

2014-  
2015

Salt Lake City Clinical Psychology  
Postdoctoral Fellowship

George E. Wahlen Department of Veterans  
Affairs Medical Center  
2012-2013

# SALT LAKE CITY CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP: PTSD TRACK



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Psychology Service (116B)  
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## LETTER FROM POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP CO-DIRECTOR

Dear Prospective Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in the Clinical Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship, PTSD Track, at the George E. Wahlen Department of Veterans Affairs Salt Lake City Health Care System (VASLCHCS). Postdoctoral training can be an exhilarating time as fellows continue their transformation from student to professional. We are excited to help contribute to this process. We hope that this brochure provides you with an understanding of the experiences offered in our program. In addition to describing the clinical rotations, training requirements, and application procedure, these materials describe the overall goal and philosophies of our program and give some sense of the training experience at VASLCHCS.

The VASLCHCS has a long history of clinical psychology training across a variety of training levels. The Psychology Predoctoral Internship has been in operation since 1952 and has been continuously APA accredited since 1979. The Clinical Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship has been operating since 2007, when the Salt Lake City VA was awarded with two clinical psychology postdoctoral positions to focus on PTSD, polytrauma, and readjustment after deployment with a particular emphasis on working with Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. In 2013, the Fellowship expanded with three more positions for with an emphasis on Integrated Primary Care Health Psychology, consisting of two tracks, Primary Care/Behavioral Health & Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention (HPDP) and Geropsychology within Primary Care/Behavioral Health.

I hope this brochure reflects our enthusiasm for training, with professional development of fellows being our highest priority. It is difficult to communicate character from a brochure; so, please feel free to contact me with any questions about our program.

Sincerely,  
Tom Mullin, PhD  
Clinical Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Co-Director  
VA Salt Lake City Healthcare System  
[Thomas.Mullin2@va.gov](mailto:Thomas.Mullin2@va.gov)

## ACCREDITATION STATUS

The Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association accredits the Postdoctoral Psychology Fellowship and an initial full accreditation was granted in 2011. Our next site visit is anticipated during 2018. For information regarding APA accreditation of this or other accredited training programs, please contact:

Commission on Accreditation (CoA)  
American Psychological Association  
750 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002-4242  
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## GEORGE E. WAHLEN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SALT LAKE CITY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The Clinical Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship is sponsored by the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System (VASLCHCS) located in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The main facility is located on an 81-acre campus adjacent to the Salt Lake City Veterans Affairs Regional Office and the University of Utah. It is a mid-sized primary and tertiary care facility with 133 beds providing a full range of patient care services. Comprehensive health care is provided through medicine, surgery, psychiatry, physical medicine and rehabilitation, neurology, oncology, dentistry, geriatrics, and extended care.



The VASLCHCS is part of VA Network (VISN) 19, which encompasses the largest geographic area in the 48 contiguous states. We serve an area covering the entire state of Utah, the majority of Montana, Wyoming and Colorado, and portions of Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada, and North Dakota. We have eleven Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) and two Outreach Clinics in remote areas of Utah, Idaho and Nevada. During fiscal year 2010, the VASLCHCS served 45,2829 Veterans in over 500,000 outpatient visits.

In terms of demographics, 94% of the veterans served by VASLCHCS are male; 6% are female. Ninety-one percent identify as Euro-American, 5% as Latino, 2% as African-American, less than 1% as Asian American, and less than 1% as Native American. The socioeconomic statuses of the veterans vary widely.

As a Dean's Committee Medical Center, VASLCHCS is closely affiliated with the University Of Utah School of Medicine, located less than one mile away. In addition to this longstanding affiliation, VASLCHCS maintains active affiliations with several other Utah colleges and universities and serves as a training site for students, interns, and fellows from a variety of health care professions. VASLCHCS is also home to the Salt Lake City Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center (GRECC), Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC), and the VHA Office of Rural Health Resource Center (RHRC). Finally, VASLCHCS serves as the location for the VHA funded Mental Health Strategic Health Care Group Informatics Section.

In 2006, VASLCHCS was designated a Level III Polytrauma Center to respond to the needs of Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts who have suffered multiple traumatic injuries, including TBI and PTSD.

Further information about the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System is available at <http://www.saltlakecity.va.gov>.

### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Although officially designated a General Medical and Surgical facility, the VASLCHCS also provides mental health treatment through a variety of inpatient, residential, and outpatient services and programs. The various programs of the Mental Health Services provide comprehensive mental health care by a

multidisciplinary staff including psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers, advanced practice nurses, vocational specialists, addiction therapists, and mental health associates. There are more than 700 admissions per year to the Inpatient Psychiatry Unit, with an average daily census of 18. More than 7,000 unique patients per year are seen on an outpatient or consultation basis by Mental Health Services personnel, resulting in over 50,000 patient contacts.

## CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

### POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

The Clinical Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship is a full-time, 12-month continuous appointment. Fellows typically work 40 hours per week and complete a total of 2080 hours of training. The usual tour of duty is 8:00 – 4:30PM, although some training experiences may involve a different one (e.g., 12:30PM – 9:00PM) due to scheduled activities on that rotation (e.g., evening therapy groups, weekend post-deployment health assessments, etc.). The parameters of each rotation are explained during the first week of orientation.



## TRAINING PHILOSOPHY

The Postdoctoral Fellowship ascribes to the practitioner-scholar model of training. As such, the goal of the internship program is to train psychologists to function in an informed, competent, independent, and ethical manner across a wide range of health care settings. The program's structure allows for both breadth and depth of clinical experiences, as well as exposure to a variety of intervention approaches and professional issues. Fellows are here for training and professional development, not service delivery; consequently, didactics, training seminars, and any other educational activities take priority in a fellow's schedule.

## FELLOWSHIP GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

This clinical psychology postdoctoral fellowship provides advanced interdisciplinary education and training across a variety of settings in outpatient mental health for the purpose of training future psychologists who are capable of providing the next generation of psychological services within Veterans Affairs. Even though this is classified as a general fellowship training, this program emphasizes the assessment and treatment of **Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**, **Polytrauma** associated with **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**, and **readjustment problems** in Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) veterans. Fellows also gain expertise in the complementary areas of trauma including, combat and military sexual trauma, substance abuse, couple/family therapy, and polytrauma.

### FELLOWSHIP GOAL

The fellowship is guided by an overarching goal:

To train clinical psychology postdoctoral fellows to be future psychologists who are especially equipped to work within the Veteran's Affairs Medical Center in clinical, and leadership roles.

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Training focuses on working with Iraq and Afghanistan veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder, polytrauma histories, and readjustment strains post-deployment.

## TRAINING OBJECTIVES

Within this goal, there are several training objectives:

### *1. ASSESSMENT*

Fellows understand, select, implement, interpret, and integrate effective methods of assessment in veterans accessing mental and medical care services through the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System.

### *2. INTERVENTION*

Fellows implement effective psychological interventions in group and individual formats for patients with PTSD, readjustment, and polytrauma histories within the framework of interdisciplinary team involvement.

### *3. SUPERVISION AND CONSULTATION*

Fellows develop and deepen their skills in receiving and giving supervision, and consultation. This is demonstrated by understanding and delivery of effective supervision and providing consultative services as needed.

### *4. SCHOLARLY INQUIRY*

Fellows demonstrate an ability to access and understand research with an emphasis on integrating science and practice for patients with PTSD, readjustment, and polytrauma histories. Fellows also share their knowledge by conducting professional presentations for psychologist, lay audiences, and other members of the healthcare community.

### *5. ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITIES*

Fellows demonstrate understanding of the organization and mission of psychology within Veterans Affairs. They further exhibit organization, management, and administration skills pertinent to psychological service delivery, training, and research.

### *6. INDIVIDUAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY*

Fellows demonstrate awareness, sensitivity, and skills in working professionally with diverse individuals, groups and communities who represent various cultural and personal background and characteristics defined broadly and consistent with APA policy.

### *7. PROFESSIONALISM*

Fellows demonstrate awareness of their identity as developing psychologists to include professional deportment, self-regulation, integrity, accountability, and adherence to professional conduct, ethics and law, and other standards for providers of psychological services.

## FELLOWSHIP TRAINING EXPERIENCES

Postdoctoral fellows are active members of several interdisciplinary treatment teams:

1. The **PTSD Clinical Team** through the Outpatient Mental Health
2. The **Polytrauma and Caregiver Teams** through the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department and the Caregiver Program

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Fellows also provide community outreach to returning veterans from Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom; OEF) and Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom; OIF and Operation New Dawn; OND). Especially relevant to the VA Mental Health Strategic Plan, psychological services are provided within the complementary areas of emotional trauma (e.g., military combat, military sexual trauma), physical trauma (e.g., TBI, orthopedic injuries), substance abuse, and couples/family discord, primarily within the OEF/OIF/OND veteran population.

### PTSD CLINICAL TEAM

As a member of the *PTSD Clinical Team (PCT)*, you will provide assessment and treatment to veterans with military-related PTSD. Sources of PTSD are primarily combat-related, but may also include military sexual trauma or other traumatic events occurring during military service. Goals for trainees at the completion of their postdoctoral fellowship are to have developed competency and expertise in the assessment of military related PTSD, to become familiar with dynamics of PTSD, and to institute evidence-based treatments in individual and group settings.

Fellows gain expertise in diagnostic interviewing and administering the *Clinician Administered PTSD-Scale (CAPS)* to assess for PTSD and other comorbid disorders. They will be exposed to and deliver evidence-based psychotherapy using a combination of treatment approaches, including *Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)*, *Prolonged Exposure (PE)*, *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)*, *Seeking Safety*, and *Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)*. There are also opportunities for providing PTSD process/integration treatments, including process-oriented psychotherapy, brief manualized treatment, and psychoeducational interventions.

### ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. **Assessment:** Fellows will conduct 2-3 assessments through PTSD Open Intake Clinic every week. Fellows also have an opportunity to move on to secondary level assessments based on this open intake clinic.
2. **Individual Psychotherapy:** You will be assigned a caseload of 4-5 veterans participating PE or CPT.
3. **Group Psychotherapy:** Each fellow will be involved with at least 4 groups over the training year.
4. **Community Outreach:** Fellows will work closely with other members of the PCT by offering services to returning military personnel, sharing resources with the local community, and providing specific education/training about PTSD. These experiences may include participating in Post-Deployment Health Re-Assessments (PDHRAs), Yellow Ribbon Events, speaking at local conferences, and providing education to police officers.
5. **PTSD Clinical Team Meeting:** Fellows will attend this weekly team meeting (Wednesdays).
6. **Supervision/Training:** Fellows will receive a weekly minimum of one hour of individual supervision from the PCT faculty, along with formal learning activities, and group supervision/consultation regarding EBTs.

### POLYTRAUMA AND CAREGIVER TEAMS

The VA Salt Lake City Health Care System is a Level III Polytrauma Support Clinic Site that provides outpatient assessment and treatment services to returning OEF/OIF/OND service members and veterans with Polytrauma and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

Fellows are members of the Polytrauma treatment team. This interdisciplinary rehabilitation team includes members from Medicine, Nursing, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Pathology, Social Work, and Psychology. The team works together to evaluate and treat patients with complicated physical and psychological presentations. Fellows assist in evaluating and treating OIF/OEF/OND veterans with possible brain injury and other co-morbid physical injuries and psychological concerns.

Fellows also gain understanding and knowledge about TBI and the associated physical, cognitive, behavioral, and emotional sequelae through individualized training and supervision. These experiences aim to expose you to patients with challenging neuropsychiatric presentations in a variety of evaluative and therapeutic settings.

The Caregiver Team identifies and supports family caregivers of Veterans who require continuous assistance due to post-9/11 injuries. The psychologist works with an interdisciplinary team to assess caregiving need related to both physical and mental health concerns. Fellows will become well versed in brief psychological and neuropsychological screening as well as measures of effort and response bias. Opportunities also exist to provide group and individual interventions, program development, and supervision of students.

### *ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES:*

1. Polytrauma Clinic: Fellows participate in this interdisciplinary rehabilitation clinic, held on a weekly basis.
2. Caregiver Clinic: Fellows participate in this interdisciplinary assessment clinic, held on a weekly basis.
3. Individual and Group Psychotherapy: Fellows are provided the opportunity to work with Veterans with polytrauma issues.
4. Polytrauma Team Meeting: Fellows will attend this weekly treatment planning meeting.
5. Caregiver Review Panel: Fellows will attend monthly meetings in which annual reviews of caregiver patients are conducted. Fellows may also participate in appeals process for Veterans who disagree with assessment results.
6. Colleague Education: Educating other mental health providers about mild traumatic brain injury
7. Community Outreach: Fellows work closely with other members of the Polytrauma team by offering services to returning military personnel, sharing resources with the local community, and providing specific education/training about Polytrauma and mTBI. These experiences may include participating in Social Gatherings for patients and their families, speaking at local conferences, providing formal education to community members.
8. Community Consultation: This includes with employers and academic institutions to set up appropriate accommodations to facilitate best possible functioning

### *POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW DIDACTICS*

Several hours each month are designated for attendance at required didactic activities. Attendance and participation in these activities takes precedence over service delivery activities or other meetings.

#### *POLYTRAUMA TEAM DIDACTIC SERIES*

Fellows are provided with a formal overview of the Polytrauma System of Care and services available at our VA. These are discussions and training about the veteran patient population with respect with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and other polytrauma injuries. There is also detailed training on diagnosis and expected recovery following mild TBI (mTBI). Supervisors will also review the role that Rehabilitation Psychology and Neuropsychology has had with regard to adjustment and recovery from brain injury. Finally, this training exposes fellows to the most recent research on OEF/OIF/OND veterans with TBI. Over the course of the postdoctoral year, fellows are encouraged to attend monthly TBI Grand Rounds and spend one afternoon per month in a specialty clinic (i.e., radiology, neurology, epilepsy clinic, sleep clinic).

#### *EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENT DIDACTIC SERIES*

In 2001, *the New Freedom Commission on Mental Health* study indicated that the nationwide system of delivering mental health services needed to be "transformed." One of the recommendations from the commission was facilitating "knowledge about evidence-based practices (the range of treatments and

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services of well-documented effectiveness), as well as emerging best practices (treatments and services with a promising but less thoroughly documented evidentiary base." In response, the VA developed a strategic plan for transforming mental health care that led to the *Uniform Mental Health Services Handbook* (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2008) and several initiatives to train clinicians in Evidence Based Psychotherapies. Current initiatives include:

- Prolonged Exposure (PE) for PTSD
- Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) for PTSD
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) for depression
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for depression, and
- Social Skills Training (SST) for serious mental illness

Early in the training year, fellows receive formal training in PE and CPT. Over the course of the training year, fellows participate in ongoing training, individual supervision, and group consultation in one or more of these EBTs.

