

## PRE-DOCTORAL EXTERNSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

PSYCHOLOGY DIVISION of the MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
NEW YORK HARBOR HEALTHCARE SYSTEM  
MARGARET COCHRAN CORBIN CAMPUS (MANHATTAN)

423 EAST 23RD STREET  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10010

Revised November 17, 2022 for the 2023-2024 training year

### Overview

The Manhattan VA currently offers intensive clinical training to advanced psychology doctoral students in the Psychology Externship program. A description of the program, as well as application and contact information, is provided starting on page 3.

We are committed to providing muticulturally competent training for our practicum students and culturally sensitive assessments and interventions to our veterans. Our program offers plentiful opportunities to work with patients who represent a wide range of diversity. We are fortunate to be located in New York City, and our patient population includes African-American, Latino, Caribbean-American, Asian, and Caucasian veterans of all genders across adulthood. Externs learn how factors such as race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, disability, and socioeconomic background interact with both psychological issues and also with the unique culture of the armed services. We strongly encourage applications from individuals from a variety of ethnic, racial, cultural, and personal backgrounds.

**Please note that we will not accept applications from students who are concurrently applying for internship.**

**Participation in our externship will have no impact on a student's later chances of attending our internship program.**

**Also be aware that we are currently unable to offer supervised training positions to students in bachelor's or master's level programs.** Our internship, externship, and postdoctoral fellowship programs for psychology doctoral students comprise between 14-18 positions per year (6 interns, 4-5 externs, 4-6 postdoctoral fellows). Given the level of intensive supervision devoted to these programs, **we are not able to accommodate additional supervisees.**

For a full description of the psychology division, VA patient population, and medical center facilities, please see our internship brochure at:

<https://www.va.gov/new-york-harbor-health-care/work-with-us/internships-and-fellowships/psychology-internship-residency-programs/>

**PLEASE NOTE:** We follow the recommendations set forth by PSYDNYS (Psychology Directors of NYS) and NYNJADOT (New York New Jersey Association of Directors of Training). PSYDNYS

**and NYNJADOT have developed recommended policies to govern the process of applying to externships and accepting externship offers.**

These guidelines stipulate the earliest date that students can submit applications and the earliest date on which an offer can be made to a student. Please see the full details of these guidelines at the link below:

[Home | NYNJADOT Externship Matching \(apa.org\)](#)

**Department of Veterans Affairs New York Harbor Healthcare System, Margaret Cochran Corbin Campus (Manhattan VA) Psychology Externship Program**

The Manhattan VA Psychology Externship program is an intensive psychotherapy training experience for advanced students in doctoral clinical and counseling psychology programs. The externship provides students with training in both CBT and psychodynamic psychotherapy, with the goal of helping trainees develop an understanding of different theories of therapeutic action by comparing and contrasting the various theoretical orientations and approaches they will be exposed to. The program also strongly emphasizes multicultural perspectives, and a multicultural lens is woven into seminars, didactics, and supervisions.

Prior to beginning the training year, externs will participate in an intensive two-week orientation period (5 days per week, 8am-4:30pm), during which they will receive training in VA systems and in the variety of therapeutic modalities that they will be using throughout the year. Externs will receive training on several manualized empirically supported approaches, such as: (1) behavioral activation (BA), (2) a short term (4 month) psychodynamic psychotherapy based on the Dynamic Interpersonal Therapy Model (DIT), and (3) Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I). Additionally, externs will also receive training in two non-manualized approaches to psychotherapy: (1) Formulation-based CBT and (2) "long-term" (1-year) psychodynamic psychotherapy.

During the training year, externs will receive weekly individual supervision on their psychotherapy cases. Typically, externs will be assigned a Psychodynamic supervisor, a DIT supervisor, a CBT supervisor, a Track supervisor, and an Elective supervisor. Supervision is conducted via telehealth and in-person and is 30-45 minutes per week for each assigned supervisor (depending on number of cases) for a total of 2-4 hours of individual supervision each week. Externs' learning is further supported by a weekly Psychotherapy Seminar, which incorporates readings and didactics about CBT, Psychodynamic Psychotherapy, and Multicultural Perspectives. Finally, externs will participate in a biweekly process group led by a staff member who is not involved within the Training program.

