

Psychology Internship Program



Alaska VA Healthcare System

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Application deadline: November 18, 2013

APPIC Program Number: 2067

NMS Match Number: 206711

Accreditation Status

The predoctoral internship at the **Alaska VA Healthcare System** is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association.

Application & Selection Procedures

Our internship seeks applicants who are graduate students in good standing in a Ph.D. or Psy.D. in clinical or counseling psychology program approved by APA and are seeking a generalist training with an emphasis on cultural diversity and service delivery in urban, rural, and frontier healthcare environments. As an equal opportunity training program, the internship welcomes and strongly encourages applications from all qualified candidates, regardless of gender, gender identity, age, religion, racial, ethnic, culture, nationality, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, disability or other minority status.

To apply, submit the following materials electronically through the on-line APPIC Application for Psychology Internships :

- [APPIC Application for Psychology Internships](#), which includes a detailed vita describing background training, experience, and scholarly activity and research, three letters of recommendation, one of which is from your university's director of clinical training, and official transcripts of your graduate work sent directly by your university.

This internship 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.

Deadline for completed applications is **November 19, 2012 for the fall of 2013.**

Note: A CERTIFICATION OF REGISTRATION STATUS, CERTIFICATION OF U.S. CITIZENSHIP, and DRUG SCREENING are required to become a VA intern. The Federal Government requires that male applicants to VA positions who were born after 12/31/59 must sign a Pre-appointment Certification Statement for Selective Service Registration before they are employed. It is not necessary to submit this form with the application, but if you are selected for this internship and fit the above criteria, you will have to sign it. All interns will have to complete a Certification of Citizenship in the United States prior to beginning the internship. We will not consider applications from anyone who is not currently a U.S. citizen. The VA conducts drug screening exams on randomly selected personnel as well as new employees. Interns are not required to be tested prior to beginning work, but once on staff they are subject to random selection as are other staff.

Psychology Setting

Psychologist positions are found in diverse settings and capacities throughout the Alaska VA Healthcare System. Alaska VA psychologists provide a broad array of clinical services in military sexual trauma, PTSD, addictions, health psychology and behavioral medicine, Home Based Primary Care, and psychosocial rehabilitation. Psychologists serve in leadership positions at the Alaska VA and several

have faculty appointments at the University of Alaska Anchorage. In addition to the Doctoral Psychology Internship, the Alaska VA also provides training for second-year Master's in Social Work Interns, Physician Assistant Clerkships, and Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner clinical rotations.

Training Model and Program Philosophy

Our training program is committed to the scholar-practitioner model of clinical education and practice. We expect interns to be able to critically evaluate research in published studies and papers and apply research findings in their clinical practices. There are three foundations or strategies to our training. First, a strong emphasis is placed on developing the intern's ability to approach clinical phenomena from the perspective of a scholar-practitioner. Second, an equally important foundational component of our training program is a strong emphasis on the psychosocial model of recovery that focuses upon actively involving clients in determining the goals and processes of their own recovery and (re)discovering their strengths. Interns will have an excellent opportunity to incorporate the recovery model into their professional practice at the beginning of their careers. Third, we emphasize the development of skills in implementing specific EBPs including: Motivational Interviewing, Seeking Safety, Prolonged Exposure, Cognitive Processing Therapy, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and their application as appropriate in different cultural contexts.

Program Goals & Objectives

Our internship is a generalist program that focuses upon preparing interns on broadening and extending their clinical and professional skills to become competent and effective professional psychologists working in culturally diverse urban, rural, and frontier healthcare environments. While some objectives are specific to each rotation, all training experiences focus on developing the following competencies:

Assessment:

- Diagnostic interviewing skills
- Differential diagnostic skills and knowledge of DSM-IV
- Completes interview within a reasonable time frame
- Selection of appropriate assessment approaches
- Administration/scoring of psychological tests
- Interpretation of psychological tests
- Evaluates suicidal concerns and potential for violence when appropriate
- Understands effects of medical conditions and medications on psychological functioning
- Clarity and conciseness of report writing
- Integration of behavioral observations, historical data, medical records, and other non-test based information
- Formulates well conceptualized recommendations
- Communication of results to patients/family members
- Reliably manages expected work load
- Awareness of, and adherence to APA ethical guidelines and ethics in assessments