### *PSYCHOLOGY SEMINAR SERIES*

This seminar series is designed for the predoctoral interns at the Salt Lake VA and is conducted by psychology staff members, other disciplines from the medical center, and community professionals. Fellows are welcome to attend these as their training interests develop.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Fellows develop presentation and teaching skills by preparing and delivering seminars to predoctoral Psychology Interns. Fellows will prepare and deliver at least one independent seminar for the ***Psychology Seminar Series***. Fellows are encouraged to review the topics that have been presented in the past, and to offer training that will contribute meaningfully to the series. For example, fellows may wish to share expertise about a clinical topic, offer training that addresses "gaps" in the current schedule, and/or ask our current interns for topic suggestions. Feel free to consult with Dr. Mullin and Dr. Turley for other suggestions. These presentations are scheduled for the spring or summer of the training year.

### POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP PROJECT

Over the course of your training year, fellows develop and present a yearlong Postdoctoral Fellowship Project. This project should exemplify the use of the Practitioner-Scholar model of psychology and be based on a clinical topic about which you are interested in learning more. Please select a specific supervisor-mentor for the project and ensure that the project meets the following goals/objectives:

- Is based on research
- Increases your knowledge and expertise in a topic of interest
- Advances the understanding of the needs/problems facing OEF/OIF/OND veterans
- Contributes to the knowledge-base and/or improves clinical practice in the PTSD Clinical Team, Polytrauma Team, OEF/OIF/OND Primary Care Clinic
- Provides you with a foundation and/or skill set that will increase your opportunities for VA employment.

Fellows are responsible for delivering a formal presentation of this project to the Psychology Staff, fellows, and psychology interns. Written evaluations of the presentation are based on Professional Competency development, as well as these goals/objectives, and will be completed by the audience following the

presentation. Evaluations will be given to Dr. Mullin, who will discuss feedback with the fellow; copies of all evaluations will also be included in the fellow's training file.

Fellows should be considering topics for the fellowship project early in the training year and have a solid idea of their project within three months after starting the fellowship.

## PSYCHOLOGY INTERN PRESENTATION SERIES

Over the course of the training year, predoctoral interns conduct two formal presentations, one of which is based on an interesting, complicated, and/or intriguing case, and the other of which is focused on a clinical topic of interest. Fellows are required to participate in this series as professional colleagues. This series is held monthly on the third and/or 5<sup>th</sup> Thursdays of the month at 3:00 pm in The Arches Conference Room, Building 16.

## RESEARCH

Some fellows are interested in conducting research during the course of the postdoctoral year. Although the primary focus of our training program is the development of applied skills, fellows may have the opportunity to participate in ongoing clinical research activities and to develop their own research interests.

## LEADERSHIP

Fellows have various opportunities to gain leadership and administrative experience. There are a variety of ways that fellows can be involved in these kind of experiences throughout the year. Some of the ways that fellows have participated in the past have included:

- Attending and participating in mental health supervisor's meetings
- Participating in weekly OEF/OIF/OND meetings
- Representing the VASLCHCS for "Governors Day"
- Conducting psychological screenings for veterans at Post Deployment Health Reassessments (PDHRA)
- Assisting with the Veteran's Day Telecast
- Delivering presentations to community organizations (i.e., schools, military organizations, local conferences).
- Playing a role in Utah State legislative projects for veterans and their families.
- Participating in the Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for law enforcement officers regarding the nature of PTSD and how to react to a person who may be displaying PTSD symptoms.
- Offering treatment to veterans in offsite locations, such as the Draper National Guard, Hill Air Force Base, and/or Salt Lake Community College.

## OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

In the Utah valley, there are bases for the Utah National Guard, Army Reserves, Marine Reserves, Navy Reserves, and the Air Force. The goal of OEF/OIF/OND outreach is to establish a good relationship with all of these branches. By far, the largest branch is the Utah National Guard. The PTSD Clinic works closely with them and regularly provides psychoeducational presentations, assessments, consultations, and direct clinical contact. This relationship is valuable for reaching veterans who are having difficulty but are unsure of the resources available to them. One component of interaction is in conducting Post-Deployment Health Re-Assessments (PDHRA) over the Salt Lake City VA's large geographical catchment area. VA clinicians often have multiple opportunities to interact one-on-one with service members in a "check-in" style of interaction

during official National Guard trainings and activities. This allows Guardsmen and women to become familiar with VA staff and make them more approachable if needed in the future.

