

Hines VA Psychology Commitment to Diversity & Inclusion: Statement

Celebrating unity in diversity



The practicum, internship, and postdoctoral fellowship training programs within the Psychology Service at Hines VA are committed to fostering and upholding an inclusive community that welcomes and supports trainees from all social identity groups. We believe a multi-pronged approach to creating an inclusive and supportive environment within our training programs is essential. Some of the ways in which we have sought to create an inclusive and affirming environment for all are:

- Cultivating and promoting an atmosphere of inclusion and acceptance, in which all individuals are supported and included within our work and professional environment.
- Welcoming honest and open discussion about issues in diversity
- Incorporating diversity as a central component of our clinical training and didactics
- Enhancing awareness of diversity issues through monthly case presentations
- Attracting psychology staff and trainees of diverse backgrounds to join our Psychology Service and our training programs Hines VA.

Psychology Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Within our Psychology Service, our efforts to promote diversity are led by our Psychology Diversity & Inclusion Committee – a group of staff psychologists and trainees (fellows and interns) who coordinate and oversee continuing efforts to build our community. The Psychology Diversity & Inclusion Committee serves the Psychology Service and the Mental Health Service Line (MHSL) in the following three primary ways:

1. **Education and Training:** Provide staff and trainees with opportunities to learn about and discuss a variety of diversity-related issues. These can include but are not limited to: trainings for staff and trainees, trainings specific to trainees, trainings specific to supervisors, CE training for staff, etc.

2. **Consultation:** Provide consultation to individual staff members, clinics, and/or programs around diversity issues as it relates to Veteran care. This can include but is not limited to: providing in-services/trainings to staff or Veterans in a clinic/program about a variety of diversity issues (e.g., microaggressions, language in the LGBTQ+ community) and helping staff find resources for a Veteran (e.g., transgender support groups in Chicago).
3. **Hiring & Retention:** To assist in ensuring cultural and professional diversity among Psychology externs, interns, postdoctoral fellows, and staff. This can include but is not limited to: helping the Training Committee in recruiting diverse trainees and assisting the Psychology department in recruiting, hiring, and retaining diverse staff.



Training Opportunities

Diversity & Inclusion Learning & Discussion Series (4th Wednesday of each month at 12pm; open for all training levels and staff; Attendance is required for all interns and fellows).

This monthly lunch-time presentation series that is a forum for staff psychologists and trainees to encourage awareness, growth, and action on topics related to the broad spectrum of diversity & inclusion that influence Veteran care and teamwork in the VA. This series alternates between a case conference/seminar and small process/discussion groups every other month. We strive to promote an open and non-judgmental atmosphere and active participation and discussion is encouraged from all attendees. Discussion focuses on the promotion of multicultural learning and fostering a sense of cultural humility.

- **Case conference/Didactic (*open to all staff and all trainees*):** Most typically, a staff member or a staff member and trainee will present a case that highlights an area of diversity or we have speakers that will present on various diversity topics. Previous topics have included: the impact of race and disability during crisis intervention; spirituality in clinical practice; privilege; the intersection of disability, gender, and sexual orientation; diversity issues and body image; discussion of diversity issues in supervision; diversity considerations in the home care setting; the impact of internalized racism on case conceptualization and treatment; and issues that arise during discharge/termination of psychotherapy.
- **Courageous Conversations for Change (*open to all staff, interns, & fellows; currently not open to externs at this time*):** Small groups will meet to process/discuss various topics related to diversity and inclusion.

