Overview

The Manhattan VA currently offers intensive clinical training to psychology doctoral students in the Psychotherapy Research and Development Program (PRDP).

A description of the program, as well as application and contact information, is provided on page 3. Depending on their schedules, externs may attend the didactic seminars held for psychology interns. Seminars cover a wide range of topics including clinical interviewing, DSM-5 psychopathology, character pathology, group psychotherapy, health psychology, cultural diversity, substance abuse, psychopharmacology, neuropsychology, supervision, and psychodynamic psychotherapy. Seminars are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays afternoons. Externs may also attend the psychology division’s monthly clinical case conference, held the first Tuesday morning of each month. A variety of additional seminars, case conferences, grand rounds, and team meetings are also available.

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

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

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

Also be aware that we are currently unable to offer supervised training positions to students in bachelor’s or master’s level programs. Our internship, externship, and postdoctoral fellowship programs for psychology doctoral students comprise between 15-20 positions per year (6 interns, 5-9 externs, 4-5 postdoctoral fellows). Given the level of intensive supervision devoted to these programs, we are not able to accommodate additional supervisees.

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

http://www.nyharbor.va.gov/docs/nypsychintern.pdf
PLEASE NOTE: We follow the recommendations set forth by PSYDNYS (Psychology Directors of NYS) and NYNJADOT (New York New Jersey Association of Directors of Training). PSYDNYS and NYNJADOT have developed recommended policies to govern the process of applying to externships and accepting internship offers.

These guidelines stipulate the earliest date that students can submit applications and the earliest date on which an offer can be made to a student. Please see the full details of these guidelines at the link below, Fairleigh Dickinson University's index of externship opportunities in the metropolitan area:

Psychotherapy Research and Development Program

The VA Psychotherapy Research and Development Program (VA PRDP) Externship at the Manhattan VA is an intensive psychotherapy training experience for advanced students in doctoral clinical and counseling psychology programs. The externship provides students with training in both CBT and psychodynamic psychotherapy, with the goal of helping trainees develop an understanding of different theories of therapeutic action by comparing and contrasting the various theoretical orientations and approaches they will be exposed to. As part of the ongoing research activities of the PRDP, externs will be trained as therapists on a variety of manualized empirically supported approaches, such as: (1) behavioral activation (BA), (2) a behavioral intervention for family caregivers of individuals with dementia (REACH VA), (3) a short term (4 month) psychodynamic psychotherapy based on the Dynamic Interpersonal Therapy Model (DIT), and (4) Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I). Additionally, through our outpatient mental health clinic, externs will also receive training in two non-manualized approaches to psychotherapy: (1) formulation-based CBT and (2) “long-term” (1 year) psychodynamic psychotherapy. Externs will be integrated into a new initiative in tele-psychology and may have the opportunity to provide individual and/or group psychotherapy to Veterans at underserved VA facilities via the VA’s Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) technologies.

In addition to the core clinical activities described above, externs will participate in one of four tracks: (1) PTSD Team, (2) Psycho-diagnostic and Neuropsychological Assessment, (3) Health Psychology and (4) Women’s Health. Each track may include specific psychotherapy and/or assessment opportunities within that area of psychology, seminars and didactics on related topics, and participation in team meetings with staff members and other trainees.

Depending on student interest, staff availability, and facility need, externs may also receive training in running inpatient groups, an older adult LGBT Veterans group, DBT Distress Tolerance group, and Emotion Focused Therapy for couples, among other opportunities.

General Clinical Activities (required):
- Long-term (year-long) psychodynamic psychotherapy case
- Short-term (4-month) psychodynamic psychotherapy cases (DIT)
- Brief manualized CBT psychotherapy cases (REACH VA, BA, CBT-I)
- Formulation-based CBT cases

Tracks (externs will participate in one of the four):
- PTSD Team
- Psycho-diagnostic and Neuropsychological Assessment
- Health Psychology
- Women’s Health

Additional Electives:
- Inpatient Group
- Older adult LGBT Veterans Group
- DBT Drop-in Distress Tolerance Group
- Emotion Focused Couples Therapy

Didactics:
- Weekly Seminar on Cognitive Behavioral Theory, Formulation, and Technique (all externs)
- Weekly Seminar on Psychodynamic Theory, Formulation, and Technique (all externs)
• Weekly or Biweekly Seminars on Group Psychotherapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Health Psychology, PTSD, Assessment, Emotion Focused Couples Therapy (depending on which tracks/electives externs participate in)
• Supplemental seminars regarding relevant professional development topics, such as internship applications, internship interviewing, and case presentations.
• Additional Seminars with psychology interns, psychiatry residents or health psychology postdoctoral fellows

**Eligibility and Requirements:** This externship is for advanced graduate students from APA accredited doctoral programs in clinical or counseling psychology. Applicants must have completed at least three full years of graduate study prior to the start of externship and have had two full years of psychotherapy training/supervision. Externship begins in July and runs for a full calendar year. At the outset of the training year, externs will participate in a two-week intensive or orientation period (40 hrs per week), during which they will have the opportunity to participate in numerous psychotherapy trainings and didactics. After the two week orientation period, a commitment of at least 2 days (16-20 hours) per week is required, and Mondays are a required day for all trainees. The second day of training is individualized for each extern based on his or her availability as well as the needs of the service.

**Application Process:** Please include a letter of interest, CV, and two letters of reference from psychotherapy supervisors. In your letter of interest, please rank order your preference of the four tracks (PTSD Team, Psycho-diagnostic and Neuropsychological Assessment, Health Psychology, Women's Health), and do not rank any track you would not like to participate in. Also include a brief statement describing a psychotherapy case that exemplifies your approach to individual psychotherapy and how you believe this approach benefits patients (250 word limit).

Email your materials to:

Cory K. Chen, Ph.D.
Clinical Psychologist
Co-Director PRDP Pre-doctoral Externship Program
E-mail: cory.chen@va.gov
Phone: (212) 686-7500; ext. 4002

And

Amy Palfrey, Ph.D.
Clinical Psychologist
Co-Director PRDP Pre-doctoral Externship Program
Email: amy.palfrey@va.gov
Phone: (212) 686-7500; ext. 4487

Also, please note that we stop accepting applications for the externship 2 weeks following the date of the NYSPA established date for submission. Please see the most updated information from NYSPA regarding this date. We will send an email confirming receipt of your application materials; however, due to the high number of applicants, we will not be able to provide individualized updates on the status of your application following its initial receipt. Generally we notify applicants invited to interview 2-4 weeks following the PSYDNYS and NYNJADOT established date for initial submission of materials and we abide by the guidelines established by PSYDNYS and NYNJADOT for notification of offers.