Over the course of the training, postdoctoral fellows develop competency in the assessment of military-related PTSD, facilitating PTSD groups, instituting PTSD interventions, and in delivering outreach to veterans. Fellows gain expertise in multiple methods of PTSD assessments from informal screenings to formal assessments utilizing the Clinician Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS). They also have exposure to Evidence-Based Treatments (e.g., Prolonged Exposure, Cognitive Processing Therapy, and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) in both individual and group settings. Postdoctoral fellows have an opportunity to facilitate a variety of groups and classes including PTSD Clinic introductory classes (i.e. Start Point Class), Seeking Safety, Iraq/Afghanistan Readjustment, Nightmare Management classes, Insomnia Management Classes, and Anger Management.

Based on fellows' training interests, they may also work in collaboration with substance abuse treatment staff to identify appropriate referrals, and facilitate groups.

Fellows also provide community outreach programming outside of the VHASLC campus to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn (OND) veterans who have not yet accessed resources available to them at the VA. This is accomplished through a variety of services including presentation to active duty service members, participation in community activities as a VA representative, and other events.

## COMPETENCY EVALUATION

Evaluation is an ongoing, continuous, and reciprocal process. The Postdoctoral Training Committee encourages and supports open and thorough communication between supervisors and fellows regarding training needs, objectives, and competencies. In addition, scheduled, formal evaluation processes occur throughout the postdoctoral year.

Evaluation forms used throughout the training year

- Professional Competency Assessment of Fellows: Completed by supervisors at the end of each quarter
- Fellow Self Evaluation: Completed by fellows at the start of fellowship, at the end of the second quarter and at the end of the fourth quarter.
- Fellowship Presentation Evaluation: After all presentations
- Fellow Evaluation of Training Site: Completed the end of the second quarter and near the end of the fourth quarter
- Fellow Evaluation of Training Supervisors: Completed by fellows at the end of each quarter

## PSYCHOLOGY PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

In November 2005, the Council of Chairs of Training Council (CCTC) recommended to the APA Board of Educational Affairs (BEA) that a set of organized and sequential competency benchmarks be established for Professional Psychology. A work group identified competencies that extended through the sequence of doctoral education and training and determined possible methods of assessing attainment of these benchmarks. In June 2007, the following document was released for public comment: Assessment of Competency Benchmarks Work Group: A Developmental Model for the Defining and Measuring Competence in Professional Psychology. In the shift to a "culture of competence" (Roberts, Borden Christiansen, & Lopez,

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2005) in professional psychology, the VASLCHCS Postdoctoral Clinical Psychology Program provides training experiences to enhance the Core Competency Domains identified in this document. Below is a summary of key issues addressed in the document.

One definition of competence as related to training is the, “habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions, values, and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the individual and community being served.” (Epstein & Hundert, 2002). There are foundational elements required for competence that include knowledge and skills as well as elements best conceptualized as professionalism (e.g. reflective thinking). Competence also presumes integration of multiple competencies. In turn, competencies are conceptualized as elements or components of competence; that is, discrete knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Kaslow et al., 2004).

Competencies divide into Foundational and Functional competencies (Rodolfa, Bent, Eisman, Nelson, Rehm, & Ritchie, 2005). Foundational competencies are the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values psychologists use to function in their role. Essentially, foundational competencies are "how we do what we do." Examples of this include understanding ethics, awareness and understanding of individual and cultural diversity issues, and knowledge of the scientific foundations of psychology. Functional competencies are the major functions that psychologists carry out, which require reflective integration of foundational competencies in problem identification and resolution. Functional competencies are defined as "what we do" (e.g., assessment, intervention, consultation, research).

A benchmark refers to a standard for measurement of performance that can be used for comparison and to identify where needs for improvement exist.

Assessment of competence to evaluate learning outcomes is contextualized within the constructs of formative and summative assessment (Rodolfa, Bent, Eisman, Nelson, Rehm, & Ritchie, 2005). Formative assessment provides an individual ongoing feedback meant to enhance performance and implying a developmental progression in the acquisition of skills. Summative assessment, in contrast, measures performance at the end of a process.

The Assessment of Competency Benchmarks Work Group utilized the “Cube” model of core competencies in professional psychology (Rodolfa, Bent, Eisman, Nelson, Rehm, & Ritchie, 2005). The Cube model proposes twelve core competencies that are conceptualized as either foundational or functional competencies. Further, the cube model posits that acquisition of these core competencies is a developmental process consistent with the focus of the Benchmarks Work Group task in that it extends from practicum training to internship, advanced postdoctoral training, and lifelong learning.

Based on these recommendations, the VASLCHCS Psychology Training Committee has identified the following Core Competencies as being central to Psychology Training programs They are organized under the training objectives of the postdoctoral fellowship

## OBJECTIVES WITH COMPETENCIES

### 1. ASSESSMENT

Fellows understand, select, implement, interpret, and integrate effective methods of assessment in veterans accessing mental and medical care services through the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System.

