Psychology Internship Program

Alexandria Veterans Affairs Health Care System

2024 - 2025





 Psychology Internship Program

**Alexandria VA Health Care System**

Psychology Training Program

Psychology Service (116B)

2495 Shreveport Highway

Pineville, Louisiana 71360

(318) 466-2589[<http://www.alexandria.va.gov/>](http://www.alexandria.va.gov/)

[Leslie.Drew@va.gov](mailto:Leslie.Drew@va.gov)

**MATCH Number: 234811 - GENERAL INTERNSHIP**

**ACCREDITATION STATUS**

The psychology internship at the Alexandria Veterans Affairs Health Care System (AVAHCS) began in the fall of 2014. We are fully accredited by APA and a member of APPIC.

Questions related to the program’s accreditation status should be directed to the Commission on Accreditation:

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation American Psychological Association

750 1st Street, NE,

Washington, DC 20002

Phone: (202) 336-5979

E-mail: [apaaccred@apa.org](mailto:apaaccred@apa.org)

Web: [www.apa.org/ed/accreditation](http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation)

## It is our intention to operate a psychology internship that provides quality generalist training in health service psychology and prepares interns for postdoctoral fellowships or entry level positions throughout the field, and especially in the VA.

**COVID-19 Impact on Training, Response, and Adaptations**

The COVID-19 pandemic created new and unique challenges related to training and delivery of mental health services. Although the Public Health Emergency has ended as of May 11, 2023, the VA continues to provide masking guidance for its medical facilities based on the latest CDC guidance. Masking is no longer universally required, but continues to be required in certain high-risk areas.

During the COVID pandemic, we maintained the ability for trainees to provide a combination of direct and virtual patient care with minimal disruptions to our specific rotations or other training opportunities and expect that to continue for the 2024-2025 training year by following safety policies and procedures including mask-wearing in high-risk areas, and vigilant monitoring of exposures and symptoms of all veteran patients, employees, and visitors. We are confident that we will continue to do all that is possible to ensure quality training for you and care for our veterans. We will continue to provide safe face to face direct patient care as well as utilize telehealth or technology-based delivery platforms when needed and or requested to include patient care, didactics, presentations, supervision, and consultation among other training activities. While there is no expectation that there will be changes to the populations we serve and services provided, we will address challenges as they arise. Regardless of the format of training and delivery platform, we remained dedicated to a high level of clinical care and training while also ensuring the health and safety of our trainees.

**APPLICATION & SELECTION PROCEDURES**

***Requirements For Program Entry***

The program actively recruits students from diverse ethnic and cultural groups. Individuals with disabilities are also strongly encouraged to apply. As the Department of Veterans Affairs, we strongly encourage qualified veterans to apply.

The minimum requirements for entry into the training program are as follows:

1. Applicants must be U. S. citizens.
2. At the time of application, applicants must be enrolled in doctoral training in an APA-accredited or CPA-accredited, clinical or counseling psychology doctoral program or at PCSAS-accredited programs in Clinical Science
3. Applicants must have completed a minimum of 550 hours of supervised practicum experience (500 intervention and 50 assessment) by the time the application is submitted.
4. Applicants must have passed all comprehensive examinations required by their graduate program by the application deadline.
5. Applicants are required to have completed their dissertation proposal prior to the application deadline.
6. To qualify for VA training, each health professions trainee (HPT) must first be listed on a Trainee Qualifications and Credentials Verification Letter (TQCVL). A TQCVL from the director of the sponsoring (VA or non-VA) program must be submitted to the VA Facility Director through the VA Designated Education Officer (DEO) prior to onboarding. The TQCVL confirms that an HPT is:
   1. Enrolled in or accepted into the accredited training program and has had primary source verification of appropriate qualifications and credentials as required by the admission criteria of the training program;
   2. Qualified, and has the required credentials, to participate in the accredited training program as agreed to by the sponsoring institution, affiliated participating institutions, and the VA;
   3. Compliant with all US citizenship or immigration and naturalization laws and therefore suitable to be appointed to a Federal Government position; and
   4. Meets the essential functions (physical and mental) of the training program and immunized following current CDC guidelines and VHA policy for healthcare workers to protect themselves, other employees and patients while working in a healthcare facility.
   5. Current federal policy also requires that essentially all VA employees be vaccinated against COVID-19 within 75 days of entering VA employment. This vaccine is available to employees from AVAHCS.

***Application Procedures***

In order to apply for the Alexandria VA Health Care System’s Psychology Internship, you must:

1. Register for the APPIC Match through National Matching Services (http://www.natmatch.com/psychint)
2. Complete the APPIC Application for Psychology Interns (AAPI) Online, including a cover letter, three letters of recommendation, a curriculum vita, and graduate transcripts.
3. Ensure that all application materials reach us by December 1, 2023.

