

Columbia University Irving Medical Center/New York State Psychiatric Institute - Children's Day Unit

Psychology Externship Program

Overview

The Children's Day Unit (CDU) at the Youth Treatment and Evaluation of Anxiety and Mood (Y-TEAM) Program is a specialty research clinic dedicated to improving the lives of children and adolescents suffering from mood and anxiety disorders. The CDU is part of the Department of Psychiatry at Columbia University and is directed by Dr. Laura Mufson. It includes a day treatment program with academic services for adolescents requiring intensive support. At the Y-TEAM program and CDU, we provide comprehensive evaluations, treatment with evidence-based psychotherapy (e.g., Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy) and medications. Externs work within a multidisciplinary team in order to provide excellent and comprehensive care to both the patients and their families.

In addition to our focus on cutting-edge treatment and research, the CDU functions as a training clinic and we are passionate about providing exceptional training and support to our trainees. Externs are responsible for carrying a caseload of both day patient and outpatient cases, gaining exposure to a variety of clinical presentations and levels of symptom severity. They are also diligently trained in diagnostic and assessment skills, completing twice monthly diagnostic evaluations and administering comprehensive neuropsychological evaluations. Acting as an integral member within our multidisciplinary team, externs collaborate with staff to provide services and receive supervision from the director of the externship, Dr. Paula Yanes-Lukin, and consultation from other team members. Finally, taking advantage of the resources at both Columbia University and the New York State Psychiatric Institute, externs attend institute Grand Rounds and twice-monthly in-service didactics led by experts in the field.

Clinical Caseload

Externs are responsible for providing both individual and group therapy to mostly underserved, diverse members of our community.

Individual Therapy

Externs are responsible for carrying a caseload of 4 patients:

- 2 Daypatients
 - Cases are seen intensely, 2-3 times per week
 - Daypatients present with either moderate to severe difficulties or multiple comorbidities, thus needing a higher level of support that is tailored to their needs
- 2 Outpatients
 - Cases are seen once per week
 - Outpatients may be participants in a research study or youth in the community requiring less intensive care, allowing for more structured, manualized treatment

Group Therapy

Externs are responsible for co-leading both a Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy Group as well as a Dialectical Behavioral Therapy skills group with all daypatients on the unit. The CBT group is both skills and process based, and highly tailored to the needs of the patients. The DBT group follows the general structure for adolescent DBT skills groups.

Collateral Work

In order to provide comprehensive support, externs are responsible for connecting with collateral supports for patients including family members, school staff, and treatment providers. Externs collaborate with members of our social work team to facilitate family work, as well as include parents and other family members in individual treatment. Externs are also responsible for collaborating with schools, either to obtain information relevant for diagnosis or treatment, or to provide psychoeducation and support if the patient's symptoms are affecting his/hers/their school performance. Finally, externs partner with current or potential treatment providers to discuss relevant clinical information and assist with transition in care.

Assessment

Our unit provides thorough diagnostic evaluations via a research initiative aimed at providing a much-needed community service of expert evaluations as well as a rigorous training opportunity for trainees. Externs are trained in the diagnostic battery which includes gold standard, semi-structured and self-report measures (e.g., the MINI International Neuropsychological Inventory for Children and Adolescents, the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale). Additionally, externs may be involved in evaluations for related research projects, either directly as independent evaluators or indirectly as observers.

In addition to diagnostic assessment, externs have the opportunity to complete two comprehensive neuropsychological evaluations, supervised by NYSPI's expert neuropsychologist team. Prior to conducting neuropsychological batteries, externs are involved in a "boot camp" seminar in order to receive background information on testing and detailed information on specific instruments.

Supervision

Supervision at the CDU consists of both individual and group supervision. Externs will meet alone with Dr. Paula Yanes-Lukin, and then in group supervision with their fellow trainee and Dr. Yanes-Lukin as well as an affiliated colleague with relevant clinical expertise to provide additional insights. Additionally, our unit has an "open door policy" and curbside consultation is welcomed, allowing externs to take advantage of the expertise of our multidisciplinary staff and faculty expertise.

Didactics

The CDU takes pride in our training programs, and as such partners with experts in the Columbia University community to present on topics that enrich externs' training. These didactics which take place the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month include presentations on treatment modalities (e.g., ACT, DBT, IPT-A, TF-CBT), comorbidities (e.g., ADHD, early psychosis, sleep difficulties, eating disorders), special populations (LGBTQIA), family system issues, and

risk assessment. In addition, externs are invited to attend NYSPI's weekly Grand Rounds, where esteemed researchers and clinicians in the field are invited to speak.

Requirements

The externship is a 1-year commitment, beginning July 1st and ending June 30th of the following year. As this is an advanced placement, we ask that applicants commit to 20 hours per week and only apply as a 3rd or 4th year practicum placement (i.e., currently being in 2nd year or above). Monday mornings are required, as well as Wednesday afternoons.

The CDU externship practicum complies with all the requirements of the NYNJADOT-PSYDNYS Guidelines.

Applications and Interviews

Interested applicants should submit a cover letter, CV, 2 letters of recommendation, and a writing sample (e.g., case summary, psychological testing report) through the APA application portal. Interviews are scheduled in the morning and include a group informational gathering followed by breakouts into individual interviews. Generally, 4-5 applicants are interviewed at a time, and while interviewees wait for their next individual interview, they will meet with various members of the team who will provide additional information on the program. All applicants meet individually with Dr. Yanes-Lukin and will have the opportunity to meet individually with either the unit's medical director, Dr. Pablo Goldberg, or the unit's Clinical Director, Mara Eilenberg, LCSW.

Contact Information

Please feel free to reach out for additional information or if you have any questions!

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