Intervention:

- Discusses issues of confidentiality and informed consent
- Establishes and documents therapy goals and development of a treatment plan
- Formulates a useful case conceptualization from a theoretical perspective
- Establishment and maintenance of therapeutic alliance
- Recognizes and responds appropriately to patient crises
- Selects and implements appropriate cognitive rehabilitation techniques
- Effective and flexible application of therapeutic strategies
- Awareness of personal issues interfering with therapy
- Maintenance of professional boundaries
- Monitors and documents patient progress during therapy and toward goals
- Planning for, and management of, therapy termination

- Coordination of care with other providers
- Reliably manages expected work load
- Awareness of, and adherence to APA ethical guidelines and ethics in treatment

Consultation and Supervision:

- Determines and clarifies referral issues
- Provides colleagues and other trainees with feedback and guidance (group supervision)
- Communication of assessment and intervention results to team, referral source, patient, and/or family.
- Rapidly and effectively translates complex biopsychosocial issues to other professionals
- Provides others with appropriate feedback in group supervision
- Provides a safe atmosphere in supervision
- Provides constructive feedback/guidance to supervisees
- Effectively deals with resistance in supervisee
- Effectively deals with ethical issues in supervision
- Effectively deals with boundary issues in supervisory relationship

Scholarly Inquiry:

- Seeks out professional writings regarding assessment and treatment cases
- Awareness and use of current literature, research, and theory in assessments
- Awareness and use of current literature, research and theory in interventions
- Provides quality oral presentations in case conferences, seminars
- Proposes realistic goals for scholarly activities for the year
- Generates independent scholarly questions/hypotheses
- Demonstrates independent, critical thinking in scholarly endeavors
- Time management and discipline in the use of allotted scholarly/research time
- Works towards communicating findings of scholarly endeavors through poster presentations, professional papers, local or national presentations

Professional Issues:

- Aware of need for and receptive to supervision
- Seeks consultation/supervision as needed and uses it productively
- Well prepared for supervisory meetings and effectively presents clinical material in supervision
- Responds to consultation/supervision with constructive action or changes
- Recognizes how personal characteristics impact clinical work
- Awareness of own competence and limitations as a clinician
- Aware of their continuing developmental professional goals
- Possesses an appropriate level of confidence in clinical abilities
- Has a sense of self as a "Psychologist"
- Interacts effectively with other staff
- Accountability, dependability, responsibility
- Initiative
- Exercises good judgment as professional
- Actively participates in seminars/didactics
- Possess realistic career plans

Ethics and Sensitivity to Diversity:

- Overall awareness of APA ethical guidelines and ethics issues that arise in professional activities
- General ability to think critically about ethics issues
- Overall behavior is consistent with ethical guidelines
- Awareness of, and adherence to APA ethical guidelines relevant to assessment, treatment, consultation, providing supervision, and scholarly inquiry

- Sensitive to issues of ethnic, cultural, gender, or sexual diversity relevant in assessment, treatment, consultation, providing supervision, and scholarly inquiry

Program Structure

The Alaska VA Psychology Internship Program is structured to provide training in core competency areas while maintaining the flexibility to provide individualized and developmentally-oriented training experiences for Psychology Interns. Training will take place in four primary contexts: 1) the Outpatient Mental Health PTSD Specialization with Dr. Greg Bilberry; 2) Health Psychology and Specialty Mental Health with Dr. Mark Holman; 3) Local Recovery Coordination with Dr. Camilla Madden; and 4) Compensations and Pensions Examination with Dr. Daniel Gonzales.

Outpatient Mental Health – PTSD Specialization

This rotation, under the supervision of Dr. Greg Bilberry, provides the intern a training opportunity in developing clinical competencies and experience in a broad array of clinical and clinical administrative activities in the context of an interdisciplinary outpatient mental health and substance abuse treatment program (Social and Behavioral Health Service; SBHS). SBHS is a full-service outpatient clinic that serves individuals with a wide range of emotional, social, and psychiatric problems. Clients represent the full Axis I and Axis II diagnostic range with a number of clients presenting with co-morbid substance abuse/dependence diagnoses. A significant number of our clients are returning veterans from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and Operation New Dawn (OND).