### *1A. Knowledge of assessment methods*

Understands the strengths and limitations of diagnostic approaches in addressing evaluation for diagnosis and treatment planning

### *1B. Conducting assessments*

Appropriately selects and implements multiple methods and means of evaluation, respectful of issues of diversity and context

### *1C. Information gathering*

Shows an ability to gather relevant information from various sources including the chart review, case history, clinical interview, and other sources as relevant

### *1D. Interpretation*

Accurately interprets the results of psychological and neuropsychological assessments.

### *1E. Conceptualization*

Independently and accurately formulates case conceptualizations based on a synthesis of information in the context of stages of human development and diversity

### *1F. Diagnosis*

Independently and accurately places diagnoses

### *1G. Recommendations*

Independently and accurately provides meaningful recommendations for treatment based on assessments

### *1H. Communication of assessment findings*

Communicates results in written and verbal form clearly, constructively, and accurately in a conceptually appropriate and timely manner

## *2. INTERVENTION*

Fellows implement effective psychological interventions in group and individual formats for patients with PTSD, readjustment, and polytrauma histories within the framework of interdisciplinary team involvement.

### *2A. Knowledge of interventions*

Independently applies knowledge of evidence-based practice, including empirical bases of intervention strategies, clinical expertise, diversity, and client preferences

### *2B. Intervention planning*

Independently constructs interventions with case conceptualizations and intervention plans that are specific to case and context

### *2C. Intervention implementation*

Independently and accurately implements interventions informed by empirical models, while being appropriately flexible and adaptable to client needs

### *2D. Progress evaluation*

Independently evaluates treatment progress and modifies planning as indicated, even in the absence of established outcome measures

### *2E. Clinical skills and judgment*

Consistently displays clinical skills with a wide variety of clients and uses good judgment even in unexpected or difficult situations

### *2F. Interpersonal relationships*

Develops and maintains effective relationships with a wide range of clients

### *2G. Affective skills*

Effectively manages difficult communications with others at an appropriate developmental level

### *2H. Communication skills*

Adapts language to articulate ideas in ways that are accessible and appropriate to the specified audience

## *3. SUPERVISION AND CONSULTATION*

Fellows develop and deepen their skills in receiving and giving supervision, and consultation. This is demonstrated by understanding and delivery of effective supervision and providing consultative services as needed.

### *3A. Knowledge of the supervision role*

Demonstrates understanding of the complexities of the supervisor role, including ethical, legal, contextual, and diversity issues

### *3B. Seeking supervision*

Aware of the need for and receptive to supervision. Seeks consultation or supervision as needed and uses it productively

### *3C. Supervisory practices*

Provides effective supervised supervision to less advanced students, peers, or other service providers in typical cases appropriate to the service setting

### *3D. Peer supervision*

Provides independent supervision/consultation to peers in routine cases

### *3E. Processes and procedures of supervision*

Demonstrates knowledge of supervision models and practices; demonstrates knowledge of and effectively addresses limits of competency to supervise

### *3F. Ethical and legal issues in supervision*

Identifies and applies relevant ethical, legal, and professional standards and guidelines to supervision

### *3G. Team management*

Effectively engages in behaviors that support effective interdisciplinary team functioning with actively contributions to patient care

### *3H. Consultation*

Appropriately identifies referral questions in consultations and selects appropriate and contextually sensitive means of assessment to address consultation issues

### *3I. Public outreach and education*

Effectively participates in community outreach and education with veteran populations and the larger public

### *3J. Program development*

Plays an active role in postdoctoral program, clinical team, and systems development

## *4. SCHOLARLY INQUIRY*

Fellows demonstrate an ability to access and understand research with an emphasis on integrating science and practice for patients with PTSD, readjustment, and polytrauma histories. Fellows also share their knowledge by conducting professional presentations for psychologist, lay audiences, and other members of the healthcare community.

### *4A. Research knowledge*

Demonstrates an awareness of current literature on research and theory of assessment and treatment of patients

### *4B. Research application as a foundation of professional practice*

Independently applies knowledge and understanding of scientific foundations to practice including seeking out professional sources regarding assessment and treatment

### *4C. Scientific approach to knowledge generation*

Generates independent scholarly questions and pursues them in a systematic manner

### *4D. Teaching and presenting*

Readily shares their knowledge by conducting effective professional presentations for psychologist, interdisciplinary teams, lay audiences, and other members of the healthcare community.

## *5. ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITIES*

Fellows demonstrate understanding of the organization and mission of psychology within Veterans Affairs. They further exhibit organization, management, and administration skills pertinent to psychological service delivery, training, and research.

### *5A. Organizational knowledge*

Demonstrate increasing understanding of the organization, management, and administrative tasks through didactics, mentorship, and collegial interactions.

### *5B. Organizational participation*

Participates in activities pertaining to organization, management, and administration.

### *5C. Organizational leadership*

Demonstrate increasing leadership roles with junior colleagues, in interdisciplinary teams, and through community outreach.