Offers of acceptance will be made in agreement with the guidelines developed by the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC). For questions about the AAPI Online Application of APPIC Match, please contact APPIC directly at (202) 347-0022 or see their webpage at [www.appic.org](http://www.appic.org) for more information. This internship site agrees to abide by the APPIC Policy that no person at this training facility will solicit, accept, or use any ranking-related information from any intern applicant. We will offer appropriate guidance to all applicants during the application process. We strongly suggest that you apply to this program only if it ranks highly in terms of your personal and professional priorities.

Prior to beginning the internship year, it will be necessary for applicants selected for the internship training program to complete paperwork (e.g., Optional Application for Federal Employment and Declaration of Federal Employment) and training modules as directed. During the training year, interns are responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures of the Psychology Training Program, the Psychology Service, and other AVAHCS policies and procedures. Also, many of the laws, rules, and guidelines that apply to federal employees are also applicable to trainees in federal training positions. A copy of the policies and procedures of this training program will be made available to intern applicants at the time of their interview if requested and is provided to each intern during orientation at the beginning of the training year.

All correspondence should be sent to:

**Leslie Drew, Ph.D., Co-*Director of Training***

Psychology Training Program

PTSD Clinic (116D)

Alexandria VA Health Care System

2495 Shreveport Highway

Pineville, LA 71360

(318) 466-2589

[Leslie.Drew@va.gov](mailto:Leslie.Drew@va.gov)

**Or**

**Danielle N. Newman, Ph.D., *Co-Director of Training***

Psychology Training Program

Psychology Service (116B)

Alexandria VA Health Care System

2495 Shreveport Highway

Pineville, LA 71360

(318) 466-2495

[Danielle.Newman1@va.gov](mailto:Danielle.Newman1@va.gov)

PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM SETTING

The Alexandria VA Health Care System (AVAHCS), Alexandria, Louisiana is a Joint Commission accredited, complexity level three facility serving Veterans within 23 of Louisiana’s 64 parishes. The AVAHCS is in Pineville, Louisiana, with five community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) in Jennings, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Natchitoches, and Fort Polk, Louisiana. The population served is a predominantly rural Veteran population. It is categorized as a primary and secondary facility with a full range of primary care, mental health, and specialty services. AVAHCS served 31,400 unique Veteran patients in Fiscal Year 2021 completing 289,664 outpatient visits, 21,705 bed days of care, and 716 admissions.

Alexandria VA Health Care System (AVAHCS) has an array of Mental Health Programs that offer comprehensive, interprofessional care to the Veterans of this area and across the state. The Mental Health Product Line encompasses Psychology, Psychiatry, Social Work and Mental Health Nursing.  Each service works in collaboration to ensure Veterans receive high quality mental health services.  AVAHCS has the largest inpatient psychiatric unit in the state with 30 Acute beds and the newly opened only VA Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Program in the State. In the outpatient setting, the AVAHCS has programs at the main campus as well as five Community Based Outpatient Centers (CBOC).  Outpatient programs include General Mental Health Clinics, PTSD Clinical Team, Post-deployment Mental Health Team, Substance Treatment and Recovery Services (STARS), Suicide Prevention Program, Homeless Program, Mental Health Intensive Case Management Program (MHICM), Community Residential Care Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The Mental Health Product Line is integrated into Primary and Specialty Medical Clinics via services such as Primary Care Mental Health Integration, Health Behavior and Disease Prevention Program, and Home-Based Primary Care Program. Additionally, Mental Health provides consultative services to outpatient clinics and inpatient units as needed.

The AVAHCS is also a teaching hospital with training programs for several disciplines and provides state-of-the-art technology and education. The Psychology Service at the AVAHCS has provided training to psychology students for over 25 years. It also provided a training rotation as part of an APA accredited doctoral internship consortium with Central State Hospital and Pinecrest Rehabilitation Center for several years.

## TRAINING MODEL AND PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The Alexandria VA Health Care System Internship Program provides doctoral education and training for the practice of professional psychology. The model of the training program is practitioner-scholar in philosophy and involves an intensive, experiential supervised experience. Our program maintains a generalist focus, fostering general competence over specialization, and maintains that recovery-oriented, comprehensive, generalist skills are the foundation for independent, professional mental health practicitioners. Interns will recognize and demonstrate cultural competency as well as utilization of evidence-based practices.

The program is also developmental, initially involving comprehensive orientation, close supervision, and early coverage of core practice issues and gradually transitioning into more autonomous practice, where supervision and didactics address more specific and advanced aspects of practice.

## PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this internship program, iterns will be capable of functioning as entry-level psychologists. This internship is based on generalist training with a focus on exposure to and experience with interprofessional teams and settings. In the context of a generalist training model, we offer interns a series of experiences aimed at the development of Core Professional Competencies.

The intent of the AVAHCS Psychology Internship program is to provide an overall training expereince that is sequential, cumulative, and graded in complexity. The Major Rotations are mandatory, but several minor rotations can be selected to create a well-balanced training experience.

In order to prepare interns for entry level employment in the VA or for advanced training through postdoctoral fellowships, the Psychology Internship will provide training and/or supervised experience in the recognized professional competencies of health service psychologists.