Interns on this rotation will enhance their ability to deliver recovery-oriented services to this full range of clinical presentations with specialized experience in PTSD. Rotation training experiences in PTSD treatment include evidence-based individual therapies (Cognitive Processing therapy or CPT and Prolonged Exposure or PE) and psycho educational group therapies as well as evidence based group therapy (CPT). Additional experiences include co-facilitating or facilitating psychotherapy groups, providing triage for clients in acute distress, intake evaluations and treatment planning, psychological assessment and testing, consultation to primary care providers and to other interdisciplinary clinicians. Additional experience is available for program development to enhance the PTSD program described above.

Health Psychology and Specialty Mental Health

This rotation includes the array of psychological services such as intakes, group, individual therapy, and psychological assessment of mental health disorders. Additionally, interns will have the opportunity to work with a multidisciplinary staff involved in primary care, chronic disease management, and health promotion / disease prevention. In this setting, an intern will function as the mental health and behavioral change expert. Interventions include behavioral health, motivational interviewing with a health related focus, and consultation/supervision. Also, interns on this rotation participate in smoking cessation groups, weight loss support, chronic pain management, and chronic and infectious disease support. Assessment activities include, but are not limited to, pre-treatment for bariatric surgery, transplant, and hepatitis C. Interns are allowed the opportunity to gain experience in a number of areas while also pursuing individualized goals. Opportunities to participate in Telemental Health are abundant during the intern's rotation as well.

Local Recovery Coordination

In this rotation, interns will work alongside the Local Recovery Coordinator (LRC), Dr. Camilla Madden. The Local Recovery Coordinator (LRC) position, which each VA medical center must maintain was first authorized in FY 2007 to help transform local VA mental health services to a recovery-oriented model of care, to sustain those changes, and to support further systemic change as new evidence becomes available on optimal delivery of recovery-oriented mental health care. The Intern in this rotation will be engaged in various systems related tasks that involve planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating the current projects fulfilling the nationally mandated responsibilities of the Local Recovery Coordinator. These responsibilities include:

- a. Leading the integration of recovery principles into all mental health services provided at the Medical Center and its affiliated CBOCs.
- b. Working collaboratively with the other LRCs in the VISN, one of whom must serve in a coordinator role for VISN level activities, and with national leadership.
- c. Being directly involved in the direct provision of recovery-oriented clinical services,
- d. Providing training and consultation to facility leadership, staff, veterans, and family members regarding the recovery transformation.
- e. Promoting the integration of recovery services across all mental health programs.
- f. Promoting activities to eliminate any stigma associated with mental illness.
- g. Ensuring that veterans with SMI are provided every opportunity to pursue and be responsible for their own goals.

The Intern will have the opportunity to apply these skills in various ways:

- Providing co-facilitated supportive group therapy to veterans with a bipolar mental health condition
- Providing individual therapy with an emphasis on learning and/or enhancing skills in the theory and application of acceptance and commitment therapy
- Providing supervision/consultation to the Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV) interdisciplinary treatment team in psychosocial rehabilitation (PSR) which will promote treatment that strives not only to achieve stability but moves beyond the maintenance model of symptom control to emphasize empowering homeless veterans in transcending their barriers and the barriers of second class personhood and stigma, so that they can achieve their goals and aspirations in the community of their own choosing. (This experience will be supported by weekly supervision of this supervision).
- Participating in a weekly interdisciplinary treatment team meeting at the main site of the Alaska VA Homeless Veterans Programs which include the Compensated Work Therapy, Compensated Work Therapy Transitional Housing Program, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) AND VA Supported Housing Program, Grant and Per Diem Program, Health Care for Reentry Veterans/Veterans Justice Outreach, Compensated Work Therapy Supported Employment, Homeless Veterans Supported Employment Program , Outreach Program and the Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans.
- Assisting in the development of partnerships with consumers, families, caregivers, & the community through participation in the Alaska Veterans Mental Health Wellness Council, the NAMI, the Alaska Peer Support Consortium, the Alaska Mental Health Consumer Web and other social supports and resources
- Participating in various system redesign planning committees
- Engaging in the ongoing planning, designing, implementation, and/or evaluation of the Veterans Wellness Center, a comprehensive, outpatient, consumer-oriented, strengths-based wellness program which uses a life-time learning education-based model to help veterans and their families enjoy a life of wellness and fulfillment.

