

Columbia University Clinic for Anxiety and Related Disorders (CUCARD)

Externship Program Overview

OVERVIEW

The Columbia University Clinic for Anxiety and Related Disorders (CUCARD) is a clinic specializing in evidence-based outpatient treatment for individuals of all ages struggling with anxiety, mood, and related disorders. CUCARD is overseen by Founder Dr. Anne Marie Albano and Clinical Director E. Blake Zakarin, and is staffed by senior clinical psychologists who are highly skilled in cognitive behavioral therapy. Central to CUCARD's mission is the training and dissemination of evidence-based treatments; our clinicians are also committed to providing a positive and high-quality learning experience for all our trainees.

Externs learn about the implementation of cognitive behavioral therapy in both individual and group therapy, as well as through other specialized experiences including co-leading therapy groups with senior staff, engagement in didactic training, participating in in vivo exposures outside the clinic, and assisting with school observation visits. Externs consult directly with our staff psychiatrist to learn effective models of collaborative, team-based care. In addition to these observational and direct contact clinical experiences, externs participate in weekly group and individual supervision, giving the opportunity for intensive training on their own cases as well as exposure to the types of problems and solutions that senior clinicians face when implementing and adapting evidence-based practice to meet the needs of their patients.

ASSESSMENT TRAINING

CUCARD's focus on offering the best empirically supported interventions to our patients begins with our assessments. Externs receive training in the Anxiety Disorders Interview Schedules for children, parents, and adults; the ADIS is an empirically validated semi-structured interview used widely in research and clinical practice. Externs are instructed in using the results of the clinical interview in conjunction with questionnaires, background information, collateral information, and observation to develop a comprehensive case conceptualization and report. Most frequently, externs conduct assessments with patients who become part of their caseload, although they will have the opportunity to gain additional assessment experience when situations and schedules permit.

CASES AND CASELOAD

Externs are expected to carry 6-8 individual patients throughout the externship year (depending on the number of onsite days). In addition to their individual case load, externs are expected to gain group treatment experience. Typically, this involves assisting a senior staff member in the leadership of a group; often, if the extern has the opportunity to run a second group, he or she will take more of a leadership role under the direct supervision of a staff member.

DIDACTICS

All externs are required to attend weekly didactics seminars held onsite on Thursdays. Seminars are led by CUCARD senior staff and invited speakers. Topics include but are not limited to: ethics,

assessment, development and psychopathology across the lifespan, psychopharmacology, foundations of CBT, disorder-specific applications (e.g., social anxiety, OCD, eating disorders, trichotillomania), PCIT, professional development, and selected research topics. The didactics calendar is reviewed and updated every year, and as appropriate incorporates feedback from externs and postdoctoral fellows from the previous year.

INDEPENDENT READING

All CUCARD senior staff and trainees are expected to have and maintain familiarity with research findings and key articles in evidenced-based interventions, ethics, cognitive-behavioral science and applications, child, adolescent and young adult development, as well as seminal articles from the field. In conjunction with didactic seminars, externs are provided associated articles and references.

SUPERVISION

Supervision is a central focus of the CUCARD Externship Program. Externs participate in staff-wide, weekly group diagnostic case conference, and receive supervision on new intakes for individual or group therapy patients. Externs are assigned to one individual supervisor for weekly supervision (one hour, minimum), and to a supervision group that includes other senior staff and postdoctoral fellows (one hour). These assigned individual and group supervisions are rotated at the half-year mark (January). Additionally, externs are paired with a senior staff psychologist or psychiatrist for ad hoc supervision on targeted or more specialized case needs.

SCHOLARLY MENTORING

All trainees at CUCARD are encouraged to participate in research and manuscript preparation. Trainees may be given opportunities to co-author manuscripts with Dr. Anne Marie Albano and other senior staff. Trainees are also encouraged to publish a case study if interested. Trainees will receive mentorship around manuscript preparation and publication.

EXTERN PRESENTATIONS

All externs are expected to present on a topic of their choice to members of the CUCARD team near the end of the externship year. These presentations are included as part of the didactic calendar, and expected to last approximately one hour, with 30 minutes for presentation and 30 minutes for discussion. Externs may select to prepare a case discussion from one of their active cases or a topic consistent with their own research and interests. Externs are provided mentoring and feedback on topic selection, presentation format, and materials from training director, Dr. Sarah Frankel, and their Spring supervisor.

APPLICATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

The CUCARD Externship Program complies with the Psychology Internship Directors of New York State and the New York New Jersey Association of Directors of Training guidelines regarding externship applications, timelines, notifications, and general procedures. For a full description of the application guidelines and procedures, see PSYDNYS-NYNJADOT Externship Guidelines for 2020-2021, revised and distributed annually by the organizations. Interested applicants should submit a cover letter, CV and 2 letters of recommendation. All applications are reviewed by Dr. Frankel, and select applications are reviewed further with Drs. Albano, Zakarin, and other senior psychologists. Approximately 10-12 applicants are invited to interview for half-day onsite

interviews with CUCARD staff, postdoctoral fellows and current externs. Interviews include individual meetings with at least 3 CUCARD team members, and a group discussion over lunch. Interviewers provide ratings of applicants (e.g., knowledge of evidenced-based literature and cognitive behavioral principals, evidence of preliminary CBT skills, social engagement, etc.). From this applicant pool, the selection subcommittee agrees on two candidates who are then invited via email by Dr. Frankel after the appropriate notification date.

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