These competencies include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Research* | *Ethical and legal standards* |
| *Individual and cultural diversity* | *Professional values, attitudes, and behaviors* |
| *Communications and interpersonal skills* | *Assessment* |
| *Intervention* | *Supervision* |
| *Consultation & interprofessional/disciplinary skills* |  |

Evidence Based Training

The AVAHCS Psychology Internship is committed to the **evidence-based** delivery of clinical care. We strive to provide interns with a significant breadth and depth of experience working with a variety of clinical populations and to simultaneously apply an approach of utilizing innovative scientific information in conceptualizing, assessing, and treating these clinical problems. This goal is greatly facilitated by our many faculty members certified in evidence-based psychotherapies (EBPs), several of whom conduct trainings in various EBPs for VA providers on a regional and national level. As a program, we constantly strive to provide interns a range of professional models and encourage integration of science and practice.

**PROGRAM AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE**

The major training activity at AVAHCS will be experiential learning through the direct provision of health care services. This will include experience on multiple rotations, allowing a diversity of training experiences in interprofessional treatment teams. Interns will also have structured didactic experiences delivered by supervisors and other professional staff. These will include topics presented in a single session and some presented across several sessions in a seminar format. Interns will also engage in scholarly inquiry as part of their clinical rotation and didactics.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Strong Training Emphasis  *(You will get this here)* | Moderate Training Emphasis  *(You can get this here)* | Not Offered  *(You will not get this here)* |
| * Evidence Based Treatments * Individual Therapy * Group Therapy * Substance Use Disorders * Military Trauma & PTSD * General Mental Health | * Military Sexual Trauma * Health Psychology * Assessment * Neuropsychology * Serious Mental Illness | * Child/Adolescent * Marital and Family Therapy * Eating Disorders * Personality Disorders * Homelessness * Research * Home-Based Primary Care * Geropsychology * Inpatient |

***Training Year Structure And Time Allocation***

The Psychology Internship at AVAHCS is a full-time, one year internship based on a 40-hour workweek. Interns are required to complete 2080 hours of internship training during a twelve-month calendar year. We are offering three positions for the 2024/2025 training year, which will begin on July 15, 2024 and end on July 14, 2025. Our training calendar is built around three primary rotations, Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program (BHIP), PTSD Clinical Team, and Substance Use Disorders; each rotation is four months long. In addition to the major rotations, interns may elect to take up to two six-month minor rotations. Options for minor rotations may include Neuropsychology, Health Psychology, and other minors that may vary year to year; these rotations account for 8 hours of the interns’ weekly schedule. This structure with optional rotations allows for both breadth and/or depth of clinical experiences, depending on individualized training needs and interests. In addtion to clinical rotations, there are times set aside for seminars, staff meetings, and other selected learning experiences.

**Supervision:** Interns will receive at least four hours of supervision (with at least two hours of individual supervision) per week and are expected to spend a minimum of 12 hours per week in face to face psychological services. Interns are expected to have at least 500 hours of direct provision of psychological services to successfully complete the internship year.

Psychology Service is a professional and collaborative health care component of the Health Care System at the main facility and all the community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs), focusing on the mental health of our Veteran population*.* Psychology Service provides a full range of psychological assessment and therapeutic interventions throughout the medical center and CBOCs. Psychology Service leads the Evidenced Based Practice Program, Smoking Cessation Program, Military Sexual Trauma Program, PTSD Clinical Team, Substance Use Treatment Services, and Therapeutic and Supported Employment Services Programs.  Psychologists are also integrated as mental health providers in all mental health settings and in non-mental health programs and settings such as Community Living Center and Home-Based Primary Care. Interns will be trained in key values related to shared decision-making between the professional team members and the Veteran patients. The importance of patient preferences will be underscored and illustrated by the routine use of patient education, collaborative goal setting, and standard treatment planning tools.

A portion of the training curriculum will be dedicated to didactic pedagogy and include various activities including group peer supervision, case presentations, as well as professional seminars on topics such as psychological assessment, therapeutic interventions, diversity, and ethics. Educational seminars will be offered on a variety of professional topics and may include other disciplines as instructors (e.g., psychiatry, nursing, social work, pharmacy, occupational therapy, chaplaincy).

Upon successful completion of the year-long internship, all interns will receive a certificate that indicates they have completed an internship in Health Service Psychology. In addition, a final letter of evaluation will be sent to each intern's respective academic program indicating he/she has successfully completed the predoctoral internship as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctoral degree in clinical or counseling psychology. The letter will further detail each intern's experiences in the internship training program and provide an overall summary evaluation.

***Program Administration***

The Psychology Training Progam houses two training programs: Psychology Internship Training Program and Psychology Practicum Program. The Psychology Training Programs are led by Co-Directors of Training. A Training Committee, chaired by the training directors and made up of current training supervisors, meets monthly to address training needs and or issues, and monitor the progress of interns. This committee assures continuity of training among various rotations and training settings, and it is responsible for all routine training activities. Final decisions regarding the Psychology Training Program are the responsibility of the Chief of Psychology Service.

