



2023-2024

(For the 2024-2025 Training Year)

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System
Doctoral Internship in Psychology
Biloxi, Mississippi

WELCOME

The Psychology Internship Training Faculty at the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System (GCVHCS) greatly appreciates your interest in our doctoral internship in health psychology. Our program has been in existence since 1951 and continually accredited since 1981. Our program aims to train interns to provide evidenced based and recovery focused clinical care and be a critical consumer of scientific research. We value the contributions interns make to our training program and the care of Veterans all along the Gulf Coast, and we have a strong commitment to promoting the development of interns' clinical skills and professional competences, all while honoring intern's individualized professional goals. Beyond the contributions interns have made during their internships, they often go on to take staff psychologist positions here and continue to contribute to the legacy of our program. Please let us know if you have any questions as you consider your internship opportunities. We look forward to reviewing your application. Thank you for your interest in our program.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Our Vision

The Psychology Internship training program embraces the philosophy that the pre-doctoral internship year represents a transition period for the emerging professional psychologist during which the intern moves from the role of graduate student to that of the autonomous professional. Training and supervision during the year should prepare the intern to enter the field of health service psychology with those skills needed to function independently and with the confidence and professional self-awareness to make maximum use of the individual's talents. Therefore, our training goal is to develop generalists who can function in a broad range of professional settings using a variety of skills. Reciprocally, our training program stimulates and enriches the training faculty and enhances the quality of patient care.

The internship program emphasizes a generalist specialty with development of extensive proficiencies in various facets of psychology (i.e., personality, intellectual, neuropsychological and psycho-diagnostic assessment, psychotherapy, scholarly inquiry, research competence, consultation) with a rural Veteran patient population. The training year provides time to develop professionally and to set the stage for further post-doctoral specialization to enhance the diversity of the training experience. The faculty encourages applications from individuals with a variety of competencies and interests. The program facilitates professional development of interns by increasing their sensitivity to the cultural and individual diversity of the patients we serve and the professionals with whom we work. Significant attention is given to encouraging interns' personal, professional, and ethical development, consistent with the demands of becoming a psychologist.

Our Goals

The primary goal of the program is to train future independent licensed practitioners whose clinical decisions are informed by the integration of science and professional practice of

psychology, in keeping with a Scholar-Practitioner Model. Significant attention is given to encouraging the intern's personal, professional and ethical development, consistent with the developmental needs of becoming a health service psychologist. Attention is also given to intern training needs, long term professional goals, and anticipated public health needs. Our specific goals for interns include:

Growth in Knowledge

We focus our clinical training and didactics on preparing a rich professional practitioner knowledge base. The internship is designed to provide a broad range of training experiences in the contemporary practice of professional psychology with some opportunity for subspecialty training and to satisfy licensure requirements for most states in the U.S.

Sensitivity to Cultural and Individual Diversity

We strive to provide the interns diverse and wide-ranging clinical training experiences with an appreciation of multicultural/diversity sensitivity. The program facilitates professional development of interns by increasing their sensitivity to the cultural and individual diversity of the Veterans we serve, including those living in rural areas, and the professionals with whom we work. To enhance the diversity of the training experience, the faculty encourages applications from individuals with a variety of competencies and interests, as well as applicants from diverse backgrounds.

Appreciation of Professional Diversity

The program is designed so that interns have interactions with and supervision by several of the training faculty. This provides for a broad range of experiences with psychologists who have diverse racial, gender, academic, theoretical, practice, and specialty backgrounds. Further, many of our training opportunities incorporate an interprofessional approach to treatment, allowing interaction with an interdisciplinary team.

Generalized Competence

The internship program emphasizes and develops a broad range of generalist skills (i.e., personality, cognitive, neuropsychological and psycho-diagnostic assessment, psychotherapy, scholarly inquiry, research competence, consultation) with diverse Veteran patient populations.

Preparing for Future Professional Roles

The training year provides time to develop professionally and to set the stage for further post-doctoral specialization in the areas of health psychology/behavioral medicine, neuropsychology, geropsychology, and trauma and stressor-related disorders. Interns will be prepared to assume clinical and research-focused professional health care positions wherein they will provide empirically based interventions and likewise contribute to the professional knowledge base. The Veterans Health Administration

(VHA) prides itself on providing state-of-the-art training for healthcare professionals, then hiring former VA trainees to serve Veterans in their professional careers. Our internship program embraces these values, and many of our graduates go on to successful careers in VHA.

Our Model

In keeping with our goals, all internship training is designed to be sequential, cumulative, and graded in complexity as the year progresses to meet both the needs of the interns and community at large.

Rotations

Each intern completes three, 4-month rotations. Periodically, certain rotations may be mandated. Most rotations are chosen by interns which allows for training opportunities that will best help to meet their longer-term professional goals. Split rotations (two half-time rotations) are possible, with the prior approval of the supervisors involved and the Director of Training. Rotation offerings may vary depending on supervisory availability. The Director of Training maintains final approval on all rotations.

Long Term Projects

The long-term project gives each intern the opportunity to design and pursue a specialized training experience in which he or she will participate throughout the entire training year. The long-term project may be clinically oriented, may focus on program development, may involve another facet of service provision (e.g., outreach, prevention, etc.), or may involve research. Four hours per week is devoted to the long-term project with one hour of the four dedicated to either individual or group supervision with their long-term project supervisor.

Dissertation Support

Although interns will be very busy with their clinical work, the training faculty encourages them to organize their professional activities, whether on-duty or off-duty, so that progress continues on their dissertation (assuming it has not already been completed). While support in completing the dissertation is available on a limited basis, it is presumed that interns have proposed their projects, collected data, and/or are in the final stages of analysis and write-up when they begin their internship year. We prefer that interns complete their dissertations before or during the training year, and then focus intensely on licensure and moving into postdoctoral fellowship or employment.

Additional Training

Each Thursday is devoted to training seminars, group supervision, or other meetings (Diversity Days, Grand Rounds presentations, Training Supervisors' Meeting). Other training activities include conducting cognitive and personality assessments with Veterans, serving a term as Chief Intern, and developing and implementing self-care

stratagems/skills as a means of promoting a greater work-personal care balance during the workday.

Supervision and Evaluation

Supervision is an integral part of the training program and is designed to foster education, professional competence, personal and professional growth, ethical responsibility, and personal integrity. At the beginning of the internship year, the goals of supervision, process of supervision, and characteristics of good supervisors and supervisees are reviewed. Outlines of this information are provided for each intern to reference during the training year. Supervisors are licensed psychologists who share their knowledge and expertise, model technique and professional behavior, and encourage interns to develop generalist skills using a variety of assessment-diagnostic, intervention, treatment team consultation, and research methods. Interns are expected to apply critical thinking and contemporary, empirically based skills to professional, legal, and ethical issues related to the practice of psychology. Interns receive a minimum 4 hours of licensed supervision per week, at least two of which are provided through individual supervision. The remaining supervision hours occur through extra individual or group supervision, including the weekly Group Supervision meeting with training leadership. Additional supervision may likely occur through other scheduled or unscheduled and formal or informal supervision contacts and sessions.