In addition to the core clinical activities described above, externs will participate in one Track for the duration of the training year. Potential available tracks include (1) **PTSD**, (2) **Health Psychology**, and (3) **Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT) for Couples**. Each Track may include specific psychotherapy and/or assessment opportunities within that area of psychology, seminars and didactics on related topics, and participation in team meetings with staff members and other trainees. Externs also have opportunities for additional clinical Electives, including (1) **DBT Distress Tolerance group**, (2) **Readjustment Clinic**, (3) **Diversity, Inclusion, and Activism**, (4) **Neuropsychological Assessment**, and (5) **CBT for Chronic Pain group**. Externs usually choose one Elective and each Elective typically runs for 6 months. Electives may be extended depending on staff availability and/or student interest.

*Availability of Tracks and Electives is subject to change depending on staff availability, facility need, and student interest. For more information on the available Tracks, please see below.*

We also strongly emphasize each extern's professional development, as this externship often serves as the final training experience before externs participate in internship. Externs have the opportunity to meet individually with the Co-Directors on a quarterly basis, or more if requested, to discuss issues related to their identity development as clinicians, future career goals, and internship/externship applications, among other topics. The externship also provides seminars on topics related to internship applications, including preparing application materials, interviewing, and practicing case presentations.

Finally, the Externship Program provides extensive training on the provision of psychotherapy using telehealth technology. Externs will have the opportunity to provide individual, couples, and/or group psychotherapy over the VA's video-conferencing platform.

**Externship Response to Covid-19:** From March 2020 until September 2021, the Externship Program operated fully remotely, with all externs and many staff teleworking full-time. In the fall of 2021, the Externship Program moved to a hybrid model that consists of on-site work and telework, providing both virtual and in-person appointments (based on patient preferences and externs' comfort). We plan to continue working in this hybrid model for the foreseeable future. Going forward, the program will also utilize the lessons learned during the pandemic to guide us in navigating future challenges. While we cannot anticipate what other crises or emergencies we might face, we are committed to preserving the integrity of our training while also serving the needs of our veteran community to the fullest extent possible. As we have learned during this public health crisis, we must be flexible, creative, and supportive in our training endeavors. We are fortunate to have such as teleworking and providing virtual care, which can be utilized in such circumstances.

**Eligibility and Requirements:** This externship is for advanced graduate students from APA accredited doctoral programs in clinical or counseling psychology.

**Applicants must have completed at least three full years of graduate study prior to the start of externship and have had two full years of psychotherapy training/supervision.**

A total of 4-5 externs will be accepted for the 2023-2024 training year. The externship will begin on Monday, July 3, 2023 and end mid-June, 2024.

- At the outset of the training year, externs will participate in a **required** two-week intensive orientation period (40 hrs. per week, 8am-4:30pm), during which they will have the opportunity to participate in numerous psychotherapy trainings and didactics.
- After the two-week orientation period, a commitment of **2 days** (16 hours, 8am – 4:30pm) per week is required. As of this time, the program continues to operate in a hybrid schedule, with one day on-site and one day remote. **Mondays are a required** day for all trainees. The second day of training is individualized for each extern based on his or her availability as well as the required day of the Tracks and needs of the service.
- Consistent with national VHA policy, all externs onboarded/hired on or after November 22, 2021, must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 (or have an approved exception) before beginning employment and/or training rotations with VA.

**Application Process:** Please include a letter of interest, CV, and two letters of reference from psychotherapy supervisors. In your CV, please specify in **rank order the Tracks** you wish to apply. If you are not interested in a Track, please leave it off your rank order list. Also, please include a brief statement describing a psychotherapy case that exemplifies your approach to individual psychotherapy and how you believe this approach benefits patients (250-word limit). Please submit **ALL** your materials, including reference letters, through the APA portal (please see the NYNJADOT website listed above for more information).

Interviews will be conducted remotely and in accordance with the NYNJADOT-PSYDNYS committee guidelines.