***Funding/Leave***

The official internship year will begin on July 15, 2024. The anticipated stipend is $33,469, which is taxable. Interns are full time employees of the VA and, as such, are eligible for health insurance (for self, spouse, and legal dependents). Interns receive 11 annual federal holidays. In addition, interns accrue four hours of sick leave and four hours of annual leave for each full two-week pay period as an intern, for a total of between 96 and 104 hours of each during the year. Additionally, interns may be granted authorized leave without charge when the activity is of substantial benefit to VA in accomplishing its general mission or a specific function such as education and training.

***Maintenance Of Records***

Intern records are maintained both in electronic and hard copy format. Some documents, such as documentation of formal complaints and performance records and evaluations related to competency assessments, are stored as hard copies in a locked file cabinet in the Training Director’s office. Electronic records, such as, certificates of completion, evaluation forms, and description of training experiences are saved in a shared electronic folder only available to members of the Internship Training Committee and maintained indefinitely within the electronic folder. Records related to past intern cohorts can be made available upon request to APA site visitors or to the specific intern to whom they apply, also upon request.

## TRAINING EXPERIENCES

***Major Mental Health Rotations***

**Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program (BHIP)**

*General Description****:*** The Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program (BHIP) is embedded within the outpatient mental health setting and consists of a team of professional disciplines including Psychiatry, Psychology, Nursing, and Social Work. The BHIP staff psychologist would serve as the primary clinical supervisor of the psychology intern rotating through the program and other professionals on the team are also available for consultation. Training would emphasize participation in collaborative relationships and interventions with the interprofessional team. An additional focus would be training in the delivery of appropriate evidence-based psychotherapy interventions in this setting (e.g., motivational interviewing and cognitive processing therapy).

The BHIP team rotation can provide a variety of training opportunities focusing on general mental health issues of Veterans. Individual psychotherapy, group counseling, couples counseling, as well as evidence-based treatments are made available to Veterans through this BHIP team. The BHIP rotation will provide experience in addressing a wide range of mental health concerns with a diverse population of Veterans. The Veterans that are treated by the BHIP team vary greatly in age, ethnicity, and diagnoses. Mood and anxiety disorders, as well as other psychological, psychiatric, and adjustment problems are commonly addressed in this clinic, affording interns the opportunity for a diagnostically and demographically broad training experience.

Training interns will work closely with supervising psychologists to assess, diagnose, and treat psychological and adjustment disorders of Veterans, doing so with a patient-centered, team-based model of service delivery. Mental health services are delivered to Veterans with high regard to cultural sensitivity, as well as sensitivity to the unique social, generational, and economic struggles facing Veterans. In addition to gaining experience in the delivery of mental health services, interns will also gain experience in the administrative and supportive duties associated with mental health treatment at the VA and other large health care institutions.

Evidence-based treatments such as Motivational Interviewing, Problem-Solving Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Cognitive Processing Therapy, and Prolonged Exposure are available to Veterans through this treatment team, allowing interns in the BHIP rotation to gain valuable exposure to or experience with these empirically supported treatments. In addition to manualized evidence-based treatment, trainees will gain experience in the art and science of traditional psychotherapy, with Cognitive, Cognitive-Behavioral, Psychosocial, Interpersonal, and integrative treatment modalities commonly utilized. The BHIP rotation will provide valuable experience in treatment planning, and in tracking the therapeutic progress of Veterans under the BHIP team’s care.

Regular clinical supervision by licensed doctoral-level psychologists is readily available in the BHIP rotation. Doctoral supervision occurs in both individual and group formats and is tailored to the specific training needs of the individual trainees. Additionally, the BHIP rotation includes the experience of being part of an interprofessional treatment team, giving insight into other health care disciplines relevant to Veteran’s overall care. Veterans who are homeless, physically disabled, victims of trauma, or suffering emotionally, both chronically and acutely, are treated by clinicians in the BHIP team. The demographic and diagnostic diversity of the Veterans cared for in the BHIP reflects an ideal generalized training experience for pre-doctoral psychologists.

*Potential Training Opportunities:*

1. Providing services to patients with a variety of disorders, including military and non-military trauma, acute stress reactions, panic/agoraphobia, grief reactions, adjustment to illness, severe character disorders, domestic violence, and mood disorders;
2. Coleading and/or leading both psychoeduational and process-oriented groups in the group therapy program (please note this may be limited by COVID-19 precautions);
3. Performing intakes and psychological screenings;
4. Performing psychological evaluations to assist in treatment planning;
5. Participating in group and individual psychotherapy and psychoeducation to assist patients in the management of a wide variety of symptoms;
6. Participating in evidence-based therapies including Motivational Interviewing, Problem-Solving Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Cognitive Processing Therapy, and Prolonged Exposure.
7. Working with the Inpatient Psychiatric Unit, which specializes in treatment of patients who have serious mental illness, to provide outpatient follow-up upon discharge;
8. Participating in specified program development and/or program evaluation projects; and
9. Working closely with psychiatrists m,who provide management of patients' psychotropic medications, interns have the opportunity to increase their psychopharmacology knowledge base.

