



Lutheran Family Health Centers **Sunset Terrace.**

PSYCHOLOGY EXTERNSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

The Psychology externship program at the Sunset Terrace Mental Health Center is committed to the teaching of cultural sensitivity and issues of multiculturalism as they pertain to psychological practice. The externship has 8 available positions focusing on different aspects of service delivery – i.e. service delivery to child and adolescent outpatients, service delivery to adult outpatients, service delivery to forensic populations, service delivery to geriatric populations, service delivery to severely mentally ill populations and service delivery to populations with co-occurring disorders. Across all service delivery areas, externs provide individual and group therapy, psychodiagnostic testing and intake and screening activities.

The Sunset Terrace Mental Health Center is proud of its contribution to the cross-cultural research literature since it is the site where two culturally sensitive clinical methods have been developed and evaluated: the “Cuentos” intervention which is a child and family therapy technique using Latino folk tales to illustrate important psychological principles and the “TEMAS” (Tell-Me-A-Story) project, which is a thematic apperception test for ethnic minority and non-minority children. The author of these two methods, Dr. Giuseppe Costantino, is a former Clinical Director of S.T.M.H.C. Additionally, several large research programs are ongoing and involve issues related to cultural sensitivity in mental health services. The clinical goals of the externship are taught to students by way of a core set of supervision experiences and seminars.

BACKGROUND

Lutheran Medical Center (LMC) is a 500 plus bed medical center whose extensive network of community care facilities has received national recognition. LMC was recently awarded best community practice by the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Health Care Organizations. Located in Sunset Park, a multi-ethnic, low to middle income neighborhood near the Brooklyn waterfront and the largest Urban Historic District in the Northeast Area, the medical center is a major teaching hospital, serving as a teaching site of the State University of New York Health Science Center of Brooklyn.

The Ambulatory Care Services of LMC are delivered through The Family Health Center Network. Since its inception in 1967, the Family Health Center has developed into one of the largest and most comprehensive federally supported community health centers in the nation. There are a number of community based satellite facilities in the Family Health Center Network. This network of healthcare services in the Sunset Park, Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Park Slope, Red Hook, and

East Flatbush communities, offers comprehensive primary care, specialty & support services as well as educational programs. The Sunset Terrace Mental Health Center (STMHC) is one of the specialty clinics operating within the Lutheran Family Health Center/Sunset Terrace. Serving the communities of Bay Ridge, Sunset Park, Park Slope and Red Hook, SPMHC currently has the largest Hispanic patient population of any outpatient mental health center in Brooklyn, and as such, in NYC. In addition, substantial portions of our population are comprised of immigrants from China, Pakistan, the former Soviet Union, Jordan, Italy, Greece, and other countries. More specifically, approximately 80% of the active patient caseload is comprised of Latinos with the remaining 20% comprised of European and Asian immigrants. The distinctive demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of this catchment area have necessitated that over the years STMHC develop an integrated network of comprehensive culturally sensitive mental health services to meet the need of its multi-cultural ethnic minority patient population.

Currently STMHC prides itself for providing a variety of culturally sensitive treatment programs, including Adult OPD treatment, Child and Adolescent Services, an On-Site School Mental Health Project, an Integrated Treatment Program for Co-Occurring Disorders and a Psychosocial Club for severely mentally ill clients. The center has had a strong innovative treatment and clinical research program which have involved both staff and students in projects that typically have led to data collection, presentations and publications. These have included: The Cuento Therapy Project, a culturally sensitive treatment modality; TEMAS (Tell-Me-A-Story), a multicultural projective test; a special treatment program for sexually abusing and abused youngsters; and psychological treatment of patients with HIV/AIDS infection.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

There are 8 externship positions available requiring a time commitment of a minimum of 16 hours per week. While the positions focus on specific specialty areas, each extern also participates in a core program that is clinic based.

1. Core Program

The STMHC outpatient mental health clinic provides comprehensive services to its patient population, thereby giving externs the opportunity to develop clinical skills. Services include intake and assessment, psychological testing, psychotherapy and crisis intervention. The patient population includes children, adolescents and adults, and spans a broad range of psychiatric diagnoses. The Child and Adolescent Service is a subunit within the outpatient clinic.