Specific rotation activity goals and objectives are communicated to interns in writing at the onset of each rotation activity. Faculty supervisors meet monthly to discuss the progress of interns toward meeting these goals and objectives. At mid-rotation, supervisors and interns are prompted to exchange feedback on the rotation experience and review goals and objectives. Patient and hospital staff feedback are reviewed and integrated into the evaluation of intern progress. At the end of each rotation, interns and their primary supervisor(s) complete formal, written competency evaluations that are forwarded to the Director of Training (DOT). The information in these evaluations is used by the DOT to provide ongoing feedback to interns, supervisors, and academic training directors. Successful completion of relevant rotations, seminars, and general activity objectives constitute exit criteria for completion of the program.

Problem Issues and Due Process Resolution

Normally, problematic behavior or less than satisfactory performance is resolved by the intern and the rotation supervisor. In rare instances, formally amending the intern's training plan is necessary. We have a written due process document which details policies and procedures that are implemented in these cases. The procedures for handling grievances are designed to protect the rights of the student, the supervisor and the training program.

Required Hours and Holidays

There are 11 Federal Holidays throughout the year and interns accrue 104 days of Annual Leave and 104 days of Sick Leave as Federal Employees, over the course of the training year. In order to certify the 2080 hour per year requirement of most states and account for time off on holidays and use of Leave, interns are required to obtain and document an average of 45 hours of work per week.

Training in the Tele-medicine Era

Remote Seminars: Seminars may be offered remotely, with presenters and participants at different locations during the seminar transmission. Remote seminars may be offered by Teams, Zoom, or other approved platforms, and information will be readily available to participants in advance of the seminar or soon after completion of the seminar. The expectation is that any seminars offered remotely will be attended in their entirety, with Interns actively participating.

Telework: Interns who have completed initial orientation requirements and have demonstrated adequate clinical and administrative skills relative to their desired rotations may be eligible for telework during a public health crisis. Telework is a privilege, requiring adherence to a formal Telework Agreement and completion of all prerequisites for telework. The safety of our Veterans and Interns are always at the forefront of what we do, but while every effort is made to secure telework during any public health crisis, telework itself is not guaranteed and can be limited. It is important for Interns to maintain an online presence and complete clinical and/or administrative duties as effectively as they would in person when they are teleworking. In this way, we can know that our Veterans and our Interns are always safe during any public health crisis.

Unique Circumstances: *Reasonable efforts will be made to maintain safety of all Interns throughout their participation in the program. Facility requirements related to face-to-face contact with Veterans and colleagues will be provided to each Intern, and adherence to these requirements is obligatory. Interns who require accommodations for a disability should seek these accommodations via the Human Resources department.*

ANTICIPATED ROTATIONS 2022-2023

Acute Inpatient: During the Acute Inpatient rotation, the intern will become a part of an interdisciplinary treatment team consisting of representatives from psychology, psychiatry, social work, nursing and allied health disciplines. The intern is afforded an opportunity to assess and intervene with patients from diverse backgrounds, exhibiting florid presentations of a wide range of psychiatric-behavioral disorders. The intern will be involved with various activities including, but not limited to, intake interviewing, development of treatment plans, consultation, providing

patient education, individual and group psychotherapy, commitment evaluations, and conducting diagnostic assessments. This rotation serves as a rich source of training in the area of clinical assessment.

Behavioral Medicine/Health Psychology: The Clinical Health Psychology/Behavioral Medicine rotation emphasizes use of an expanded biopsychosocial perspective in the prevention and treatment of health-related conditions. The mission of Health Psychology is to maximize the physical and psychological functioning of Veterans through health promotion programs, individual goal-oriented treatments, and group psychoeducational programs that teach self-management of chronic medical conditions, while additionally reducing overall health care costs through application of these programs. We operate under the premise that learned ways of thinking and behaving can compromise health or promote wellness. Interns on this rotation are trained to respond to consultations from healthcare providers and to assess and treat a wide variety of medical conditions that are caused or impacted by lifestyle and/or psychological factors. Medical conditions frequently treated by health psychologists include chronic pain, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cancer, tension and migraine headache, temporomandibular disorders, insomnia and other sleep disorders, diabetes, irritable bowel syndrome, obesity, and compliance with difficult medical regimens. They may also offer disease management, primary prevention, and health promotion programs (e.g., tobacco cessation, weight loss), as well as programs in population health management. Interns may work with interdisciplinary teams comprised of a variety of health-care professionals. Current programs of this type may include the OEF/OIF Traumatic Brain Injury/Polytrauma program, OEF/OIF/OND Post-deployment Clinic, Inpatient Medical/Surgical Unit, and the MOVE! Weight management program. There is often opportunity for presurgical evaluations. Rotations in Behavioral Medicine may emphasize sleep-related difficulties or chronic pain management.

General Mental Health (Outpatient): The Mental Health Outpatient Clinic (MHOC) is multidisciplinary and provides opportunity for interprofessional training. The clinic is staffed by psychologists, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, social workers, addiction therapists, and nurses. It is an open clinic, which means that it accepts consults and referrals from all services throughout the hospital. The clinic provides a wide range of mental health services, as well as coordination of Veteran care across the facility. The population served by this clinic is diverse and represents a wide range of clinical issues and presenting problems. Frequently presented clinical issues and diagnoses include: mood disorders, substance-related disorders, schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, anxiety disorders, sleep disorders, impulse control disorders, personality disorders, bereavement, partner relationship issues, anger management, emotional dysregulation, gender and sexual disorders, pain disorders, combat and non-combat PTSD, Military Sexual Trauma (MST), and Adjustment Disorders. Less frequently presenting issues include Eating Disorders, Somatoform Disorders, and Dissociative Disorders. Comorbidity is present in most patients treated within this clinic, which provides an even broader and more diverse exposure for interns. The Veteran population is diverse with respect to racial/ethnic identity, gender, and age and typically corresponds with our local VA Medical Center catchment population.

PTSD Clinical Team (PCT – Outpatient): This rotation traditionally offers an opportunity for interns to experience working in an outpatient PTSD specialty clinic. While the priority for the Biloxi PCT is serving Veterans with PTSD or Trauma-related disorders resulting from combat, opportunities typically exist to work with other types of trauma as well (e.g., training accidents, military sexual trauma, etc.). Most of the Veterans treated within the PCT have served in combat theaters including Vietnam, Gulf War (Deserts Storm and Shield), and post-9/11 conflicts (e.g., Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn (OND). One of the goals of the Biloxi PCT are to administer gold-standard and psychotherapies (i.e., PE, CPT, EMDR) per VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guidelines as much as possible. There has also generally been ample opportunity to gain experience using motivational interventions (MI, ACT, etc.) to prepare Veterans for PTSD EBPs.