**Substance Use Disorder (SUDS) Clinic**

*General Description****:*** The Substance Use Disorder (SUD) clinic an outpatient mental health specialty clinic providing a range of services to veterans struggling with addictions. The treatment model is based on an interdisciplinary team approach and includes Psychiatry, Psychology, Social Work, Peer Support, Chaplain Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Veteran Justice Outreach, the Homeless Program with emphasis on recovery-oriented care. We also work closely with other disciplines and teams as needed to coordinate care and provide a range of services to assist veterans. The Substance Treatment and Recovery Services (STARS) Program Manager and staff psychologist would serve as the primary clinical supervisor of the psychology intern rotating through the program and other professionals on the team are also available for consultation. Training would emphasize participation in collaborative relationships and interventions with the interprofessional team. An additional focus would be training in the delivery of appropriate evidence-based psychotherapy interventions in this setting (e.g., motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioral therapy for SUDs) and provision of services in multiple formats (e.g., group and individual, face-to-face, and virtual).

The SUDS rotation can provide a variety of training opportunities focusing on thorough assessment and diagnosis of substance use and addictive behaviors and interventions. The clinic provides varying levels of care to meet veteran needs. The Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) includes of several hours of interventions Monday through Friday to include both group and individual interventions offered in face-to-face or virtual formats. Aftercare is also available for veterans after completion of residential care, an IOP, or another round of more intensive treatment. Additionally, the clinic can provide non-intensive treatment options for veterans needing a lower level of care or more traditional psychotherapy options (e.g., time-limited, goal oriented weekly psychotherapy). Intervention formats primarily include individual and group psychotherapy but may include couples or family counseling as needed or requested by the veteran. Treatments utilized in this clinic are evidence-based and include cognitive behavioral therapy, contingency management, and motivational interviewing. A diverse group of veterans receive care in this clinic and vary regarding addiction type, gender, race, age, medical condition, and level of motivation for treatment. Many veterans also experience co-morbid mental health diagnoses that may need to be addressed during treatment.

Training interns will work closely with supervising psychologists to assess, diagnose, and treat Veterans with substance use disorders or other addictions. Mental health services are delivered to Veterans with high regard to cultural sensitivity, as well as sensitivity to the unique social, generational, and economic struggles facing Veterans. In addition to gaining experience in the delivery of mental health services, interns will participate in weekly treatment team meetings and work collaboratively to address the complex needs of veterans in the SUD population.

*Potential Training Opportunities:*

1. Attending/participating in regular team activities, such as interdisciplinary treatment team meetings;
2. Conducting standardized psychological assessments for determination of level of care, diagnosis, and appropriate SUDS pecific treatment reccomendations;
3. Collaborative identification of treatment goals and use of measurement based care to information treatment;
4. Experience working with a variety of substance use and recovery concerns across a range of recovery phases (relapse prevention, stabilization, early recovery, maintenance, and relapse), in addition to several co-occurring disorders or health issues;
5. Participating in group and individual psychotherapy in both face-to-face and virtual formats;
6. Coleading and/or leading both psychoeduational and process-oriented groups in the Intensive Outpatient Program and/or Aftercare;
7. Participating in evidence-based therapies as available including Motivational Interviewing, Contingency Management, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for SUDs
8. Participating in specified program development and/or program evaluation projects as available

**Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Clinical Team**

*General Description****:*** The PTSD Clinical Team is an outpatient specialty clinic serving Veterans with psychological issues due to military-related trauma. The interprofessional treatment team represents the following disciplines: Psychiatry, Psychology, Nursing, Social Work, Occupational Therapy, Recreational Therapy, and Chaplaincy. The PCT staff psychologists serve as the primary clinical supervisors of the psychology intern rotating through the clinic. Training emphasizes participation in collaborative relationships and interventions with the interprofessional team. A focus of the rotation is training in the assessment of PTSD and delivery of appropriate evidence-based interventions in this clinic (e.g., Cognitive Processing Therapy).

The PTSD Clinical Team provides the opportunity to work with Veterans from different war eras and to learn evidence-based therapies that are at the forefront of PTSD treatment. Education is provided pertaining to the development of treatment plans that reflect clinical interventions that are designed to facilitate the Veterans’ achievement of their goals and aspirations. Training emphasizes diagnostic assessment, test administration and interpretation, treatment plan development, group therapy, and individual therapy. The clinic promotes an evidence-based treatment focus with opportunities for provision of individual and group evidence-based psychotherapies for PTSD.

*Potential Training Opportunities:*

1. Conducting comprehensive psychodiagnostic interview-based assessment;
2. Conducting individual psychotherapy, including evidenced based therapies (EBTs) such as Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I);
3. Facilitating and co-facilitating group psychotherapy
4. Developing and implementing specialized treatment (e.g., grief resolution, treatment of nightmares, or mindfulness therapy);
5. Participating in interprofessional treatment;
6. Consult management and treatment planning; and
7. Participation in measurement based care.

