventions among men who have sex with men have explored using online platforms to expand the knowledge of relevant stakeholders (Hubach et al., 2014; Tanner et al., 2016). Hubach et al. (2014)

have collaborated with community-based organizations to develop an appropriate study design for identifying the unique needs of men who have sex with men in rural communities who require more knowledge of HIV prevention and care. Self-reported survey results indicate that the majority of participants have used social networking sites and video conferencing platforms to seek sexual contact with other men. Consequently, the researchers proposed developing an online platform to provide useful health information (e.g., on risks related to specific sexual behaviors and barriers to condom use) and intervention programs to expand relevant stakeholders' knowledge of online HIV prevention and care options pertinent to them (Hubach et al., 2014). Similar studies have explored the importance of anonymity to marginalized groups in rural communities, who specifically seek out information on HIV prevention and care in online spaces so as to reduce any risk of incidental disclosure and discrimination (Gamariel et al., 2020; Veronese et al., 2019).

### **Recommendations for Incorporating Digital Technologies into Community Psychology Education and Training**

Recognizing the significant potential of digital technologies in CBPR and the promotion of engaged scholarship and related community psychology values, we believe that as a field of study, community psychology has missed significant opportunities over the last two decades to fully harness the power of digital technologies in the development of its theory and the conduct of its research and practice. Despite the numerous examples we have cited that showcase how digital technologies have considerably helped community-engaged studies and CBPR projects, we believe that these accomplishments are only a small fraction of what digital technologies could actually do for the field of community psychology.

To remedy this, we believe that community psychology should, first and foremost, incorporate digital technologies into community psychology training. To accomplish this important task, we offer six practical recommendations for current and future graduate and undergraduate community psychology training programs to consider: (1) establish an ad hoc or standing committee that would assume the primary responsibility of developing and carrying out the plans to incorporate digital technologies into their community psychology training program, (2) secure the involvement of an individual with content and technical expertise on digital technologies (preferably one from the community) who will collaboratively work towards incorporating digital technologies in their community psychology training program, (3) survey and assess their current training program for opportunities to incorporate digital technologies, (4) review previous recommendations from community psychology founders and current scholars on how to improve community psychology training and examine how the integration of digital technologies into their recommendations could further improve the training of community psychologists, (5) design and finalize a plan on how to incorporate digital technologies into their community psychology training program, and (6) amend, ratify, and implement the plan in collaboration with other representatives from their department (i.e., faculty members, staff, graduate and undergraduate students) and/or community partner agencies of their training program and prepare for its future evaluation.

***Establish a Committee to Incorporate Digital Technologies into the Training Program***

An important first step is for relevant stakeholders (in the psychology department or elsewhere) to establish an ad hoc or standing committee that would assume the responsibility of planning and carrying out the effort to incorporate digital technologies into their community psychology training program. Depending on the judgement of those involved, they could establish an ad hoc committee created solely for the aim of developing and carrying out a plan to incorporate digital technologies and maintain the committee until this aim is satisfactorily achieved. Alternatively, they could establish a standing committee that would remain as a regular department committee and that would ensure the department incorporates digital technologies in its training program and, perhaps later, in other aspects of their department's agenda. The decision to establish an ad hoc or standing committee will understandably be influenced by the department's priorities, resources, and changing needs. As an alternative, a decision could be made to start with establishing an ad hoc committee, which could later on transition into a standing committee.

Ideally, the committee members should be as diverse and inclusive as possible, potentially including faculty members with different statuses (e.g., tenured, promoted, tenure-track, non-tenure-track, and/or teaching stream), graduate and undergraduate students, staff, and, if possible, representatives from community partners who also have a stake in the training of community psychologists. Other considerations include the members' knowledge of and proficiency with digital technologies, interest and investment in the training program, and levels of power and privilege. The committee would establish aspects such as shared governance, shared responsibility, and shared ownership of the plan to incorporate digital technologies into their community psychology training program.

While this recommendation would likely be feasible in large, resource-rich departments with already existing ad hoc and standing committees (e.g., executive, personnel, graduate/undergraduate, symposium, grievance, social, and/or diversity, equity, and inclusion committees), we recognize that departments from smaller universities and colleges may find it difficult to establish such a committee for reasons related to manpower, resources, and/or priorities. Because of this, it is crucial to note that our subsequent recommendations need not be contingent on the establishment of an ad hoc or standing committee. These recommendations could be carried out by as few as one or two dedicated members of the department—and they need not carry out all of our recommendations to benefit from them.

An example of this would be one faculty member and their graduate student integrating one or more of our subsequent recommendations into a CBPR project with internal or extramural grant funding. Another example is a determined and motivated faculty member who sees the value, and even the urgency, of incorporating digital technologies into their training program and customizes our recommendations into specific, doable tasks at a more appropriate scale. Some of our recommendations may even be considered by students advocating for change in their training programs. In other words, we present our recommendations here not as ideas that have to be rigidly followed but as suggestions that can be flexibly implemented into different contexts.