Geropsychology (Half-Time): The geropsychology rotation occurs within the Community Living Center (CLC). This rotation provides services to individuals that typically present between the ages of 50 to their 90s. Service emphasis of this rotation is varied and may include: brief cognitive assessment, psychotherapy/counseling for individuals presenting with age-related difficulties (e.g. Death of spouse, life transitioning difficulties after retirement, coping with loss of functional autonomy with decline of physical capacity, etc.), research/literature analysis and compiling psychotherapy and psychoeducational resources, assisting in brief capacity interviews, consultation with other disciplines on specific cases, and other options. Veterans within the CLC neighborhoods (units) live on site, with their own rooms and ready access to medical services and staff oversight. Neighborhoods within the CLC offer palliative care, dementia care, long-term care, and shorter-stay rehabilitation care.

Neuropsychology: Interns on this rotation assist in conducting neuropsychological assessments for referred patients, progressing to increased independence in administering the evaluations over the course of the rotation and writing the integrated report. Referral questions include differentiating normal aging and early dementia, determining cognitive functioning after moderate-to-severe head injury or after a significant illness affecting the central nervous system, and assessing the potential impact of cognitive difficulties on work performance.

Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program-Domiciliary (RRTP-DOM): RRTP-DOM is a 72-bed residential program where Veterans live in a therapeutic community setting and receive treatment for PTSD, chronic mental illness (CMI), and/or substance use disorders (SUD). Veterans attend structured group therapy and lectures, process groups and individual therapy. A wide variety of interventions are offered across these modalities of treatment including anger management, mood management, introduction to 12-Step Recovery, education on the biological basis of addiction, medication management of symptoms, and ambulatory detox if needed. Veterans with a history of substance use disorders are also required to attend AA/NA meetings. The average length of stay for Veterans in the RRTP-DOM, is 45-days.

Interns on this rotation acquire skills necessary to function as a member of a multidisciplinary treatment team, will conduct psychological interviews on new admissions, develop mental health treatment plans for individual patients, conduct suicide risk assessments, and create safety plans. To develop the skills necessary to function as a member of a treatment team, interns will attend treatment team meetings and at least one weekly screening committee meeting. This rotation also affords interns the opportunity to acquire skills in conduction of individual and group psychotherapy for patients which address a wide variety of behaviors that arise from substance abuse/dependence, PTSD, and/or CMI. Interns will conduct weekly individual psychotherapy and co-facilitate group therapy sessions. Interns develop their own learning plans, much like the treatment plans developed by our individual patients. They may select to work with any variety of patients and groups.

OUR FACILITIES AND LOCATION

The Biloxi Medical Center is the administrative hub of the health care system, and home to medical and surgical in- and outpatient programs, Primary Care medical teams, Emergency Department, extended care programs providing rehabilitative therapies and geriatric care, and various specialty clinics. Inpatient and outpatient mental health services for Veterans in the rural and urban Mississippi Coastal area are also located in Biloxi. In addition to general psychiatry and geriatric inpatient units, outpatient programs include a Mental Health Clinic, Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders Clinic, and Women's Mental Health Clinic. The Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (PRRTP) provides intensive bed programs for substance abuse, PTSD, serious mental illness and homelessness-work therapy. The Mobile, Eglin, and Panama City Outpatient Clinics as well as the Pensacola Joint Ambulatory Care Center provide community-based primary medical and mental health care to eligible southern Alabama and northwest Florida Veterans with the Biloxi VA Medical Center providing inpatient care as needed. All treatment (i.e., mental health, medical, or extended care) is formulated under the primary care model with patients assigned to single providers supported by specific health care teams. Interns in our Biloxi Internship program may rotate to the CBOC or JACC facilities, as well as within our main facility, should there be willing training faculty at these alternative sites.

OUR AREA: THE GULF COAST

The Gulf Coast area is a relaxed beach resort setting. French and Spanish explorers settled the area in the late 1600's attempting to gain strategic and economic control of the mouth of the Mississippi River. The area has been home to Native Americans (the Biloxi Indians), French Acadians ("Cajuns"), African Americans, Slavic Fishermen, and more recently, Vietnamese Americans. Since the 1950's, numerous federal agencies and large industries have been located here including: the National Space Technologies Laboratories, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, Keesler Air Force Base (a major Air Force electronics, communication, and medical/surgical training facility, the home of the Naval Construction

Battalion (Seabees), and the Pensacola Naval Flight Training Center (home of the Blue Angels precision flying team).

The Mississippi Gulf Coast is a major tourist destination and is home to several casinos with their related hotels, fine dining and entertainment facilities. Each year, the interns enjoy many Coast diversions including Mardi Gras, art and entertainment festivals, yacht and powerboat racing, and various fishing rodeos and seafood festivals. Some other noteworthy annual events include: “Cruisin’ the Coast” hosting some 5000 antique and classic cars, “Smokin’ the Sound” offshore powerboat races, and the Mississippi Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo. Fine cuisine and entertainment have always been a part of the Mississippi Gulf Coast tradition, as have the 26 miles of beach and the bays, bayous and rivers with their associated water sports and recreation. The Gulf Coast Coliseum and Convention Center is host to big name concert entertainment, boat and camper shows, arts and crafts exhibitions, and numerous conventions. In 2015, Biloxi became home to a minor-league baseball team, the Shuckers.

RESEARCH FACILITY

The Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System is accredited as a research facility by the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs (AAHRPP). In our efforts to provide quality and cutting-edge care to Veterans, this facility encourages all disciplines to pursue research endeavors. At times, some training faculty members actively pursue their own research programs, which may translate to opportunities for interns to participate in research.

Our Information Resources

The Department of Veterans Affairs has been a leader in the development of computerized medical records. The VA’s Computerized Patient Records System (CPRS) is currently the most sophisticated system in VA use. Interns will utilize CPRS for chart review of progress notes, consults, radiological reports, health care summaries, discharge summaries, pharmaceutical information, etc. Interlibrary Loan service and assisted literature searches are available.

SEMINARS

2023-2024

Neuropsychology Seminar

The Neuropsychology Seminar consists of presentations designed to provide basic education about Veterans in the areas of Neuropsychology, including information about the various domains and disorders that are assessed, basic neuroanatomy, test administration, and report writing. It includes training in the use of standardized tests such as the Neuropsychological Assessment Battery and Delis-Kaplan Executive Function System. It is useful for individuals preparing to take the EPPP who have had no coursework in Neuropsychology, and it serves as a review for those who have. Discussion of the various domains and disorders are supplemented with case presentations pertinent to the topic being discussed.

Case Processing Seminar

Case Processing works to bridge the gap between learning DSM-5 diagnoses and their associated polythetic criteria and applying these paragon models of behavioral and neurological disorders to real-world or real-world inspired cases. This interactive didactic involves working through differential diagnoses, conceptualization, light treatment prognoses, and hypothetical directions of treatment. Psychology interns will have the opportunity to facilitate their own case processing didactic during the course of the seminar series.

Special Topics Seminar

Special Topics seminar offers lectures oriented around specialized knowledge in diagnostics, treatment, and/or engagement with unique populations and/or with unique presenting concerns. This seminar is flexible in approach and may be more discussion-based or traditional lecture structured, depending on the preference of the specific didactic facilitator overseeing the specific seminar date.