Compensations and Pensions

The intern on the Compensation and Pension (C&P) rotation will be in the role of forensic examiner for those active duty service members and veterans who are engaged in the process of applying for disability benefits through the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). Interns who successfully complete this rotation will be able to perform evaluations to diagnose for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and/or other psychological conditions, evaluate the claimed condition's relationship to active duty military service, and assess for the level of social and occupational impairment that may result. The intern will also be providing "medical opinion" on service connected benefits.

The intern will be expected to produce timely reports using a "best practices" model, that incorporates evidence-based assessment, psychological testing, specific and detailed forensic interviewing techniques

and strategies, and comprehensive review of the service member's or veteran's claims file. Interns will be able to effectively incorporate these multiple sources of data into a valid, comprehensive, coherent and clear and promptly completed evaluation that fully responds to the questions of diagnosis, causation, and level of impairment from military service.

Other Training Opportunities

In addition to the standard clinical rotations, other training opportunities include: (a) multi-session focused trainings to develop competencies in specific Evidence-Based Psychotherapies and intervention modalities (e.g. cognitive processing therapy and telemental health, respectively), (b) topic-specific symposia (e.g., cultural sensitivity from an indigenous perspective, psychopharmacology, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, mental health service delivery in Bush Alaska, etc), (c) long term therapy case supervision, (d) intern case presentations, and (e) special projects (e.g., clinical research arranged through our affiliation with the Psychology Department at the University of Alaska Anchorage).

OPTIONAL TRAINING PLACEMENTS

In order to obtain clinical experience and training in areas not available at the Alaska VA Healthcare System, interns may choose to spend one work day per week on an optional placement either within or outside the Alaska VA Healthcare System. Such placements are available during the second and third trimesters only. The Training Director can assist interns in locating appropriate optional training placements as they are available. The Training Committee must approve all optional training placements. The most important considerations in approving an optional training placement are 1) the placement must provide a quality training experience comparable to current rotations, including supervision by a licensed psychologist, and 2) the optional training placement does not use the intern's work to generate income in excess of the costs of training (i.e., the placement is intended for training purposes and not primarily for revenue generation). Optional training placements outside the Alaska VA Healthcare System have been available at the University of Alaska Anchorage including participation in NIH grant-funded research projects in an array of clinical areas.

Requirements for Completion

It is expected that each intern will attend all scheduled didactic presentations and actively engage in the training rotations for the full duration of the assignment unless there is prior approval for the absence. The intern will be responsible for assuring attendance at a minimum of 80% of all scheduled presentations including, but not limited to Seminars and Psychology Clinical Case Presentations. Where feasible, attendance will be monitored via sign-in sheets. Where applicable, attendance criteria include completion of evaluation forms.

Program completion requires 2080 hours of internship training activities under clinical supervision (four hours weekly). Performance evaluation of and feedback to interns by clinical supervisors and other internship faculty is continuous; however, more formal evaluations are completed at the end of each rotation, as well as at the mid-point and end of the internship year. Maintaining good standing and completing the internship requires receiving satisfactory ratings in the clinical competencies listed above under Program Goals and Objectives.

Facility and Training Resources

Each intern will have a dedicated office with computers and phones; digital recording equipment will be available to support clinical supervision and training activities. In addition to the support from psychology internship faculty and clinical staff, each intern will have administrative and program support for training and consultation with electronic medical record management, telemental health, and other clinical applications; and data management related to clinical workload, program and facility performance improvement programs. Video-teleconferencing, "Live Meeting," and "Smart Board" technologies are available to support seminars, clinical case conferences, and other trainings as well as clinical

applications. The Alaska VA Healthcare System also has made a considerable investment in telehealth technology, which will support intern experiences in telemental health applications.

The Alaska VA Healthcare System Medical Library and the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) Consortium Library offer access to all major psychology, medicine, and public health journals. The capacity for database searches of the card catalog, Medline, ERIC, CINAHL, HEALTH, New England Journal of Medicine, PsychLit (Psychological Abstracts), and many others is available on-site and remotely. The libraries also have an excellent electronic inter-library loan system for periodicals that are not available at either library.