### ***Secure the Involvement of a Digital Technologies Content and Technical Expert***

Another important recommendation is securing the meaningful involvement of a digital technologies content and technical expert who understands what digital technologies can bring to a community psychology training program, its community psychology values, engaged scholarship, CBPR, and commitment to social change. Ideally, this expert is a known community partner to the training program or a key stakeholder. This expert would work very closely and as equitably as possible with the individual(s) or committee from the department responsible for incorporating digital technologies into the community psychology training program. Ideally, this expert would receive just remuneration for their work. If there are no department or program funds for remuneration, consider other sources of funding, such as disbursements from within the university, college, or school the department belongs to; internal or extramural grants or scholarships; and benefactors from the community. The committee could also look for individuals whose job responsibilities include collaborating with academic researchers. In this case, remuneration may not be necessary, especially if their job prohibits remuneration for community-academic partnerships.

### ***Assess the Training Program for Opportunities to Incorporate Digital Technologies***

Our next recommendation is for departments to survey the current state of their training program and assess possible opportunities, venues, and aspects that could incorporate and benefit from the use of digital technologies, ideally with the guidance of a content and technical expert. For example, they could review the undergraduate (e.g., Introduction to Community Psychology, Research Methods, Community Service Learning) and graduate (e.g., Program Evaluation, Community Psychology and Social Interventions, CBPR) courses offered in their program to identify where digital technologies content and technical skills could be embedded to best benefit trainees. Departments could also consider developing a course about digital technologies in community psychology theory, research, and practice, as we anticipate that the value and use of digital technologies will become increasingly relevant to CBPR and community psychology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### ***Review Previous Recommendations of Community Psychology Founders and Other Community Psychologists***

Existing academic literature already offers important ideas and recommendations for improving the training of community psychologists (Jimenez et al., 2016; Kelly, 1970), and training programs should seriously review and consider this literature. For example, looking into Kelly's ideas for improving the training of community psychologists with the guidance of a digital technologies expert could offer ideas on how to promote continuous interagency interaction, develop longitudinal research or practice perspectives, take advantage of community events, identify community resources, and update community psychologists using digital technologies. As has been documented, digital technologies allow individuals and communities to improve communication and information sharing and gain social support through social media, social networking, video conferencing, and video streaming; increase health education through

academic and professional websites and online platforms and campus learning management systems; and use software to maintaining anonymity (Bucci et al., 2019; Jimenez et al., 2016).

Another example would be for the responsible individual(s)/committee and digital technologies expert to review the recommendations of Jimenez et al. (2016). They argue that community psychologists should use social media to stay current and relevant, as well as to influence how people in the field of community psychology socially interact. A logical extension of this recommendation is to use digital technologies to support or implement the other recommendations of Jimenez et al. (2016) for improving community psychology training, including having community psychologists serve as a major resource to communities; promoting a sense of community within the field; diversifying students, faculty, and leadership; systematically evaluating the field's efforts; enhancing the visibility and growth of community psychology; and fostering globally minded and innovative community psychology scholars and researchers.

As a final example, consider Dalton and Wolfe's (2012) work. Their research, which was later reviewed and made more accessible online by the SCRA Community Psychology Practice Council and Council of Education Programs (SCRA, n.d.), shows how digital technologies can be incorporated into community psychology training to augment psychologists' community psychology practice competencies. Based on the CBPR work of various community psychologists and other scholars we reviewed in this article (Craig Rushing & Stephens, 2012; Frasilho et al., 2018; Halsall & Forneris, 2016; Kornbluh et al., 2016; Lichty et al., 2019; Ohmer et al., 2021), digital technologies can bolster community psychology trainees' practice competencies in promoting community inclusion and partnerships; community leadership and mentoring; consultation and organizational development; collaboration and coalition development; community organizing and advocacy; and community education, information dissemination, and building of public awareness (SCRA, n.d.).

### ***Finalize the Plan to Incorporate Digital Technologies into the Training Program***

Once the individual(s), committee, and/or digital technologies expert have completed their review of previous recommendations for improving community psychologists' training and explored the opportunities for feasibly and appropriately incorporating digital technologies, they should then begin to devise, design, and finalize a plan to improve their community psychology training by incorporating digital technologies. Ideally, this plan would be based on sound community psychology theories, core values, and evidence derived from CBPR and prior scholarly work. When this plan is completed and finalized, the next step would be to present it to the greater community of stakeholders, such as other faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, staff, and community partner agencies of the training program.

### ***Implement the Plan to Incorporate Digital Technologies into the Training Program***

The last recommendation is the implementation of the plan to incorporate digital technologies into the community psychology training program. In genuine collaborative fashion, the implementation will immediately follow the review, amendments, and ratification of the plan by the greater community of relevant stakeholders who have an interest and investment in

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improving the training of the program's community psychologists. A protocol to conduct sequential evaluations after designated periods of time (e.g., mid-implementation, post-implementation) should be in place prior to the plan's implementation. These sequential evaluations will fall under the purview of the individual(s) or committee responsible for incorporating digital technologies into their training program, and who will report the evaluation findings to their respective department and community partners.

### **Conclusion**

A strong commitment to improvement is an important part of the spirit of community psychology as a field, and improving the training of community psychologists is an integral aspect of this ongoing commitment. In this article, we argued that when incorporated into CBPR, digital technologies are excellent resources for advancing not only the promotion of engaged scholarship and community psychology core values, but also community psychology's strong commitment to consistently improve its theories, research, and practice. It is high time that community psychology harnesses the power of digital technologies, particularly by incorporating them into the training of community psychologists. While the task of incorporating digital technologies into community psychology training will not be easy, it is our hope that the advocacy and recommendations in this article will prove a worthwhile starting point for the community psychologists who choose to take on this task in the years to come.

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