Fireside Chat Pedagogy

The function of Fireside Chat Pedagogies is to provide a more casual and informal form of teaching that fosters cohesive discussion and analysis of complex topics. This form of pedagogy is intended to shift away from the more unidirectional method of conveying information that exists within a more classical didactic-lecture paradigm. Topics of fireside chats will widely vary and may include a variety of topics that may be brought forth by the pedagogy facilitator. Facilitators will rotate amongst faculty, clinical psychologists not on faculty, and representatives from other disciplines.

Psychological Assessment Seminar

The Psychological Assessment Seminar meets regularly through the entire year. The goal of the assessment seminar is to help the intern acquire the skills necessary to select, administer, score and interpret a range of diagnostic psychological tests. Relevant concepts will be illustrated using case history materials gathered from past and present medical center patients. The seminar also includes instruction in the evaluation of capacity, review of current literature related to assessment, ethics in the evaluation of malingering, and discussions of cultural and ethical considerations. Interns are encouraged to bring test data to the seminar for discussion.

Evidence Based Psychotherapy (EBP) Seminar

The Evidence Based Psychotherapy (EBP) seminar is offered monthly and allows for didactic presentations by training faculty dedicated to education in EBPs by EBP-trained staff members. The seminar provides an overview of the theory and practice involved in various VA-approved evidence-based psychotherapies. Currently, this seminar is shared with the Rural & Underserved Interprofessional Fellowship Program. Treatments covered include Motivational Interviewing, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Interpersonal Therapy, Cognitive Processing Therapy, Prolonged Exposure, Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy, and Cognitive Behavioral Conjoint Therapy for PTSD.

Advanced Theory and Practice Seminar

The Advanced Theory and Practice Seminar is oriented around developing basic clinical conceptualization abilities that may be used to: (1) swiftly and flexibly conceptualize a range of cases; (2) facilitate understanding of behavior from a more “whole” perspective that can explain both adaptive and maladaptive behavior; and (3) provide a counterpoint balance to the reductionistic method of modern psychodiagnostics. Seminars will mostly be interactive and emphasize simple conceptual models (e.g. biopsychosocial) over more complicated and rigid, pathology-oriented conceptual models.

Psychopharmacology Seminar

As the traditional boundaries between behavioral and medical science are blurred with the omnipresent reality that one impacts the other, it is becoming increasingly necessary for clinical psychologists to possess a foundational understanding of pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics. The vast majority of the individuals one works with in psychotherapy, assessment, education, etc. service settings will be actively engaged in pharmacotherapy and present with potential medical complications. This seminar series is intended to assist in providing this foundational knowledge so one is better equipped to navigate this potentially overlooked area of our field.

Grand Rounds Trial

During Grand Rounds Trial (GR Trial), presentations are made by the interns with a review of the relevant recent literature involving a problem in assessment or intervention. Each intern will present all the research for his or her Grand Rounds presentations on his or her assigned GR trial date. The Director of Training and the internship cohort will critically review the research being presented and suggest possible further avenues of research.

Diversity Seminar

The Diversity seminar seeks to integrate topics of diversity, communication, and the impact of society on intrapersonal and interpersonal (including therapeutic) relationships. Case presentation, lectures, open discussions, and other methods of learning may be utilized in facilitating learning and thoughtful reflection in this seminar series.

Science and Art of Supervision

As part of the foundational domains of proficiency expected of all psychologists, the Science and Art of Supervision seminar series was formed to overview the literature behind providing clinical supervision as well as discuss real-world scenarios a clinical supervisor may face. A focus of the seminar is reflective practice as interns move from primarily functioning as supervisees to taking on the role of clinical supervisor. This seminar occurs early in the year to prepare interns for peer and tiered supervision experiences.

EPPP Power Hour

The EPPP Power Hour was formed to assist in providing early steps for preparation for the EPPP licensure examination via granting exposure to assessment questions derived from past EPPP and EPPP prep materials, increase comfort with the daunting licensure examination, and give some practical advice on test taking strategies that are relevant to the examination. This didactic series is also facilitated in a less stringent and strict atmosphere and strives to increase comfort and shift perspectives of the EPPP and other formal examinations to intrinsic motivation to learn over extrinsic fears of failure as the assessment approach method.

Variety Hour

In response to the varied requests for presentations, learning opportunities, and facilitator formats that don't fit cleanly into the other didactic and pedagogy series, a "variety hour" series was developed to allow flexibility during the course of the year to topic requests, presentations, seminars, etc. that training faculty, sibling-disciplines, and/or interns may be willing to provide to further and support knowledge bases, clinical skills, critical thinking skills, and paradigm shifts.

Possible Additional Didactic Opportunities**Diversity Days Seminar**

The Diversity Days Seminar falls outside of the regularly scheduled didactics day, occurring on Wednesdays at noon. This multi-site seminar is offered every month as an opportunity for interns and training faculty to examine issues related to working with diverse populations. Presenters are expert practitioners and researchers employed in a variety of settings across the nation. Seminars are offered via V-Tel from remote sites. Presentations are usually followed by group discussion. Recent topics have included spirituality in combat, the role of acculturation in psychotherapy outcomes, white privilege, and psychotherapy with American Indian populations.

Various Teleseminars and Seminar Series:

The VA offers additional clinical training didactics via the Talent Management System (TMS) and seminar series. Additional seminar series may also be passed on by training faculty to be hosted by community, university, and other settings.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCES DURING THE INTERNSHIP YEAR**Group Supervision**

Group Supervision meets on a weekly basis, supervised by the training program leadership. Interns discuss current cases and elicit feedback from their supervisors and peers. Professional development issues and cohort dynamics may also be a focus of the Group Supervision meetings. Interns will also practice peer supervision in several of these weekly group supervisions.

Psychology Grand Rounds

Psychology Grand Rounds will be led by each intern one time during the training year. Interns, on a rotating basis, present a case in either assessment or intervention. Faculty, interns and other students attend and participate. Interns must present assessment data, review contemporary literature related to the disorder, and lead discussion concerning the diagnosis and treatment of the case. Attention is given to diversity in patients and populations presented.

*The Grand Rounds Trial was created to support this activity by allowing a practice run, peer feedback, and time to alter presentation prior to the formal Grand Rounds presentation.

Assessment Training Program

The Assessment Training Program provides services to the Biloxi center and to the Mobile Outpatient Clinics (For Mobile OPC - when available). Consultation requests are received from a wide range of sources: Neurology, Medicine, Primary Care, Psychiatry, Extended Care, and even Employee Health. After learning to properly administer the assessment measures, Interns are assigned full psychological assessment reports throughout the year, with a minimum of six (6) overall reports completed and two (2) of these being fully integrative batteries possessing both cognitive (e.g. RBANs, WAIS, DKEFS, etc.) and personality (MMPI, MCMI, PAI, etc.) assessments. This training experience is supported through the Neuropsychology Seminar, Clinical Assessment Seminar, and individual and group supervision.