***Minor Mental Health Rotations***

**Neuropsychology**

*General Description*: The neuropsychology rotation is a minor rotation that offers interns the opportunity to develop an understanding of a variety of neuropsychological and psychological measures; expand skills for administering and scoring tests; increase ability to interpret test data; and improve writing proficiency to produce comprehensive reports that integrate test data with clinical information, medical history, and knowledge of neurological conditions. The intern will learn the skills necessary to conduct an effective clinical interview in the context of neuropsychological evaluations, gaining knowledge of underlying neurological conditions that impact cognitive and emotional status with the goal of integrating this information into a comprehensive understanding of the patient and their unique neuropsychological and psychological functioning. Interns will work with veterans of all ages to clarify diagnoses and make relevant treatment recommendations based on their specific needs.

*Potential Training Opportunities:*

1. Develop basic knowledge of neuropsychological and psychological measures including their appropriate use; how to create a testing assessment battery that comprehensively assesses cognitive and psychological functioning; and generate treatment recommendations that are individual and beneficial for the patient.
2. Develop basic knowledge of neurological conditions and the contributions of medical, physical, and emotional factors on cognitive ability and emotional functioning.
3. Develop interpersonal skills for establishing rapport to engage patients in a collaborative evaluation process, increasing the likelihood of obtaining valid information and data in order to draw accurate conclusions about cognitive and emotional status.
4. Develop administration, scoring, interpreting, and report writing skills.
5. Enhance ability to provide feedback to the veteran (and their family when appropriate) using meaningful, straight forward language that facilitates an understanding of their strengths and challenges, including ways that these factors impact their daily life and functioning. Feedback often includes providing education about diagnosis and treatment.

**Health Psychology**

*General Description:* The health psychology minor rotation provides interns with the opportunity to learn and practice basic skills related to behavioral medicine. Interns will learn skills that promote Veterans to lead healthier lives, recover from illnesses, and cope with chronic medical conditions such as diabetes. Other issues frequently focused upon within the health psychology minor rotation include lifestyle choices and health beliefs; stress, weight, and pain management; reducing risky sexual or health-related behaviors (e.g., excessive alcohol intake). Issues specific to women’s health may also be a focus of this minor rotation.

*Potential Training Opportunities:*

1. Understand health behaviors through theoretical and empirical constructs such as the Theory of Planned Behavior, Health Belief Model, and Health Action Process Approach.
2. Develop basic knowledge/skills to help Veterans change poor health habits and manage chronic pain (e.g., Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, CBT for chronic pain).
3. Develop clinical skills to enhance collaboration with the therapeutic process (e.g., Motivational Interviewing, setting SMART goals).

\*\*Other minors may be available, but vary year to year\*\*

***Other Supervised Training Experiences***

Any roles that are attributed to psychologists in professional practice are appropriate training activities during the internship. Specifically, these include assessment, interviewing, psychotherapy, consultation, administration, program development, and training.

***Supervision***

Supervision is provided both formally and informally during the internship year. In keeping with APA and APPIC standards, a *minimum of four hours (including at least two hours of individual supervision)* of formal supervision is scheduled each week. Many additional hours are accumulated and logged through informal or extra scheduled time. Interns are also provided with seminars on supervision theory and practice, and engage in formal, peer supervision during the latter half of the training year.

***Didactics***

Each Wednesday, interns meet following lunch for a combination of scholarly activity, supervision, and seminars. These seminars are conducted by psychology staff members, other disciplines from the medical center, and community professionals. Topics covered through the seminar series include:

**Assessment Seminar Series**: This seminar focuses on enhancing intern’s psychological assessment skills and covers a wide spectrum of assessment including diagnostic interviewing, mental status examinations, differential diagnosis, functional assessment, and specialty clinical assessments. This seminar will enhance interns’ abilities to integrate a wide range of data from assessment in order to make a differential diagnosis with cogent treatment recommendations.

**Evidence-Based Psychotherapy Seminar Series**:Regardless of the supervisor and experience an intern selects, all interns will receive didactic training in a variety of empirically based practices and interventions provided in an outpatient mental health setting. Some of the evidence-based psychotherapies interns will learn about during the series will include Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Prolonged Exposure (PE), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Chronic Pain (CBT-CP).

**Neuropsychology Seminar Series***:* The process of general assessment and aspects of neuropsychological specific assessment will be covered with emphasis on critical thinking skills and the interpretative process of examining multiple sources of information for consistency. Interns will be introduced to the process of conducting neuropsychological evaluations, including principles of assessment, interpretative steps, and differential diagnosis of neurocognitive disorders. The standard areas of assessed cognitive domains will be reviewed and we will engage in exploration of a diverse range of neurocognitive disorder, including strategies for differential diagnosis.