Treatment modalities include individual psychotherapy, group psychotherapy, brief therapy, marital therapy, family therapy, filial (parent-child) therapy and psychoeducational treatment with severely impaired adults. Innovative culturally sensitive modalities are also provided, such as Frieda Kahlo Narrative Therapy. The clinic services a caseload of over 3,000 patients and provides upwards of 65,000 mental health visits per year, making it among the most active outpatient mental health programs in New York City. All 8 externs are expected to participate in the intake

and screening process at the outpatient mental health clinic, to conduct psychodiagnostic testing in the clinic setting, and to carry a small caseload of clinic patients.

INTAKE AND SCREENING

Screening and Intake interviews constitute the core training in admission evaluations for all externs. New applicants for treatment present the extern with a variety of clinical problems, which require immediate decisions. These include referral to other agencies, inpatient hospitalizations, medication and acceptance for outpatient treatment. All externs actively participate in these screening and intake functions, initially in collaboration with another staff member and, after they have acquired experience, independently. The intake evaluation process entails an extended and in depth interview by the extern leading to a provisional DSM-IV diagnosis as well as organization of the clinical findings. Externs' immersion in screenings and intakes, a process that requires continual on-the-spot clinical evaluations and decisions, inculcates the capacity to make immediate clinical judgements with confidence and sensitivity.

PSYCHODIAGNOSTIC TESTING

Externs are expected to complete 3 full psychological batteries during the course of the externship year. Using a standard battery of intelligence and projective tests as well as more innovative multicultural assessment tests such as TEMAS, externs evaluate patients to produce differential diagnoses, to assist in referral placements to other agencies or to explore the dynamics of patients. Externs receive supervision on all aspects of psychodiagnostic assessment. In addition, externs meet as a group in diagnostic seminars led by Psychology Unit supervisors. Training in dealing with issues of culture, particularly Latino and African-American cultures, in psychological assessment are a distinctive aspect of such group seminars and individual supervision.

OUTPATIENT PSYCHOTHERAPY

The emphasized individual therapeutic approach focuses on comprehensive and intensive understanding of the patient, the psychodynamics of personality and character development, the development of patient-therapist relations, the impact of individual psychopathology on the family and social systems in which the patient lives, and finally, the interaction between culture and the individual. Individual and group supervision on individual psychotherapy is provided. STMHC also offers group therapy as a modality. The following is a sampling of some of the groups typically offered during the year: an Hispanic women's support group, a geriatric support group, an ongoing psychoeducational group, groups for hyperactive and conduct disordered children; an adolescent girls' group; a Frieda Kahlo Narrative Therapy group; and various activity groups. The acquisition of group therapy skills occurs in the context of externs serving as psychotherapists in group therapy with a staff member or with other students.

SERVICE DELIVERY SPECIALIZATIONS

1. Child/Adolescent Outpatient Program

Externs working within the Child and Adolescent Services Unit receive training in a variety of functions performed by child psychologists in an outpatient clinic setting. Such an extern provides comprehensive services to a small caseload of child and adolescent clinic clients spanning a broad range of diagnoses. The services provided include individual and group psychotherapy, collateral contacts with parents, provision of concrete services, psycho-diagnostic testing, and intake and screening interviews.

2. ADULT OUTPATIENT PROGRAM

Externs choosing to emphasize adult outpatient treatment receive the equivalent of 2 days training per week in a wide variety of functions performed by psychologists in the public health sector. The adult outpatient extern provides comprehensive service to adult clinic patients spanning a broad range of psychiatric diagnoses. These services include individual and group psychotherapy as well as the provision of concrete services, psychodiagnostic testing, and intake and screening interviews.