Self-Care Inclusion

The concept of self-care is often spoken about as an after-work series of activities, despite the reality that it is often most useful and beneficial when included during work hours, when mental-emotional difficulties often occur. As a means of fostering greater bridging between work roles and self-care needs, it is strongly encouraged that training faculty and trainees utilize and practice methods of self-care during training day seminars and on rotation workdays (e.g. walking supervision [on topics that don't contain patient PII] on a nice day, sitting outside under the shade during a seminar on mindfulness, taking a brief mindful breathing break by the pier during a free hour, etc.). It is hoped that by modeling and practicing self-care during these training activities, interns may be more willing and comfortable in implementing self-care strategies in future settings they work in after procurement of their doctorate and license.

Role of Chief Intern

The Chief Intern is appointed by the Director of Training on a rotating schedule from among the intern class. The primary job of the Chief Intern is to represent the intern class to the Director of Training and other training leadership, as needed, with some of the duties relevant to the psychology training program. Some traditional duties of the Chief Intern have included: responsibility for leading and recording the monthly Steering Committee Meeting, attending the monthly training faculty meeting as a representative and liaison for the internship class, serving as the point of contact for information that needs to be conveyed to the training cohort or collected from the cohort, and other duties as relevant and necessary. These varied duties are consistent with the overarching goals of the training program and needs of the Behavioral Health Service.

INTERNSHIP TRAINING FACULTY

Active Training Faculty

Ronald W. Alexander, Ph.D.

Titles: Clinical Health Psychologist

School: University of Alabama, Birmingham

Internship: Wilford Hall Medical Center, Lackland AFB, San Antonio, TX

Post-doctoral Fellowship: Clinical Health Psychology, Wilford Hall Medical Center, Lackland AFB, San Antonio, TX

License: Kansas, 1999 – Present

Duties: Dr. Alexander is responsible for providing a full spectrum of health psychology behavioral medicine services within the medical center. He is currently involved with the Health Psychology Behavioral Medicine Clinic, Behavioral Sleep medicine Clinic, MOVE! Program and the Traumatic Brain Injury-Polytrauma screening program. Dr. Alexander is currently a VHA national training consultant for the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) training program.

Professional Interests: Dr. Alexander's theoretical orientation is primarily cognitive behavioral with an emphasis on comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment and treatment. His special passion is in the behavioral assessment and treatment of sleep disorders including insomnia, breathing-disordered sleep, and circadian rhythm disorders. He is an avid supporter of the integration of mental health professionals into primary care and specialty medical clinics, with strong emphasis on the behavioral health consultant model of care. He has special interest in the proper referral, and comprehensive assessment and treatment of veterans returning from the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Dr. Alexander is a strong advocate for patient-centered care and is a member of the GCVHCS Whole Health committee. He is currently developing programs to be provided under the Whole Health system of care.

Personal Interests: My family, travelling, soccer, music, movies, food, video games

Eugenia Boozer, Psy.D

Titles: Clinical Neuropsychologist - MOPC

School: Florida Institute of Technology (PsyD-MS)

Internship: Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center, Tuscaloosa, AL

Post-doctoral Fellowship: Central Arkansas VA Healthcare System, North Little Rock, AR

License: Alabama, 2019 – present

Duties: Dr. Boozer operates the neuropsychology clinic at the Mobile CBOC. Duties include providing specialty consultative services in neuropsychology, administration/scoring and interpretation of various neurocognitive measures using a flexible battery approach and providing therapeutic feedback to patients and families. Supervision of clinical neuropsychology training via provision of graduate level supervision in affiliation with University of South Alabama (USA) clinical psychology doctoral program and supervision of a predoctoral psychology internship rotation in clinical neuropsychological assessment.

Professional Interests: Professional interests include differential diagnosis of dementia, nuances and interactions of mental/emotional health and cognitive functioning, military TBI, functional neurological disorders, and diversity and cultural considerations.

Personal Interests: Personal interests include yoga, hanging out with my German shepherd mix rescue dog, reading, long walks while listening to podcasts, and discovering new coffee shops, art galleries, and brunch cafes.

Alicia Brown, Ph.D..

Titles: Licensed Psychologist Outpatient Mental Health

School: University of Georgia

Internship: Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) – The University of Kansas

License: Hawaii

Duties: Dr. Brown works on the outpatient unit in the Behavioral Health department. She is a generalist practitioner, where she provides individual and group therapy. Her theoretical orientation is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), however, she also incorporates a plethora of other modalities including Gestalt, Transactional Analysis and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT). She is dedicated to providing evidence-based practices for the well-being of all veterans.

Professional Interests: Her interests include multiculturalism and diversity, Energy Psychology, and training and supervision.

Personal Interests: She enjoys cooking, traveling, ballet performances, making corny jokes, and improving her spiritual well-being.

Avery R. Buras, Ph.D.

Title: Clinical Psychologist – Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program-Domiciliary (RRTP-DOM) – Substance Use Disorder Track

Schools: M.S. – The University of Southern Mississippi (Counseling Psychology) – 1994

Ph.D. – Texas A&M University (Counseling Psychology) – 1999

Internship: Gulf Coast Veterans Healthcare System (1997-1998)

License: Louisiana (2004)

Duties: I currently work with the Veterans living in the RRTP-DOM, primarily in the substance use disorder/addiction track. However, coverage is provided at times for the other tracks of the RRTP (MASD-EBP/PTSD, Dual Diagnosis, and CMI). Individual responsibilities include but are not limited to the following: individual and group psychotherapy; comprehensive intake and suicide risk evaluations; progress monitoring through measurement-based care (pre/posttest measures); admissions screening and assessment; chart reviews for prospective admissions; program and group curriculum development and enhancement; and participation on an interdisciplinary team including peer support, chaplaincy, medical staff, pharmacy, social work, and recreation therapy. I am also designated Chair of our Stakeholders Committee.

Approach to Treatment: I rely heavily on my thinking and case conceptualization on 12-Step Facilitated Recovery. However, understanding that one size does not fit all, I translate this thinking into the language and application of CBT. Interpersonal and process-oriented approaches along with understanding and teaching the biological aspects of addiction are

heavily stressed. I try to apply this in a practical manner that will help with treatment and aftercare.

Professional Interests: I enjoy wrestling with and trying to integrate the various theoretical models of understanding addiction (medical, disease, faulty learning, avoidance, and reward seeking). I do not view these as necessarily antithetical to each other, as each may be equally valid and apply differentially to an individual's path into compulsive drug use and/or compulsive behaviors. I employ cognitive behavioral strategies when trying to give Veteran's practical coping strategies. I strongly encourage those struggling with addiction to "write their own narratives." Addiction may have led to individuals losing contact with themselves and acting against their values. People's individual spiritual/religious beliefs or lack thereof, are never off limits. One's thoughts and beliefs are more often than not stronger than the facts.