### *5D. Program development*

Demonstrates abilities, management, and supervisory skills needed to participate in program development including the postdoctoral training program, clinical teams, or other programs

### *5E. Generating solutions*

Readily offers solutions or discusses with supervisor solutions to systems problems

## *6. INDIVIDUAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY*

Fellows demonstrate awareness, sensitivity, and skills in working professionally with diverse individuals, groups and communities who represent various cultural and personal background and characteristics defined broadly and consistent with APA policy.

### *6A. Individual and cultural diversity and context*

Independently monitors and applies knowledge of self and others as a cultural being in assessment, treatment, and consultation

### *6B. Applying diversity knowledge to assessment*

Applies knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding dimensions of diversity to assessment

### *6C. Applying diversity knowledge to treatment*

Applies knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding dimensions of diversity to treatment

### *6D. Applying diversity knowledge to consultation and supervision*

Applies knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding dimensions of diversity to consultation and supervision

### *6E. Applying diversity knowledge to scholarly inquiry*

Applies knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding dimensions of diversity to scholarly inquiry

## *7. PROFESSIONALISM*

Fellows demonstrate awareness of their identity as developing psychologists to include professional deportment, self-regulation, integrity, accountability, and adherence to professional conduct, ethics and law, and other standards for providers of psychological services.

### *7A. Professional identity*

Displays consolidation of professional identity as a psychologist and demonstrates knowledge about issues central to the field

### *7B. Deportment*

Fellow conducts self in a professional manner across settings and situations

### *7C. Self-regulation*

Ability to critique one's own performance, enact self-corrective practice as necessary

### *7D. Integrity, honesty, personal responsibility and adherence to professional values*

Monitors and independently resolves situations that challenge professional values and integrity

### *7E. Accountability*

Independently accepts personal responsibility across settings and contexts

### *7G. Professional standards*

Identifies complex ethical and legal issues, seeking to prevent problems and manage situations in a principled manner through the application of APA Ethical Principles and Codes of conduct, and other ethical, legal, and professional standards of the profession

### *7H. Concern for the welfare of others*

Independently acts to safeguard the welfare of others

Fellows complete a self-assessment of professional competency across various domains in preparation for planning the fellowship. Please refer to your copy of the Psychology Post-Doctoral Fellow Competencies Document to identify specific behavioral anchors within these domains. We encourage you to use the evaluation process as a forum for identifying, discussing, and monitoring your training progress. If you disagree with any aspect of the evaluation process, you may discuss your concerns with your supervisors, Training Director, Assistant Training Director, ombudsperson, and/or follow the processes outlined in the Remediation, Sanction, Due Process, and Grievance Policy.

## MINIMUM COMPETENCE LEVEL

There are minimum levels of competence defined within each training objective. These define the absolute minimum ratings fellows can have on any of the specific competencies. Any rating below these threshold levels indicate that fellows are not meeting training goals for that objective. For example, the minimum competency levels for the Assessment, objective, which has 8 competencies, is:

- No items in competency areas rated as 1
- 3 months, at least 5 competencies rated at 3 or higher
- 6 months, at least 6 competencies rated at 3 or higher
- 9 months, at least 5 competencies rated at 4 or higher
- 12 months, at least 6 competencies rated 4 or higher

These minimum requirements indicate that fellows need to progress over the training year in order to maintain minimum competency levels. The specific competency levels as defined under each objective are defined in the **Postdoctoral Fellowship Professional Competencies** evaluation form. Fellows who are below minimum competency levels as noted by formal evaluation are required to develop a training plan with their supervisors regarding improving competencies to minimum levels.

## FELLOW RESOURCES

Fellows have private offices for use in assessment and psychotherapy. Fellows have access to computers with a Microsoft Office Suite, printer access, and a nationwide integrated electronic medical chart named CPRS. There is also computer support through IRMS. There also are several additional group therapy rooms available for fellows to reserve if needed. While training in the OEF/OIF/OND Primary Care Clinic and the Polytrauma Clinic, fellows have access to workstations with computer and network access. Fellows also receive a neuropsychological testing kit to share. The VA Salt Lake City has a medical library that provides a wide range of psychology, psychiatry, gerontologic, and other journals consistent with the needs of staff and the training program. Fellows have access to the VA library and may access the libraries at the University of Utah by either personal access or inter-library loan.

Fellows receive administrative support from administrative support assistants who help fellows with several aspects of the fellowship.

## FELLOW TRAINING YEAR

The fellowship begins on August 25, 2014, with a full orientation from VA Human Resources and Psychology Service, and ends on August 21, 2014.

Fellows devote eight hours per day, 40 hours per week, to the training program. The usual tour of duty is 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., although some require evening work with a shifted shift of 11:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Some weekend work is a part of the outreach activities.

## STIPEND AND BENEFITS

Fellows receive a stipend of \$42,239.00 paid in equal installments over 26 bi-weekly pay periods. Fellows are not covered by civil service retirement, but are eligible for federal employee group life insurance and health benefits.