## **TRACKS:**

### **PTSD**

**Length of Track:** 12 months

**Weekly Time Commitment:** 4-5 hours

**Required Day of the Week:** Wednesday

**Supervisors:** Jennifer Schneider, PhD & Amy Parter, PhD

The PTSD Track of the Manhattan VA Externship Program provides an opportunity for externs to learn more about the effects of trauma on the psyche and how we as clinicians can help people begin to heal. Externs may have the opportunity to participate in trainings on evidence-based treatments for PTSD that are widely utilized in the VA system such as Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE), and Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Regulation (STAIR). Externs will be expected to carry a caseload of 1-2 patients with a focus on providing veterans with psychoeducation and helping them to develop coping skills in preparation for more intense trauma-focused treatment. As externs advance, they may have the opportunity to continue working with their patients to process difficult trauma memories using evidence-based treatment for PTSD (CPT, PE, STAIR). Externs will receive 1 hour of weekly individual supervision. They will also be expected to participate in a bi-weekly hour-long extern seminar focusing on PTSD diagnosis, assessment, and treatment. Additional opportunities include the possibility of observing/conducting PTSD diagnostic assessments (Clinician Administered PTSD Scale for DSM 5, CAPS-5), participating in PTSD treatment via telemental health (TMH) with rural veterans, and attending PTSD clinic interdisciplinary team meetings as necessary to coordinate patient care.

### **Health Psychology**

**Length of Track:** 12 months

**Weekly Time Commitment:** 4 hours

**Required Days of the Week:** Tuesday

**Supervisors:** Alyssa Baer, PsyD (GeriPACT) & Erica Shreck, PhD (Dialysis)

Externs on this track will have the opportunity to work with veterans with co-morbid medical and psychological issues, spending 6 months in Geriatric Primary Care (GeriPACT) and 6 months on the Dialysis unit. Across both rotations, externs can expect to work with veterans presenting with depression, anxiety, adjustment to medical issues and life changes, difficulties managing medical regimens, bereavement and family stress. For the GeriPACT rotation, externs will work closely with the multidisciplinary GeriPACT team to provide brief psychological assessments, cognitive screenings, individual psychotherapy and family interventions to older adult veterans. If scheduling permits, externs may have the opportunity to observe the psychology postdoctoral fellow conducting a bedside psychotherapy session for a palliative care patient and/or observe a geropsychologist conduct a home-based primary care visit. For the dialysis rotation, externs will have a chance to collaborate with the multidisciplinary dialysis team in providing brief assessments and short-term therapy (chair side in person on the unit) to veterans with end stage renal disease on hemodialysis. Externs will receive 30-45 minutes of weekly supervision, including individual supervision and a bimonthly health psychology track group meeting, which includes discussion of relevant health psychology articles, presentation of cases and group supervision.

### **Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT) for Couples**

**Length of Rotation:** 12 months

**Weekly Time Commitment:** 3-5 hrs

**Required Days of the Week:** Wednesday

**Supervisors:** Sagiv Ashkenazi, PsyD & Elana Cairo, PhD

Externs will have the opportunity to learn about the theory and application of Emotionally Focused Couples Psychotherapy (EFT) through engagement in direct clinical work, attendance in didactic seminars, and participation in individual supervision. Externs will conduct EFT with 1-2 couples at a time via in person or telehealth over the course of the year (total of couples could amount to more in cases of short-term treatment). Externs will receive weekly individual supervision provided by staff with advanced training in EFT. Externs will also attend a six-month weekly didactic seminar with the psychology interns that is led by psychology staff members.

Any questions about the externship or application process can be sent to the Co-Directors of the externship:

Julia Buckley, Psy.D.  
Clinical Psychologist  
Co-Director Psychology Externship Program  
E-mail: [Julia.buckley@va.gov](mailto:Julia.buckley@va.gov)

And

Jessica Esposito, Ph.D.  
Clinical Psychologist  
Interim Co-Director Psychology Pre-doctoral Externship Program  
Email: [jessica.esposito@va.gov](mailto:jessica.esposito@va.gov)