Personal Interests: I was born and raised in New Orleans, so I love everything NOLA and Mardi Gras! In some ways being south of I-10 makes people from this area more like New Orleanians than Mississippians; a hypothesis that has not been formally tested! I enjoy fishing, riding my bike and working in the yard. I enjoy watching college sports, especially football, baseball and softball. I currently can't seem to get enough education on Evolutionary Psychology, Reward Deficiency Syndrome, and the historical place of religious and philosophical beliefs. To balance this, I have been known to thoroughly escape in Science Fiction. This is the way...

Michael Cumberland, Psy.D. (License-Eligible Faculty)

Title: Staff Psychologist – Outpatient Mental Health

School: The Chicago School of Professional Psychology at Xavier University of Louisiana

Internship: Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System (GCVHCS/Biloxi VAMC)

License: License-Eligible

Duties & Professional Interests: Dr. Cumberland is a license-eligible psychologist working in Outpatient Mental Health. He sees Veterans with an array of disorders including military sexual trauma, depressive disorders, anxiety related disorders and has a special interest in substance use disorder, and PTSD. He uses EBTs, distress tolerance techniques, mindfulness, ERRT, CPT, TrIGR, CBT, DBT, and becoming certified in clinical hypnosis, and EMDR in the near future. He regularly uses the PAI, MCMI-III, MMPI-II-RF to help triangulate diagnosis, and will perform per-bariatric evaluations when asked. Dr. Cumberland graduated from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology at Xavier University of Louisiana with a doctorate in Clinical Psychology (Psy.D.) in 2021. He also holds graduate degrees in Forensic Psychology and Addiction Psychology. Dr. Cumberland is a native of New Orleans and completed his APA Internship at the Biloxi VA in 2021. Prior to internship, he completed externships at LSU Health Sciences Family Counseling Center and The University of New Orleans Counseling Center. Dr. Cumberland's area of dissertation research was on the relationship between impulsivity and risky sexual behavior, and was published to ProQuest.

Paul Ellis, Psy.D. (License-Eligible Faculty)

Title: Staff Psychologist – PR RTP

School: William James College (formerly Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology), Newton, MA

Internship: Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System (GCVHCS/Biloxi VAMC)

License: License-Eligible

Duties & Professional Interests: Dr. Ellis is a license-eligible psychologist working in the Residential PR RTP-DOM. Dr. Ellis is a generalist practitioner, providing individual and group psychotherapy. His theoretical orientation is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). He is dedicated to providing evidence-based practices for the well-being of all Veterans.

Professional Interests: His interests include trauma focused care, substance abuse treatment, and exploring the potential benefits of service dog utilization.

Personal Interests: In his free time, Dr. Ellis enjoys running, hiking, and spending time outdoors. Dr. Ellis is a 10x finisher of the Home Base program 9K race, which takes place at the historic Fenway Park, located in Boston, Massachusetts. Additionally, Dr. Ellis is a 4x finisher of the 26.2 mile Tough Ruck marathon. When he's not running, hiking, or exploring new trails, Dr. Ellis can often be found taking in a concert or making waves in the water.

Racha Fares, Psy.D.

ABN Eligible

Title: Neuropsychologist

Schools: Florida State University, Webster University, and Adler University

Internship: Erie Psychological Consortium- Major rotation in neuropsychological services in outpatient and inpatient settings

Post-doctoral Fellowships:

1st year- Forensic Psychology/Neuropsychology Services and Rehabilitation Associates-Jonathan Mack, Psy.D. ABN

2nd year- Neuropsychology Practice-Patrick Gorman's

License: Florida, 2016 – present

Duties: Dr. Fares conducts full outpatient neuropsychological evaluations and occasional inpatient, bed side assessments. She is the Diversity Mentorship Coordinator and she coordinates and leads Neuropsych Seminar.

Professional Interests: Brain injury, movement disorders, agent orange, neurofeedback, cognitive rehabilitation, neurodevelopmental disorders and advocating for the profession.

Personal Interests: Poetry, traveling, backpacking, fitness and nutrition, fishing, kayaking, biking, and hiking.

Shannon K. S. Fussell, Ph.D.

Titles: Director of Postgraduate Training, Rural & Underserved Interprofessional Fellowship; Director of Psychology Postdoctoral Training; Outpatient Mental Health Psychologist

School: Auburn University

Internship: The University Counseling Center – Florida State University

Licenses: Georgia and Mississippi

Duties: Dr. Fussell coordinates the Evidence Based Psychotherapy Seminar. She is a generalist practitioner in the Outpatient Mental Health clinic, where she provides individual, couple, and group psychotherapy and diagnostic evaluations. Her psychotherapy focus is on the therapeutic

alliance, integrating evidence-based practices as appropriate (e.g., CBT, DBT, IPT, STAIR). She is experienced in providing conjoint therapy via the Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy (IBCT) and Cognitive Behavioral Conjoint Therapy for PTSD (CBCT) models.

Professional Interests: Professional interests include training, supervision, developmental psychology, and the therapeutic alliance. Recommended reading includes *The Gift of Therapy* and *Love's Executioner*.

Personal Interests: Interests include cooking, enjoying food, exercising, kayaking, fishing, bike rides, being outside, playing instruments (with varying levels of proficiency) and singing (badly), being a dog mom, and trying new things.

Jeffrey S. Lawley, Ph.D.

Titles: Assistant Director of Intern-Extern Training (ADOT) Psychologist, Behavioral Health Acute Inpatient Unit; Assessment Seminar Coordinator

School: University of Southern Mississippi

Internship: Michigan State University Counseling Center

License: Louisiana, 2010 – 2023; Mississippi, 2022- present

Duties: Dr. Lawley is a generalist psychologist on the behavioral health acute inpatient unit. The acute unit consists of two locked wards that primarily serve Veterans who are in crisis and/or a danger to themselves or others. Individual duties include personality assessment and screening of cognitive functioning, individual and group therapy, and consultation as needed in these areas. Groups are on a broad range of topics, including mindfulness, impulse management, values-consistent behaviors, and psychoeducation. Interns are welcome to design and implement their own type of standing group. Collaborative duties include working with a large, diverse treatment team to coordinate acute care and plans for mental health treatment after discharge. Prior to working at the VA, Dr. Lawley was teaching at an M.S. program in counseling. Dr. Lawley also previously worked on the RRTP for several years.

Professional Interests: Professional interests include psychological assessment, supervision, career development, multicultural issues in psychology, and the intersection between psychology, ethics, and law. His theoretical orientation is primarily cognitive-behavioral, with heavy interpersonal, developmental, and narrative influences. (Constructivist, if you have been exposed to that).

Personal Interests: Personal interests include computers and cars (you will often hear of him tinkering with one or the other), tabletop and video games of all kinds (particularly cooperative games), creepy podcasts, and history.

Natalia T. Marin, Psy.D.

Titles: Clinical Psychologist

School: Carlos Albizu University, San Juan Campus, Puerto Rico.

Internship: Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care Systems (GCVHCS/Biloxi VAMC).

Post-doctoral Fellowship: Rural & Underserved Interprofessional Fellowship at GCVHCS/Biloxi VAMC.

