

VISN 1

VA Advanced Fellowship Program in Mental Illness Research Education and Treatment

VA Connecticut
Healthcare System
950 Campbell Ave

West Haven, CT

www.connecticut.va.gov



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Fellowship Overview

The VA Office of Academic Affiliations is sponsoring a VA Advanced Fellowship Program in Mental Illness Research and Treatment at the VA Connecticut Healthcare System, West Haven campus, through the Mental Illness Research Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC) and the National Center for PTSD (NCPTSD). The VA Advanced Fellowship Program offers individualized, mentored clinical research and clinical training in two high priority emphasis areas—dual diagnosis and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Each year, the Fellowship recruits one Physician and one Psychologist for the dual diagnosis emphasis area of training as well as one Physician and one Psychologist for the PTSD emphasis area of training.

Program Philosophy & Model of Training

The VA Advanced Fellowship Program follows a scientist-practitioner model and places strong emphasis on state-of-the-art methodological approaches to clinical research and practice. The Fellowship provides advanced clinical research training through individualized mentorship with skilled faculty in addition to traditional clinical training within an interdisciplinary team focused on one of the two emphasis areas. Training also offers state-of-the-art seminars and didactics focused on research methods, statistics, epidemiology, mental health systems, quality improvement methods, education and service delivery. Fellows devote 75% of their time to patient oriented research and 25% to direct patient clinical care.

Program Goals & Objectives

The goal of the VA Advanced Fellowship Program is to offer training experiences that encourage the acquisition, development, and refinement of professional skills, research proficiencies, and clinical practice competencies for fellows working with Veteran populations. This interdisciplinary program aims to train Physicians and Psychologists with an interest in clinical research to become outstanding clinical researchers in high priority areas of Veteran mental health.

In order to fulfill the goals of fellowship training, all fellows must demonstrate an advanced level of skill and knowledge in the following areas by the completion of The Fellowship Program, as measured by

supervisors' evaluations of the specific competencies.

Competency 1: Assessment, Diagnosis, and Intervention: Fellows will develop advanced competencies in the use of empirically derived treatments and systemic means of psycho-diagnostic and neuropsychological evaluation of patients.

Competency 2: Consultation, Supervision, and Teaching: Fellows will gain advanced skills in delivering consultation to inter-professional teams, develop advanced skills in the supervision of psychology trainees including interns and practicum students, and gain experience providing psycho-education to patients, family members and providers.

Competency 3: Scholarly Inquiry: Fellows will acquire competencies in several aspects of clinical research and scholarship. Key competency areas are discussed below.

a) *Integration of Science and Practice*: Fellows will learn to utilize the scientific literature to guide their clinical practice, and will use “lessons learned” from clinical practice to foster and shape their scientific hypotheses. Fellows will learn to use their emerging competencies in clinical science to identify solutions to emerging clinical problems they encounter in practice and will systematically evaluate the effectiveness of their clinical work (e.g., monitoring patient outcomes).

b) *Conducting Clinically Informed Research*: Fellows will gain advanced skills in conducting clinically focused research pertinent to the mental health needs of today’s veterans.

Competency 4: Organization, Management, Administration, and Program Evaluation: Fellows will gain experience in organizational management and administration pertinent to the career development of clinical Psychologists and scientists. Fellows may choose additional training experiences that facilitate the development of advanced competencies in program evaluation.

Competency 5: Professional, Ethical, and Legal Issues: Fellows will become competent (as appropriate for an entry level professional) in professional and collegial conduct, knowledge of the ethical guidelines of clinical psychology, and those ethical guidelines that govern the appropriate conduct of human subjects research. They will also become appropriately familiar with the wide array of legal issues relevant to the proper conduct of clinical psychology and human subjects related research.

Competency 6: Cultural and Individual Diversity Issues: Fellows will further develop their awareness and appreciation of cultural and individual differences and will attain cultural competence regarding the delivery of mental health services to a diverse population of Veterans.

Competency 7: Confidence and Professional Identity: Fellows will develop a strong professional identity, confidence, and professional demeanor commensurate with their entry-level status in the profession.

Program Structure

Fellows devote 75% of their time to research and educational activities and 25% to clinical training. In collaboration with their mentors, Fellows will develop and implement a research project, publish and present findings, participate in grant writing, and utilize the latest technology for educational activities and clinical service delivery. Over the course of the two-year program, fellows will be trained in clinical research skills and advanced clinical service delivery with evidenced-based treatments among veteran populations within an interdisciplinary setting. The fellowship combines individually mentored clinical research and clinical training with advanced educational experiences.

Seminars & Didactics

Advanced educational experiences include a twice-monthly video conferencing seminar in which a leading experts in the field presents to all VA Advanced Fellows nationally. The didactic seminars focus on two main areas: 1) presentations on the most recent advances in clinical research in mental health and 2) presentation on all aspects of career development from grant and manuscript preparation to the role of mentorship. Recent seminar topics have included VA career development, funding and resources, behavioral genetics, health informatics, designing clinical trials for behavioral therapies, funding mechanisms, and career development awards. Ongoing multi-site workshops on manuscript and grant preparation are also provided to the Fellows in addition to ongoing weekly biostatistics seminars.

Requirements

Physicians

MD applicants must have completed ACGME-accredited training, be board eligible or board certified, and have an active, unrestricted U.S. license to practice. International medical graduates must also have a current visa and an ECFMG certificate that is valid indefinitely. Applicants on a J-1 visa must also have current ECFMG sponsorship. Stipends will be based on years of previously completed residency training accredited by the Accrediting Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and index rates approved at the respective VA facility and affiliated university.

Psychologists

Eligible Psychologists must be U.S. citizens. They must have graduated from an American Psychological Association (APA) accredited doctoral program in clinical or counseling psychology. Completion of an APA accredited internship in clinical or counseling psychology also is required. A stipend is provided both for the first year and second year of the program with a stipend increase in the second year. These stipends are reviewed biannually and are adjusted according to rates paid by comparable non-VA postdoctoral fellowship programs.

Applications & Fellowship Site Contact Information

Interested Physicians and Psychologists who meet the eligibility requirements should send a cover letter and curriculum vita to the appropriate contact listed below by Jan 31st

PHYSICIAN CONTACT	PSYCHOLOGY CONTACT
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