

**SUNSET TERRACE FAMILY HEALTH CENTER at NYU LANGONE**  
**PSYCHOLOGY EXTERNSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM**

**OVERVIEW**

The Psychology externship program at the Sunset Terrace Family Health Center is committed to the teaching of cultural sensitivity and issues of multi-culturalism as they pertain to psychological practice. The externship has 2 available positions for the 2019-2020 externship year focusing on different aspects of service delivery – i.e. service delivery to adult outpatients and service delivery to populations with co-occurring disorders. Across all service delivery areas, externs provide individual and group therapy, psychodiagnostic testing and intake and screening activities.

The Sunset Terrace Family Health Center is proud of its contribution to the cross-cultural research literature since it is the site where two culturally sensitive clinical methods have been developed and evaluated: the “Cuentos” intervention which is a child and family therapy technique using Latino folk tales to illustrate important psychological principles and the “TEMAS” (Tell-Me-A-Story) project, which is a thematic apperception test for ethnic minority and non-minority children. The author of these two methods, Dr. Giuseppe Costantino, was a former Clinical Director of S.T.M.H.C. Additionally, several large research programs are ongoing and involve issues related to cultural sensitivity in mental health services. The clinical goals of the externship are taught to students by way of a core set of supervision experiences and seminars.

**BACKGROUND**

NYU/ Langone Brooklyn medical Center is a 450- plus bed medical center whose extensive network of community

care facilities has received national recognition. NYU/Langone Brooklyn formerly known as NYU Lutheran was awarded best community practice by the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Health Care Organizations. Located in Sunset Park, a multi-ethnic, low to middle income neighborhood near the Brooklyn waterfront and the largest Urban Historic District in the Northeast Area, the medical center is a fully functioning academic center that is part of NYU Langone Health.

The Ambulatory Care Services of the NYU/Langone Brooklyn Health System are delivered through The Family Health Center Network. Since its inception in 1967, the Family Health Center has developed into one of the largest and most comprehensive federally supported community health centers in the nation. There are a number of community based satellite facilities in the NYU/Langone Family Health Center Network. This network of healthcare services in the Sunset Park, Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Park Slope, Red Hook, and East Flatbush communities, offers comprehensive primary care, specialty & support services as well as educational programs. The Sunset Terrace Family Health Center is one of the specialty clinics operating within the NYU/Langone Family Health Center network.. Serving the communities of Bay Ridge, Sunset Park, Park Slope and Red Hook, the Sunset Terrace Family Health Center currently has the largest Hispanic patient population of any outpatient mental health center in Brooklyn, and as such, in NYC. In addition, substantial portions of our population are comprised of immigrants

from China, Pakistan, the former Soviet Union, Jordan, Italy, Greece, and other countries.

More specifically, approximately 70% of the active patient caseload is comprised of Latinos with the remaining 30% comprised of European, Asian and Arab immigrants. The distinctive demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of this catchment area have necessitated that over the years the Sunset Terrace Family Health Center develop an integrated network of comprehensive culturally sensitive mental health services to meet the need of its multi-cultural ethnic minority patient population.

Currently the Sunset Terrace Family Health Center prides itself for providing a variety of culturally sensitive treatment programs, including Adult OPD treatment, Child and Adolescent Services, a specialized program for children and adolescents that have committed sexual offenses, an On-Site School Mental Health Project, an Integrated Treatment Program for Co-Occurring Disorders, a Club House for severely mentally ill clients, and programs offering behavioral health services in various primary care settings and homeless shelters. The center has had a strong innovative treatment and clinical research program that has involved both staff and students in projects that typically have led to data collection, presentations and publications. These have included: The Cuento Therapy and Frieda Kahlo Narrative Therapy Projects, culturally sensitive treatment modalities; TEMAS (Tell-Me-A-Story), a multicultural projective test; and a special treatment program for sexually abusing and abused youngsters;. In addition, Sunset Terrace recently developed a program of Integrated Care for those with SMI called STIR. This is a program that focuses on whole-health, particularly on improving the common physical health conditions that affect those with SMI and lead to premature death, such as diabetes, hypertension, respiratory problems

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

There are 2 externship positions available requiring a time commitment of 16 hours per week at a minimum. While the positions focus on specific specialty areas, each extern also participates in a core program that is clinic based.

### **1. Core Program**

The Sunset Terrace Family Health Center outpatient mental health clinic provides comprehensive services to its patient population, thereby giving externs the opportunity to develop clinical skills. Services include intake and assessment, psychological testing, psychotherapy and crisis intervention. The patient population includes children, adolescents and adults, and spans a broad range of psychiatric diagnoses. The Child and Adolescent Service is a subunit within the outpatient clinic.

Treatment modalities include: individual psychotherapy, group psychotherapy, brief therapy, marital therapy, family therapy, filial (parent-child) therapy and psychoeducational treatment with severely impaired adults. The clinic services a caseload of close to 4,000 patients and provides upwards of 75,000 mental health visits per year, making it among the largest outpatient mental health programs in New York City. Both externs are expected to participate in the intake and screening process at the outpatient mental health clinic, to conduct psychodiagnostic testing in the clinic setting, and to carry a small caseload of clinic patients.

