



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Bedford Healthcare System

VA Bedford Healthcare System

Interprofessional Fellowship Program in Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery-Oriented Services (PSR)

VA Bedford Healthcare System is seeking applicants for their PSR fellowship program. Each year, we welcome four to five fellows at VA Bedford HCS. We welcome applications in psychology, social work, mental health counseling, vocational rehabilitation, and other allied health disciplines.

Program description

PSR fellows will become part of an interdisciplinary team of postgraduate fellows which may also include social work, nursing, psychiatry, vocational rehabilitation, and/or occupational therapy. Each fellow will select two programs to work in throughout the year. The primary placement will be a program that focuses on serving Veterans with serious mental illnesses. For the second placement, fellows can choose from a variety of inpatient, outpatient, or community-based programs. No specific emphasis is required for the second placement choice, and the options are designed to be flexible and offer the fellow opportunities to pursue individual professional interests.

The program placements provide the fellow with an environment to learn and to apply the principles of psychosocial rehabilitation while working with an interdisciplinary team of experienced professionals. All fellows will provide recovery services to Veterans with serious mental illness through the Program for Outpatient Wellness, Engagement, and Recovery (POWER). In addition, the fellow will be actively involved in recovery-oriented assessments, program development, consultation, and educational dissemination regarding psychosocial rehabilitation within the healthcare system and nationally via conference presentations. Opportunities for participation in research are also available in collaboration with the VISN 1 Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC).

The overall goals of the PSR fellowship are to provide training and clinical experiences for fellows so that they become grounded in the principles and values of PSR and incorporate them into their work with Veterans. In addition, fellows acquire knowledge of current PSR research and practices in order to become a skilled PSR practitioner capable of promoting change in the VA system (to act as “agents of change”).

Program components

There are four main components to the PSR Fellowship at VA Bedford.

1. First program placement

Each fellow has the opportunity to choose a primary placement in one of the programs that serves Veterans with serious mental illnesses. The possible placements include: 1) Community Residential Care (CRC); 2) the Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM) Program which uses the Assertive Community Treatment model; 3) inpatient psychiatric services. (Estimated 10/15 hours per week).

2. Second program placement

Each fellow has the opportunity to choose a secondary mental health program placement to work, with approval from one's preceptor and the PSR Fellowship Committee. Fellows' work in this placement must be recovery-oriented and focused on Veterans with more significant mental health disabilities. There are many possibilities for secondary program placements to choose from based upon the fellow's professional interests. Here are a few examples: Compensated Work Therapy (CWT); Domiciliary; programs and services for homeless Veterans (HCHV); Veterans Administration Supported Housing (VASH); Behavioral Addictions Clinic; and Crescent House, a transitional residence. (Estimated 10 hours/week).

3. Program for Outpatient Wellness, Engagement, and Recovery (POWER)

All fellows will carry a caseload of Veterans receiving services through this outpatient program for Veterans living with serious mental illness. (Estimated 5 hours/week).

4. Group project—Program development/evaluation & education dissemination

All the PSR fellows will work together throughout the course of the fellowship year on a program development or program evaluation project. The fellows will be given projects to choose from or may develop their own project idea with approval from the PSR Fellowship Committee. A final, written report of the project, including lessons learned, will be submitted to the PSR Fellowship Committee. Past education dissemination efforts have included presentations about the group projects at the Psychiatric Rehabilitation (PRA) annual conference and presentations of project evaluation results to the hospital's program managers and staff of recovery-oriented programs. (Estimated 2-3 hours/week).

Fellows are afforded considerable flexibility to design and implement clinical and/or programmatic changes toward the goal of greater enactment of psychosocial rehabilitation principles and practice. Fellows are seen as "change agents" within the healthcare system's psychosocial rehabilitation-oriented programs. As such, they often engage in consultation, program evaluation, and program development in their individual placements. In addition, the fellows are actively involved in program development, consultation, and educational dissemination regarding psychosocial rehabilitation within the larger medical center and nationally via conference presentations.

Program contacts

Please contact Andrew Peckham, Ph.D., or Adam Kirschner, LICSW, for more information:

Andrew Peckham, Ph.D., Co-Director

Andrew.Peckham@va.gov or (781) 687-4329; Lead contact for Psychology Postdoctoral and Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist applicants

Adam Kirschner, LICSW, Co-Director

Adam.Kirschner1@va.gov or (781) 824-0589; Lead contact for Social Work and LMHC candidate applicants