The Ph.D. program in Community/Clinical Psychology at the University of Alaska Anchorage includes internship faculty and interns in seminar and other educational offerings, including options to participate in NIH-funded clinical research.

Administrative Policies & Procedures

NOTE: Our privacy policy is clear: we will collect no personal information about you when you visit our website.

Our internship policy and procedure manual covers all domains applicable to our trainees, including, but not limited to (a) Administrative (e.g., training committee structure and function, intern's involvement in faculty meetings, intern selection, evaluations of interns, faculty, rotation, etc.); (b) Training (e.g., compliance with training and ethical requirements, outside placements, moonlighting, supervisor qualifications, rotation placement changes, etc.); and (c) Other (e.g., grievance procedures, disciplinary procedures.)

Of particular note:

- Leave Policy: Our authorized leave policy is the same that applies to all VA Psychology Training Programs.
- Due Process: A specific policy is established to ensure and guide due process for all interns. Grievances covered by this policy include, but are not limited to (a) challenging a performance rating, (b) grievance against clinical, teaching, supervision, or other professional behavior of faculty member(s); or (c) challenging a program policy or procedure. (This policy does not deny the intern's right to grieve directly to the Chief of Staff or the Human Resources Management Service.)
- Our internship program does not require self-disclosure.

Training Staff

We have 5 doctoral psychologists representing diverse theoretical orientations, clinical specialties, and interests. Some have academic appointments at the University of Alaska Anchorage. The staff is experienced and highly committed to clinical service and professional training.

Training Director:

Name: Daniel Gonzales

Degree: Ph.D., Counseling Psychology

Date of Degree: 1988

University: University of Missouri - Columbia

Primary Clinical and Research Interests and Expertise: Assessment and treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; Prolonged Exposure Therapy; Cognitive Processing Therapy; Health Psychology.

Faculty:

Name: Gregory Bilberry

Degree: Ph.D., Counseling Psychology

Date of Degree: 1990

University: University of Miami

Primary Clinical and Research Interests and Expertise: Assessment and Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders; Mental health administration and program development; Military post-deployment readjustment; Tele-mental health.

Name: Mark V. Holman

Degree: Psy.D.

Date of Degree: 2007

University: Georgia School of Professional Psychology at Argosy University

Primary Clinical and Research Interests and Expertise: Motivational Interviewing, primary care / mental health integration, psychotherapy research, psychotherapeutic resistance, personality disorders, behavioral health, and varied applications psychological assessment.

Name: Camilla A. Madden

Degree: Ph.D., Counseling Psychology

Date of Degree: 1990

University: University of Miami

Primary Clinical and Research Interests and Expertise: Cultural Diversity, Psychosocial Recovery Model, Homeless Veterans Services, VA Therapeutic and Supported Employment Services, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Mental Health Consumer Advocacy and Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Intersex Issues

Trainees

Graduate Programs of interns:

2008 – 2009

- The University of Montana; Ph.D., Clinical Psychology
- Alliant International University, California Professional School of Psychology, Ph.D., Clinical Psychology

2009 – 2010

- Washington State University, Ph.D. Clinical Psychology

2010 – 2011

- Pacific University, Psy.D. Clinical Psychology
- Pacific University, Psy.D. Clinical Psychology

2011 – 2012

- Regent University, Psy.D. Clinical Psychology
- Seattle Pacific University, Ph.D. Clinical Psychology
- Pacific University, Psy.D. Clinical Psychology

2012 – 2013

- Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology
- California School of Professional Psychology
- George Fox University

2013 – 2014

- Florida State University, Ph.D., Counseling Psychology
- Pacific University, Psy.D., Clinical Psychology

- Ponce School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Ph.D., Clinical Psychology

Local Information

Anchorage is a young and thriving metropolis – a four-time All-American City, rich in culture and the arts. Locals are quick to point out that perhaps its greatest virtue is that it is "only minutes away from Alaska!" Beyond the foothills at Anchorage's edge lies the third largest state park in America – a half-million acres of some of the most accessible hiking, skiing, camping, wildlife viewing, snowmachining, rafting, and climbing in Alaska. The mountainous backdrop to Anchorage reminds us that, although we live in an urban setting, we really reside in the middle of a vast wilderness.

For additional information about our locale:

<http://www.bigwildlife.net/brand.html>.