FORENSIC EXTERNSHIP

The extern wanting to emphasize service delivery to forensic populations provides services within Project Second Try, a specialized treatment program for young sexual offenders. This program was inaugurated in 1991 with the help of a Federal grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The patient population includes children, from the ages of five to fourteen. As a rule, referred patients are mandated, as part of probation is required. The treatment protocols include intake assessment, psychological testing, individual therapy and group therapy. The approach combines cognitive behavioral and psychoeducational approaches, but is also guided by psychodynamic understanding of the patient's delinquent behavior. Treatment and assessment are culturally sensitive in that TEMAS is included as part of the test battery, and cultural factors, such as these related to sexual behavior and family depression are a focus of treatment. The PST experience provides the extern with an understanding of forensic psychological issues relating to young sexual perpetrators; competence in working with delinquents, specifically those exhibiting sexual misconduct; parental and familial issues pertaining to this population; skills in working with individual and group modalities; and experience in case presentations with this population. In addition, the extern may participate in ongoing clinical research with this population. The extern will be responsible for a small outpatient caseload. Specific extern activities include intake assessment; individual and group psychotherapy, psychological testing; parents group, and case presentation.

Integrated Treatment For Co-Occurring Disorders

The Co-Occurring Disorders Service actively integrates interventions intended to address both the mental health and substance use disorder of individuals identified as having mental health symptoms

and a pattern of substance use. Integrated treatment focuses on the whole person rather than on a discrete disorder. Treatment for co-occurring disorders is self-directed and phase specific. Treatment interventions are tailored to the individual's "stage of change". The ultimate goal of person centered, integrated, stage specific treatment is to help the individual develop an effective relapse prevention based on the acquisition of self-soothing skills, achieving medication compliance, building family and social support for recovery, learning to identify triggers and beginning to use successful strategies to manage urges.

The integrated treatment program for co-occurring disorders provides the extern with opportunities for acquiring skills in working with dually diagnosed populations. Extern activities include intake assessment, individual treatment and co-leadership in group treatment modalities.

Services for Older Adults- Senior Connections

The Senior Connection Program strives to identify older adults with symptoms of depression, anxiety, alcoholism and dementia and refer them to mental health services. Through the utilization of a host of groups that utilize creative arts to engage older adults, group participants are involved in both preventive mental health care as well as being assessed to determine if they can benefit from ongoing mental health treatment. Externs working with seniors within the Senior Connections Program will co-lead activity groups and identify underlying indicators of distress, depression, or unusual behaviors and serve as a bridge to counseling and other mental health services.

DIDACTIC PROGRAM

The educational component of the externship is concentrated into one half day- Tuesday afternoons.. Externs arrange their supervision and participation in didactic seminars during this time.

Clinical Supervision

Externs receive one hour of individual supervision a week with a licensed staff psychologist. Supervision focuses on individual and group treatment cases and psychological test batteries. In addition, externs receive 2 hours of group supervision for clinic cases.

SEMINARS

Seminars are designed to cover topics relevant to professional psychology. While some seminar topics have relevance to general populations, others are designed to address issues of greater relevance for a specific age group or sub population.

TIME COMMITMENT

Externs are required to make a time commitment of at least 16 hours per week. The time commitment includes Tuesday afternoons, when the didactic component of the externship is scheduled. The remaining time can be spread out over several additional mornings or afternoons. Externs choosing to provide treatment to children and adolescents are additionally expected to provide evening times to accommodate children who need to be seen after school has ended.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applications will be accepted after January 15th of the year preceding the externship. Externs are required to be matriculated in a clinical, counseling or school psychology doctoral program. Because the externship at Sunset Terrace is a front-line clinical position requiring a high degree of patient contact, it is best suited to second and third year externs. The application material required includes:

1. 2 letters of reference
2. A curriculum vitae
3. A transcript of graduate work
4. Two writing samples
5. A letter indicating which of the externship programs the applicant is applying to.
6. A letter indicating that the applicant is in good standing in their doctoral program and ready for externship .

Application materials should be sent to:

Carmen Rivera PhD

Coordinator of Internship and Externship Training

Sunset Terrace Family Health Center

514 49th Street

Brooklyn, NY 11220

Applicants are requested to send all materials in one packet.