Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System
Externship Opportunities

Below are several externship opportunities offered at the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System (SLVHCS) for the 2022-2023 training year. If an applicant has more than one interest, please state this in the application. Training hours per week are negotiable. Applications are due Monday, March 21st 2021. A 2-3 month onboarding time is required should an applicant be selected.

If you are interested in being considered for any of the externship placements, please contact Christopher Parkinson, Ph.D., ABPP via email (Christopher.Parkinson@va.gov) and include a letter of interest indicating desired placement(s) and a current CV. Additionally, please have your Director of Training complete the externship readiness form and submit to Dr. Parkinson directly.

Thank you for your interest in the SLVHCS externship program!

   (Baton Rouge: 1-2 positions)
   
   **Supervisor(s):** Emily Ibert, Ph.D.; Christopher R. L. Parkinson, Ph.D., ABPP; Royce Butler, Ph.D.; and Dustin Seidler, Ph.D.
   
   **Availability:** Full Academic Year, Summer (New Orleans)
   Full Academic Year (Baton Rouge)
   
   **Hours:** 4 – 20 hours per week

   In health psychology and behavioral medicine, externs function as consultants on the psychosocial and behavioral aspects of disease expression, control, and prevention in addition to providing brief, solution-focused behavioral health treatment for adjustment issues and less severe mental illness.

   • Primary Care-Mental Health Integration
     o Brief solution-focused treatment for depression, anxiety, and adjustment issues
     o Health coaching for health promotion & disease prevention utilizing motivational interviewing
     o Treatment of chronic pain and anger management in primary care setting

   • Interdisciplinary Palliative Care
     o Assessment of psychological and cognitive functioning in the context of an interdisciplinary team
     o Individual therapy to address adjustment to disease, symptom management, and transition to end-of-life
     o Experience with providing consultation to other health professionals
Full Academic Year (New Orleans):
Trainees applying for a position in New Orleans have the opportunity to obtain experiences in primary care-mental health integration (PCHMI) with Dr. Ibert (50%) and interdisciplinary palliative care with Dr. Parkinson (50%) if applying for a full year experience. Trainees may also apply to work with Dr. Seidler obtaining experience applying tele-mental health in a Women’s Health Clinic in PCMHI.

Summer Experience (New Orleans):
If applying for a Summer experience, trainees will be working with Dr. Ibert only. This option will be higher hours per week due to shorter duration.

Full Academic Year (Baton Rouge):
Trainees in Baton Rouge will obtain experience in PCMHI with Dr. Butler or Dr. Seidler.

2. Integrated Inpatient and Outpatient Treatment (New Orleans: 1 position)
   Supervisors: Chelsea Ennis, Ph.D.; Desirae Vidaurri, Ph.D., Jessica Walton, Ph.D.
   Availability: Full Academic Year
   Hours: 4 – 20 hours per week

Externs working within this rotation will have the opportunity to work in both outpatient and inpatient at SLVHCS.

Inpatient Mental Health:
With Veterans admitted to inpatient mental health, the emphasis is placed on adapting empirically supported treatments for short-term delivery. The focus of training will be put on learning a modular approach to flexibly apply treatments that are evidence based, particularly from a cognitive behavioral perspective, to a broad range of diagnoses. Trainees will gain experience in assessment, and brief individual & group psychotherapy in the acute setting.
   o Leading or co-leading group therapy, tailoring empirically supported treatments, particularly from a cognitive behavioral perspective
   o Exposure to cognitive behavioral therapies, including Dialectical Behavior Therapy, and other complementary treatments such as Motivational Interviewing
   o Collaboration with other mental health professionals, such as psychiatry, pharmacy, social work, and nursing, within an integrated team

Outpatient Mental Health (PTSD Clinic):
Veterans receiving services in this program are combat Veterans from WWII, Korean conflict, Vietnam, the 1st Gulf War, and Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND), as well as Veterans from peacekeeping missions and those Veterans who experienced non-combat trauma. This training experience will focus primarily on obtaining experience in providing evidence-based psychotherapy (EBP) for trauma.
   o Experience providing prolong exposure (PE)
3. **Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC)** (Baton Rouge: 1 position)
   The Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System (SLVHCS) is comprised of a primary medical facility in New Orleans and 7 community-based outpatient clinics (CBOC). CBOCs function to provide medical and mental health care to Veterans, typically in more rural areas in our system. As CBOCs are located further from the main campus, trainees will typically see a wide-range of presenting concerns. Trainees will have the opportunity to work in our Baton Rouge clinic with Dr. Bill Schmitz.
   
   **Supervisor:** William “Bill” Schmitz Jr., Psy.D.  
   **Availability:** Full Academic Year  
   **Hours:** 4 – 20 hours per week

   - Conduct initial evaluations for Veteran’s seeking outpatient treatment
   - Develop skills in case formulation, differential diagnosis, and treatment planning
   - Administration of psychological assessments for diagnostic clarification and assessment of treatment effectiveness
   - Evidence-based treatments for individuals and groups (behavioral activation for depression, PTSD, ACT, pain management, insomnia, CAMS, etc.)
   - Consultation and collaboration with primary and specialty care providers for psychological intervention and behavioral management of medical concerns
   - Coordination of comprehensive mental health services (e.g. substance abuse, homeless program etc.) within context of multidisciplinary team

4. **Research** (New Orleans/Remote: 1 position)
   **Supervisors:** Joseph W. Boffa, Ph.D.; Claire Houtsma, Ph.D.; and Amanda M. Raines, Ph.D.  
   **Availability:** Full Academic Year  
   **Hours:** 8 hours per week

   Externship students may participate in a research rotation within SLVHCS’s Psychology Service. Students may work with one or all of the aforementioned supervisors. Activities while on the rotation may include but are not limited to: 1) data entry and management; 2) administering research protocol to veteran participants; 3) supervised peer-review for scientific journals; 4) secondary data analysis; and 5) manuscript preparation for co-authorship. Below you will find information about each supervisor’s area of research interest.

   **Dr. Boffa’s** research focuses on cognitive-affective variables that intersect PTSD and suicide risk as well as the development of novel interventions to target these conditions.
Dr. Houtsma’s research focuses on suicidal behavior, with three related areas of emphasis – the role of firearms in suicide, capability for suicide, and sociocultural influences on suicide risk. Dr. Houtsma is interested both in understanding risk factors for suicide and developing scalable, Veteran-led interventions to prevent suicide.

Dr. Raines’s research focuses on identifying and empirically examining transdiagnostic risk and maintenance factors (e.g., anxiety sensitivity), as well as the development of novel interventions that can be used to treat and prevent anxiety and related pathology including PTSD, suicide, and substance use.