**Professional Development/Advanced Topics Series:** This seminar is designed to address areas of ongoing professional development as interns advance in skills and move towards independent practice. Topics may include specialized presentations on working with interdisciplinary teams, clinical supervision seminars, preparation for the EPPP, licensure, early career issues, and administrative roles within psychology. There are also special or advanced topics to provide a broad range of didactic information to interns such as evaluations for bariatric or organ transplants, psychopharmacology, or moral injury.

**Diversity Seminar and Projects**:The seminar is intended to build on the diversity education and training that interns have received in their graduate programs. To augment multicultural competence, interns will present clinically relevant multicultural topics and case-based presentations throughout the seminar, highlighting areas of struggle, complexity, or special knowledge. Interns will also complete a Diversity Project, to identify and explore a personal bias/blind spot and a Diversity Moment presentation for the Psychology Service Staff.

**Intern Case Conference Series**: In addition to the formal didactic seminar series, training staff and interns participate in case conferences to examine critical issues of assessment and treatment. Each intern will be required to present at least two cases during the year. The fall case conference series (approximately September) focuses on assessment and testing, while the spring series (approximately March) emphasizes intervention. Interns will be required to present a written case conceptualization and any relevant psychometric and treatment data in advance of the conference. An audio recording (with informed patient consent) of a portion of the clinical encounter(s) is also required.

Interns will have opportunities and be encouraged to attend other events within the medical center to broaden interprofessional training experiences. These will include, but not be limited to, shadowing non-psychology providers, attending medical staff meetings, and educational conferences.

**DUE PROCESS**

All Interns are afforded the right to due process in matters of problem behavior and grievances. A due process document is distributed to and reviewed with all interns during their first week of orientation at the Alexandria VAHCS and periodically throught the training year.

## FACILITY AND TRAINING RESOURCES

A number of resources are available to interns at the Alexandria VAHCS including an office equipped with networked personal computers, providing easy access to patients’ computerized medical records, e-mail, and internet. A broad range of assessment materials are available in paper form or through the computerized mental health testing package. Library resources are provided online for intern access. Parking is available close to the medical center and exercise facilities are available to interns.

**TRAINING FACULTY**

**Marceline Brown, Ph.D.**

*Clinical Psychologist*

University of Southern Mississippi, 2003

Licensed Psychologist, Maryland

PTSD Clinical Team

**Leslie R. Drew, Ph.D.**

*Clinical Psychologist*

University of Mississippi, 1993

Licensed Psychologist, Mississippi

Program Manager PTSD Clinical Team

Psychology Training Program Co-Director

**Gina Gibson, Ph.D., ABPP-CN**

*Board Certified Neuropsychologist*

Louisiana Tech University, 2007

Licensed Psychologist, Louisiana

Lafayette CBOC

**Catherine Hansen, Ph.D.**

*Clinical Psychologist*

University of Rhode Island, 1992

Licensed Psychologist, Louisiana and Connecticut

Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator, Natchitoches CBOC

**Patricia Joyce, Ph.D.**

*Clinical Psychologist*

Nova Southeastern University, 2000

Licensed Psychologist, Florida

Neuropsychology

**Danielle N. Newman, Ph.D.**

*Counseling Psychologist*

Louisiana Tech University, 2017

Licensed Psychologist, Louisiana

Substance Treatment and Recovery Services (STARS) Program Manager

Psychology Training Program Co-Director

**Kelley S. Pears, Ph.D.**

*Counseling Psychologist*

University of Southern Mississippi, 1994

Licensed Psychologist, Louisiana

PTSD Clinical Team; PTSD/SUDS Coordinator

**Troy Raffield, Ph.D.**

*Clinical Psychologist*

University of Louisville, 2003

Licensed Psychologist, Louisiana

PTSD Clinical Team

**Sherri Transier, Ph.D.**

*Counseling Psychologist*

Louisiana Tech University, 2010

Licensed Psychologist, Louisiana

Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program/ Mental Health Clinic

**Joseph Salande, Ph.D.**

*Clinical Psychologist*

Fielding University, 2018

Licensed Psychologist, Louisiana

Jennings CBOC Mental Health Clinic

**ADJUNCT TRAINING FACULTY**

**Paula Muse**

*Clinical Psychologist*

Palo Alto University, 2021

Licensed Psychologist, Louisiana

Fort Polk CBOC Mental Health Clinic

**Birgit Smart, Ph.D.**

*Counseling Psychologist*

Louisiana Tech University, 2009

Licensed Psychologist, Louisiana

Mental Health Clinic

**Lauren M. Vines, Ph.D.**

*Clinical Psychologist*

University of Louisville, 2014

Licensed Psychologist, Alabama

Chief, Psychology Service

**Internship Admissions, Support, and Initial Placement Data**

**Date Program Tables are updated: 8/15/22**

**Program Disclosures**

Does the program or institution require students, trainees, and/or staff (faculty) to comply with specific policies or practices related to the institution’s affiliation or purpose? Such policies or practices may include, but are not limited to, admissions, hiring, retention policies, and/or requirements for completion that express mission and values.