## **INTAKE AND SCREENING**

Screening and Intake interviews constitute the core training in admission evaluations for all externs. New applicants for treatment present the extern with a variety of clinical problems, which require immediate decisions. These include referral to other agencies, inpatient hospitalizations, medication and acceptance for outpatient treatment. All externs actively participate in these

screening and intake functions, initially in collaboration with another staff member and, after they have acquired experience, independently. The intake evaluation process entails an extended and in depth interview by the extern leading to a provisional DSM-V diagnosis as well as organization of the clinical findings. Externs' immersion in screenings and intakes, a process that requires continual on-the-spot clinical evaluations and decisions, inculcates the capacity to make immediate clinical judgements with confidence and sensitivity.

### **PSYCHODIAGNOSTIC TESTING**

Externs are expected to complete 3 full psychological batteries during the course of the externship year. Using a standard battery of intelligence and projective tests as well as more innovative multicultural assessment tests such as TEMAS, externs evaluate patients to produce differential diagnoses, to assist in referral placements to other agencies or to explore the dynamics of patients. Externs receive supervision on all aspects of psychodiagnostic assessment. Training in dealing with issues of culture, particularly Latino and African-American cultures, in psychological assessment are a distinctive aspect of testing individual supervision.

### **OUTPATIENT PSYCHOTHERAPY**

The emphasized individual therapeutic approach focuses on comprehensive and intensive understanding of the patient, the psychodynamics of personality and character development, the development of patient-therapist relations, the impact of individual psychopathology on the family and social systems in which the patient lives, and finally, the interaction between culture and the individual. Individual and group supervision on individual psychotherapy is provided. NYU/ Langone Family Health Center-Sunset Terrace also offers group therapy as a modality. The following is a sampling of some of the groups typically offered during the year: a Hispanic women's

support group, various Wellness Self-Management groups, a geriatric support group, a Seeking Safety group, an ongoing psychoeducational group, groups for hyperactive and conduct disordered children; an adolescent girls' group; and various activity groups. The acquisition of group therapy skills occurs in the context of externs serving as psychotherapists in group therapy with a staff member or with other students.

## **SERVICE DELIVERY SPECIALIZATIONS**

### **1. Child/Adolescent Outpatient Program (not available in 2019-2020)**

Externs working within the Child and Adolescent Services Unit receive training in a variety of functions performed by child psychologists in an outpatient clinic setting. Such an extern provides comprehensive services to a small caseload of child and adolescent clinic clients spanning a broad range of diagnoses. The services provided include individual and group psychotherapy, collateral contacts with parents, provision of concrete services, psycho-diagnostic testing, and intake and screening interviews.

### **2. ADULT OUTPATIENT PROGRAM**

Externs choosing to emphasize adult outpatient treatment receive the equivalent of 2 days training per week in a wide variety of functions performed by psychologists in the public health sector. The adult outpatient extern provides comprehensive service to adult clinic patients spanning a broad range of psychiatric diagnoses. These services include individual and group psychotherapy as well as the provision of concrete services, psychodiagnostic testing, and intake and screening interviews.

### **Integrated Treatment For Co-Occurring Disorders**

The Co-Occurring Disorders Service actively integrates interventions intended to address both the mental health and

substance use disorder of individuals identified as having psychiatric symptoms and a pattern of substance use. Integrated treatment focuses on the whole person rather than on a discrete disorder. Treatment for co-occurring disorders is self-directed and phase specific. Treatment interventions are tailored to the individual's "stage of change". The ultimate goal of person-centered, integrated, stage specific treatment is to help the individual develop an effective relapse prevention based on the acquisition of self-soothing skills, achieving medication compliance, building family and social support for recovery, learning to identify triggers and beginning to use successful strategies to manage urges.

The integrated treatment program for co-occurring disorders provides the extern with opportunities for acquiring skills in working with dually diagnosed populations. Extern activities include intake assessment, individual treatment and co-leadership in group treatment modalities.

### **DIDACTIC PROGRAM**

The educational component of the externship is concentrated into one half day- Tuesday afternoons. Externs arrange their supervision and participation in didactic seminars during this time.

### **Clinical Supervision**

Externs receive one hour of individual supervision a week with a licensed staff psychologist. Supervision focuses on individual and group treatment cases and psychological test batteries. In addition, externs receive 2 hours of group supervision for clinic cases.

### **SEMINARS**

Seminars are designed to cover topics relevant to professional psychology. While some seminar topics have relevance to general populations, others are designed to address issues of greater

relevance for a specific age group or sub population.

### **TIME COMMITMENT**

Externs are required to make a time commitment of at least 16 hours per week. The time commitment includes Tuesday afternoons, when the didactic component of the externship is scheduled. The remaining time can be spread out over several additional mornings or afternoons. Externs choosing to provide treatment to children and adolescents are additionally expected to provide evening times to accommodate children who need to be seen after school has ended.

### **APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

Applications will be accepted after January 15<sup>th</sup> of the year preceding the externship. Externs are required to be matriculated in a clinical, counseling or school psychology doctoral program. Because the externship at Sunset Terrace is a front-line clinical position requiring a high degree of patient contact, it is best suited to second and third year externs. The application material required includes:

1. A curriculum vitae
  2. A writing sample
  3. A letter indicating which of the two externship programs the applicant is applying to.
  4. 2 letters of reference
  - 5.. A letter indicating that the applicant is in good standing in their doctoral program and ready for externship .
- Application materials should be sent to:

Carmen Rivera PhD  
Coordinator of Externship Training  
Family Health Centers at NYU Langone-Sunset Terrace

514 – 49<sup>th</sup> Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11220  
Tel: 718 437-5218