License: Iowa, 2023-Present

Duties: Behavioral Sleep Medicine – Sleep Lab Clinic. Normal duties include interventions designed at improving symptoms of sleep wake disorders. Special focus on providing EBP with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia and Imagery Rehearsal Therapy for Nightmares. Also, consulting with other medical and behavioral health providers on matters of sleep disorders or difficulties.

Professional Interests: PTSD, sleep wake disorders, phobias, EMDR, and VR.

Personal Interests: Family, spending quality time with Gianni (6-year-old German Shepard), beach and flip flops all day, dancing, cooking, and reading about dreams and nightmares.

Christopher M. Perez, Ph.D.

Title: Team Lead & Staff Psychologist (PTSD RRTP)

School: University of Southern Mississippi

Internship: Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System (Biloxi VAMC)

Postdoctoral Fellowship: Memphis VA Medical Center (Trauma Recovery Services)

License: Mississippi (6/2021 – Present)

Duties: Dr. Perez serves as Staff Psychologist and Team Lead for the interdisciplinary PTSD RRTP, with roles involving clinical supervision, consultation, admissions coordination, psychodiagnostic assessment, treatment planning, provision of evidence-based group and individual treatments for PTSD and relevant comorbidities, patient staffing, and discharge planning. He also emphasizes the importance of ongoing program development and evaluation. Further, he serves as the PR RTP Nursing Liaison and sits on the Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship training faculty. Lastly, he emphasizes a scientist-practitioner model of both consuming and producing research, currently being in the early stages of data repository development.

Professional Interests: Evidence-based practices (EBPs) for trauma- and stressor-related disorders, behavioral sleep medicine, polytrauma, chemical dependency, program development and evaluation, cultural competence, interdisciplinary training, and research, non-exhaustively.

Personal Interests: I absolutely adore spending time with my family, which typically consists of chasing a toddler around until she retires to watch Peppa Pig or put stickers on any inanimate object within her grasp, while trying to discover which goofy noise will make my infant son laugh next and watching brain-numbing reality television (e.g., Survivor, 90-Day Fiancé) with my spouse. Originally being from the suburbs of Dallas, TX, I enjoy taking advantage of the local nature (e.g., saltwater fishing, golf, parks) and cuisine.

Kray Scully, Ph.D.

Title: Deputy Assistant Director of Training (DADOT), Licensed Psychologist – Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program-Domiciliary (RRTP-DOM) & Quit Tobacco Clinic

School: The University of Southern Mississippi

Internship: Gulf Coast Veterans Healthcare System (Yes, I stuck around...)

License: Alabama (2021 – Present)

Duties: I currently work with Veterans in RRTP-DOM, primarily in the substance use and addictions emphases. Individual responsibilities I maintain include but are not limited to the

following: individual and group psychotherapy services; comprehensive intake and suicide risk evaluation; progress monitoring through measurement-based care; admissions screening and assessment; comprehensive chart reviews for prospective admissions; program and group curriculum development and enhancement; and participation on interdisciplinary team including peer support, chaplaincy, medical staff, pharmacy, social work, and recreation therapy. There may be opportunities for exposure to violence risk assessment for Veteran disruptive behavior and providing behavioral support services for Veterans engaging in tobacco cessation efforts.

Professional Interests: I enjoy philosophical discussions regarding mitigation of barriers to care, challenging traditional ideas of readiness-to-change and substance abuse treatment, and “function v. form” when approaching patient care among other current, relevant topics. For theoretical orientation, I subscribe to more of theoretical integrationist perspective than other schools of thought. I primarily therapeutically operate from cognitive-behavioral, third-wave behavioral, and humanistic pillars, grounding conceptualization through a broad yet culturally sensitive biopsychosocial model.

Personal Interests: I’m one of the South’s only ice hockey fanatics (Go Rangers!). I’m into almost anything that has a competitive element, including most sports, video games, and game shows. I enjoy watching Twitch, browsing Reddit, and hearing any Harry Potter, The Office, or Impractical Jokers reference integrated into conversation. I like being outdoors whenever I can, whether it’s playing with my daughter and my dog, Toby, working in the yard, or walking the Bay Bridge with my wife.

Brian T. Upton, Ph.D.

Titles: Behavioral Medicine Psychologist, Whole Health Integration Champion

School: University of Kentucky

Internship: Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System

License: Alabama

Duties: Behavioral medicine/clinical health psychology with emphasis in chronic pain and somatic complaints, pre-surgical psychological evaluations, audiology-psychology collaboration, diagnostic clarification assessments, post-traumatic stress disorder, promote and organize integration of complementary medicine/services in the healthcare setting.

Professional Interests: I specialize in strategies that integrate the mind/body approach to behavioral health such as mindfulness/meditation-based interventions, clinical hypnosis, EMDR, ACT, and biofeedback. Even though much of my clinical time is dedicated to assisting those with chronic pain conditions there is a lot of variety in referrals from physicians for diagnostic clarification in Veterans with suspected somatic disorders.

Personal Interests: My interests include all things nerdy and fun including: video games, table-top RPGs, miniature painting, 3d printing, calligraphy, gardening, cooking, and a good old-fashioned book. My poor husband has to put up with my collections of random things and not-so-random gadgets.

Walter B. Ware, Psy.D., M.S.C.P.

Titles: Director of Psychology Training (DOPT), Clinical Psychologist – Community Living Center (CLC)

School: Regent University (PsyD-MS) and Fairleigh Dickinson University (MSCP)

Internship: Mississippi State Hospital

License: Mississippi, 2013 – present

Duties: Dr. Ware operates on one of the two units of the acute inpatient unit. Individual duties are variable but do include provision of group and individual psychotherapy services; psychological assessments for diagnostic clarification; provision and monitoring of brief outcomes assessments; neurocognitive screeners; oversight of formalized suicide risk evaluations; thorough chart summaries to examine for consistent behavioral trends; and other clinically relevant tasks that may be required. In addition to his clinical duties, Dr. Ware serves as the Director of Training for the Doctoral Internship and Externship programs. He has previously worked within a PTSD clinical team (PCT), helped start and run a Substance Treatment and Recovery – Intensive Outpatient Program (STAR-IOP), and served a dual administrative-clinical role for a court-committed state hospital substance use treatment unit.

Professional Interests: Professional interests include the mechanisms and function that underlie treatment approaches and theory, psychopharmacology, and acceptance-mindfulness behavioral therapies, amongst other topics. Theoretical orientation is primarily “3rd wave” cognitive-behavioral (primary influence is Acceptance and Commitment Therapy [ACT]), but frequently includes variations of standard cognitive-behavioral, existential, solution-focused, and interpersonal theory into his overall conceptualizations and treatment approaches).

Personal Interests: Personal interests include regular exercise (cardio and weights), audiobook-driven outdoor walks, listening to music at cafes, peaceful water-based experiences, orchestral events, burning money on new electronic gadgets, VR and video games, playing sports (primarily tennis, soccer-football, and baseball-softball), and devolving into hysterical nonsense with his significant other.

Adjunctive Training Faculty

Angela P. Hatcher, Ph.D.

