Ph.D vs Psy.D: What is the Difference?
Guest Speakers: Dr. Saunders (Psy.D) and Dr. Chin (Ph.D)

Grad School Training:
Dr. Chin:
Originally, I didn’t know what I wanted to study in college, I was undecided for a good portion of my undergraduate years. I started taking some psychology classes and realized that I found social psychology really interesting. An advisor told me that to get into grad school I needed to get involved in research and through that experience I found that I truly enjoyed research. After getting my B.A. in psychology, I obtained my Ph.D in social psychology from the University of California at Santa Barbara. My grad school experience focused mostly on statistics and was research oriented. After grad school, I ended up staying in academia and doing research through the universities I have worked at.

Saunders:
Similar to Dr. Chin, I didn’t know what to study in college. During my undergrad years I worked as a youth director at my local church and discovered that I liked interacting with others in a positive way. After getting my bachelors in psychology, I went on to obtain my masters in counseling and psychological services. Personally, I choose to obtain a Psy.D instead of a Ph.D because I did not like research, but I liked the practicum aspect of being a psychologist. I was offered a job from the bureau of prisons through networking with people at an APA conference. Later on in my career I went into private practice and got a lecture job at UCF.

What advice would you give to someone looking at clinical programs? Which program should they apply to?
It depends on what you are interested in and if research is a big part of that program. Also look at masters program with a thesis aspect to determine which field is right for you. Not all PhD recipients go into academia and most end up in a job that requires little to no research.

What would you suggest for someone who wants the Dr-patient interaction?
Depending on the area of psychology, Dr-patient interaction can be obtained with either degree. The job you get after graduation determines the amount of Dr-patient interaction you will experience.

How much does the label of a doctoral program (i.e. developmental, cognitive) really matter?
If you want to work in a university setting then the label of the doctoral program matters because universities have to hire individuals within a certain department (ex. Have to hire someone with a Ph.D in developmental for a developmental position). If you don’t want to work in a university
setting then the label of the doctoral program does not really matter. You should apply for programs that peak your interest.

**Is a masters degree required to get into doctoral programs?**
No, it is not necessary for an individual to obtain a masters degree before applying to doctoral programs. In fact, most doctoral programs prefer students to not have a masters degree and most schools will not accept the degree or transfer classes. It is common to obtain your masters degree while getting a Ph.D or Psy.D. Depending on your desired career path a doctoral degree might not be necessary. For instance, as a therapist only a masters is required. However, a doctoral degree has the opportunity to open more doors in terms of a career path.

**What advice would you give to students that did not get into a Psy.D or Ph.D program?**
The best advice is to continue to gain experience that will be beneficial to you and improve your CV. A lot of individuals take time off between graduation and grad school, it is important to use that time to strengthen your future application. An example would be getting involved in a research position or acquiring an internship.