**Yes**

**X\_\_ No**

If yes, provide website link (or content from brochure) where this specific information is presented:

**Internship Program Admissions**

|  |
| --- |
| Briefly describe in narrative form important information to assist potential applicants in assessing their likely fit with your program. This description must be consistent with the  program’s policies on intern selection and practicum and academic preparation requirements: |
| **Applicants should be interested in a generalist internship experience, as our program provides generalist training and encourages development of general competence over specialization.** |
| Does the program require that applicants have received a minimum number of hours of the following at time of application? If Yes, indicate how many: |
| Total Direct Contact Intervention Hours: N **Y\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_500\_\_\_\_**Amount:  Total Direct Contact Assessment Hours: N **Y**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**50**\_\_\_\_Amount: |
| Describe any other required minimum criteria used to screen applicants: |
| **Applicants must be U.S. citizens, and at the time of application, must be enrolled in an APA or CPA-accredited clinical or counseling psychology doctoral program or at PCSAS-accredited programs in Clinical Science. Applicants must have passed all comprehensive examinations required by their graduate program and have completed their dissertation proposal at the time of application**. **Current federal policy also requires that essentially all VA employees be vaccinated against COVID-19 within 75 days of entering VA employment.** |

**Financial and Other Benefit Support for Upcoming Training Year**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Annual Stipend/Salary for Full-time Interns | $33,469 | |
| Annual Stipend/Salary for Half-time Interns | N/A | |
| Program provides access to medical insurance for intern? | **Yes** | N/A |
| If access to medical insurance is provided: |  |  |
| Trainee contribution to cost required? | **Yes** | N/A |
| Coverage of family member(s) available? | **Yes** | N/A |
| Coverage of legally married partner available? | **Yes** | N/A |
| Coverage of domestic partner available? | N/A | **No** |
| Hours of Annual Paid Personal Time Off (PTO and/or Vacation) | 96-104 | |
| Hours of Annual Paid Sick Leave | 96-104 | |
| In the event of medical conditions and/or family needs that require extended leave, does the program allow reasonable unpaid leave to interns/residents in excess of personal time off and sick leave? | **Yes** | N/A |
| Other benefits (please describe): | | |
| Interns receive 11 annual federal holidays. Additionally, interns are granted up to 40 hours of authorized leave without charge when the activity is of substantial benefit to VA in accomplishing its general mission or a specific function such as education and training. | | |

\*Note. Programs are not required by the Commission on Accreditation to provide all benefits listed in this table.

**Initial Post-Internship Positions**

(Aggregated Tally for Preceding 3 cohorts)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2019-2022 | |
| Total # of interns who were in the 3 cohorts: | 9 | |
| Total # of interns who remain in training in the internship program | 0 | |
|  | PD | EP |
| Academic teaching | 0 | 0 |
| Community mental health center | 0 | 1 |
| Consortium | 0 | 0 |
| University counseling center | 0 | 0 |
| Hospital/Medical Center | 3 | 0 |
| Veterans Affairs Health Care System | 2 | 1 |
| Psychiatric facility | 0 | 0 |
| Correctional facility | 0 | 0 |
| Health maintenance organization | 0 | 0 |
| School district/system | 0 | 0 |
| Independent practice setting | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 0 | 2 |

**Living in Central Louisiana (CENLA)**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Red_River_Amphitheatre.JPG)

Amphitheatre on the Red River (Wikipedia.org)

Alexandria, Louisiana is a growing, vibrant and historical city along the south bank of the Red River in the geographical center of the state. It has a population of approximately 48,000 residents and is the ninth-largest city in the state of Louisiana. Due to Alexandria’s location within the center of the state, it serves as the retail, business, health care and transportation hub of a nine parish (county) region of more than 400,000 people. Alexandria has three colleges located within it: Louisiana State University at Alexandria is a regional campus of Louisiana State University, Louisiana College is a private Southern Baptist University, and there is also one of the Region 6 Louisiana Technical College campuses.

Alexandria is a small Southern city with many amenities commonly found in large cities including an airport, two award-winning hospitals, and one of the best small zoological parks in the country. There are five golf courses including The Links on the Bayou, which was named Best Public Course in Louisiana by *Golf Digest*. Alexandria was also named one of the top ten “wilderness towns” in the nation by the *National Geographic Traveler*. Alexandria contains the Alexandria Museum of Art, Arna Bontemps African American Museum, Louisiana Historical Museum, Kent Plantation House, and Cultural Arts Center. There are several annual cultural events and festivals including Mardi Gras, Winter fete, Cenlabration, and Riverfest, which typically include music and cultural food in addition to event specific features.

In addition to being a great place for family, Alexandria is a great place for businesses and was named one of the “Best Small Places for Business and Careers” by Forbes magazine in 2019. Alexandria is a small town that is regularly expanding.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.cityofalexandriala.com/>

<http://www.pineville.net/>

<http://www.alexandria-louisiana.com/>