Title: Program Manager, RRTP-DOM (Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program-Domiciliary)

School: Western Michigan University

Internship: Fulton State Hospital

License: Michigan, 2010 – Present

Duties: Dr. Hatcher is the Program Manager for the RRTP-DOM. Her duties in this role involve administrative and clinical oversight of a multidisciplinary team as well as assisting in clinical duties.

Professional Interests: Dr. Hatcher’s professional interests include substance use disorders, harm reduction, offender treatment, forensic assessments, and psychopathy. Her theoretical orientation is behavioral, with a cognitive-behavioral influence.

Personal Interests: Her personal interests include spending time with her family, traveling, spending time on the water, reading, and watching Saints and Alabama football.

Michael D. Prazak, Ph.D.

Title(s): Outpatient Mental Health Psychologist

School: University of North Dakota

Internship: Larned State Hospital (KS)

Postdoctoral Fellowship: Gulf Coast Veterans Healthcare System

Licenses: Alabama

Duties: Dr. Prazak practices in the Outpatient Mental Health clinic, providing group and individual therapy, assessment, and consultation as needed. He also provides training on clinical topics include psychodiagnostics and treatment recommendations to internship and fellowship trainees.

Professional Interests: Professional interests include diagnostic assessment, treatment of personality disorders, OCD, NSSI, suicidality, and SPMI. His theoretical orientation is integrated consisting primarily of brief, interpersonal dynamic and REBT. He also maintains research involvement, with present focus related to program evaluation, interpersonal behavior, and spirituality.

Personal Interests: Technology, reading, spirituality, animals, and film.

INTERNSHIP ADMISSIONS, SUPPORT, AND INITIAL PLACEMENT DATA

Program Tables last updated: 07/2023

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
If yes, provide website link (or content from brochure) where this specific information is presented:	
Please see Program Information section at beginning of this brochure for program disclosures and overview. Goals and mission of the program may also be found within this same section. In addition to specified program disclosures and mission, our program also adheres to general Veteran Affairs policies pertaining to appropriate work attire, submitting for personal leave, and other relevant issues. These policies are generally addressed during the 2-week orientation at the beginning of the training year.	

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:

See entire content of current brochure for a general overview of our program's goals, the general area our program is contained in, and general seminars and areas of emphasis of our generalist programmatic model.

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			Yes, Amount = 300+
Total Direct Contact Assessment Hours			Yes, Amount = 50+

Describe any other required minimum criteria used to screen applicants:

- 1.) Our program requires full completion of 3 full years of graduate courses and training (i.e. applicants must be in their 4th or 5th year of graduate coursework-training).
- 2.) 3 letters of recommendation with 2 from individuals familiar with one's applied clinical work and 1 from an individual familiar with academic coursework.

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	Not Applicable	
Program provides access to medical insurance for intern?	Yes	
If access to medical insurance is provided:		
Trainee contribution to cost required?	Yes	
Coverage of family member(s) available?	Yes	
Coverage of legally married partner available?	Yes	
Coverage of domestic partner available?	Yes	
Hours of Annual Paid Personal Time Off (PTO and/or Vacation)	Yes, 104 hours accumulated over the course of the year	
Hours of Annual Paid Sick Leave	Yes, 104 hours accumulated over the course of the year	
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	
Other Benefits (please describe): 1) Paid leave for 11 Federal Holidays 2) Up to 40 additional hours of potential approved leave for use on professionally oriented leave via dissertation defense, attending a conference, postdoctoral interviews, attending graduation ceremonies, etc. (*Note* Requests for this type of leave must be approved by Director of Training). *Specific inquiries about coverage of other individuals will need to be addressed with Human Resources directly upon initiation of the internship training year as rules and allowances may change.		

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

Initial Post-Internship Positions

(Provide an Aggregated Tally for the Preceding 3 Cohorts)

	2020-2023	
Total # of interns who were in the 3 cohorts	(18 total)	
Total # of interns who did not seek employment because they returned to their doctoral program/are completing doctoral degree	0	
	PD	EP
Academic teaching	PD=0	EP=0
Community mental health center	PD=1	EP=0
Consortium	PD=0	EP=0
University Counseling Center	PD=1	EP=0
Hospital/Medical Center	PD=4	EP=0
Veterans Affairs Health Care System	PD=5	EP=5
Psychiatric facility	PD=0	EP=0
Correctional facility	PD=0	EP=0
Health maintenance organization	PD=0	EP=0
School district/system	PD=0	EP=0
Independent practice setting	PD=0	EP=0
Other	PD=2	EP=0

Note: “PD” = Post-doctoral residency position; “EP” = Employed Position. Each individual represented in this table should be counted only one time. For former trainees working in more than one setting, select the setting that represents their primary position.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Eligibility

Applicants for the internship program must be degree candidates in APA-accredited doctoral programs in clinical or counseling psychology who have fulfilled departmental requirements for internship as certified by their university training director. Only US citizens are eligible to receive stipend support. A physical exam certifying good health is required of applicants who are selected for the internship program at the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System. A security background check is also required.

Stipend and Benefits

VA Headquarters in Washington, DC notifies us in January of each year of the budget that we will receive for the following internship year. The **2023-2024 stipend is \$33,469** per year. There are **11 federal holidays**, and interns accrue an **additional 26 days of leave during the year**. Additionally, interns are granted authorized absence for dissertation related activities and

approved educational programs. Interns are eligible for optional Government Life and Health Insurance benefits.

Applying

Application materials (AAPI) are located on the APPIC web site. **The application deadline is at 11:59 p.m. CST, Sunday, December 3, 2023.** We will receive your completed application when you select us as one of the sites for which you are applying. Our training program faculty will review your application via the Selection Portal of the APPIC site mentioned above. **Applicants will be notified no later than December 20, 2023** as to whether they have been invited to interview. Invitations will be sent via email and will be conducted during the month of **January 2024**.

Recommendations

We require letters of recommendation from at least three (3) supervisors who are familiar with your academic and applied performance in psychology. One (1) of these letters should be from individuals familiar with your academic work and two (2) from individuals familiar with your applied work (e.g., practicum placements). “Letters of Readiness” from a program’s Director of Training cannot be one of these letters of recommendation.

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (APA) ACCREDITATION

The Psychology Internship Training Program at the VA Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System is accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) and has been since 1981. Contact APA at: 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242. Phone: (202) 336-5979. Visit the APA web site at <http://www.apa.org/>.

ASSOCIATION OF PSYCHOLOGY POSTDOCTORAL AND INTERNSHIP CENTERS (APPIC) MEMBERSHIP

The Psychology Internship Training Program at the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System is a member of the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) and fully subscribes to their selection procedures and policies. This 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. Please visit the APPIC web site to obtain additional information including the Uniform Application and Match Rules at <http://www.appic.org/>.

CORRESPONDENCE

Send requests for information to:

Walter B. Ware, PsyD, MSCP

Clinical Psychologist

Director of Psychology Intern-Extern Training

Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System

400 Veterans Ave, Biloxi, MS 39531

Telephone: (228) 523-4999

Walter.Ware2@va.gov