Over the course of the year, fellows earn approximately 13 vacation days and 13 sick days, in addition to 10 federal holidays.

Fellows who work 40 hours per week can fulfill their commitment and still have time for vacations and sick leave.

Postdoctoral fellows at the VASLCHCS are provided with all rights, benefits, and responsibilities associated with "Employee" status. As such, they are expected to comply with all medical center policies pertaining to employee behavior, including leave.

Fellows may also apply for limited hourly credit for attendance at national and regional professional meetings and workshops through their primary supervisor and Postdoctoral Training Committee.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements for the postdoctoral training program:
2. Completion of doctoral degree, including defense of dissertation, from an APA-accredited doctoral program before the fellowship start date.\*
3. Completion of an APA-accredited psychology internship program before the fellowship start date.\*
4. U.S. citizenship

Those not meeting the eligibility requirements will be notified as soon as possible.

Failure to meet the above qualifications prior to the fellowship start date could nullify an offer to a candidate.

Fellows are considered federal employees and, therefore, must meet all federal employee requirements, including a background check, pre-employment physical examination, and drug screening. Other branches of the federal government may also conduct routine background checks at their discretion as well. Official hiring is contingent on meeting all of these federal requirements.

\*If you have not yet completed your internship and degree by the time of the application, the Training Directors of both your doctoral programs and internship must verify that you are expected to complete these requirements prior to the start of the postdoctoral fellowship. Applicants must provide verification of a degree prior to an agreed upon postdoctoral training start date. In unique situations, extensions may be applied as deemed appropriately by the training committee.

## APPLICANT MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

1. United States Citizen (per VA Policy)
2. Completion of an APA accredited predoctoral internship
3. Graduation from an APA accredited Clinical or Counseling Psychology Doctoral Program.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

- Application materials due: January 2, 2015, 5 pm (Eastern Time)
- Interviews of candidates: Early to mid-February

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Submit the APPIC APPA CAS Online application no later than 5pm on January 2, 2015. Please use the following web address to access the application website:

<https://appicpostdoc.liasoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login>

- Include a letter of certification from your Internship Training Director that you are in good standing and they expect you to matriculate on time, in addition to indicating the last day of internship.

All application materials must be received by the due date listed above. Please submit the following:

1. Letter of interest including the following elements:
  - A description of your educational, clinical, and research experiences relevant to this fellowship
  - A statement of your training and career goals and how this fellowship may meet those goals
2. Curriculum Vitae.
3. Include graduate transcripts.
4. Three letters of recommendation including:
  - At least one from a faculty member personally familiar with your graduate school performance
  - At least one from a primary clinical supervisor during the pre-doctoral internship.
5. A brief statement regarding the status of your dissertation or research project and expected graduation date from your graduate school program.
6. A letter from your Internship Training Director verifying date you are expected to complete internship.

If you would like confirmation of receipt of application, please include a self-addressed, stamped postcard, which will be mailed to you upon our receipt of your information.

## APPLICATION EVALUATION

Each set of application materials received by the due date will be reviewed by two randomly assigned members of the selection committee. Independent ratings are based on educational, intervention, and assessment experiences, cover letter, report writing, and professional letters of recommendation. The selection criteria focus on all aspects of the application materials, with emphasis placed on background training, experience, and an applicant's clear articulation of training goals and professional aspirations.

After an average score is calculated, the selection committee addresses significant discrepancies in scores, and determines the cut-off score to participate in the interview process.

Interviews are typically planned for mid to late February, but this can vary based on the schedules of applicants. In addition to being interviewed by two members of the Selection Committee, applicants will have the opportunity to meet current interns, fellows, and staff members, as well as participate in a tour of the facility. Telephone interviews are available for applicants who are unable to attend in person.

Following all interviews, the Selection Committee will meet to identify the top candidates and alternates for the two postdoctoral positions. These selections are based on an integration of file and interview ratings, with the entire list of interviewees being reviewed to ensure that all candidates have received fair and equal consideration.

The Clinical Psychology Postdoctoral Program at VA Salt Lake City Health Care System is in the process of becoming a member of the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) and will abide by all APPIC guidelines regarding fellowship recruitment and notification procedures.

## COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

The VASLCHCS Psychology Service has made efforts to recruit and maintain a diverse psychology staff in a geographic region with limited ethnic and racial diversity. As such, the Fellowship Program places a high value on attracting a diverse group of interns and on maintaining an awareness of diversity issues during the fellowship year. The program appreciates the fact that attracting a diverse group of fellows is important, not only for the fellowship, but for the staff as well.

Throughout the training year, the training program provides various learning activities and trainings that build upon the multicultural competency from graduate training. For example, the training program schedules a number of seminars directly dealing with a variety of diversity topics. We have speakers discuss issues of multicultural competency, religion/spirituality, gender, sexual orientation, culture, and age. The topics vary year to year, in large part due to the requests of the individual training cohort and their needs as determined by the training director.

## ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The VA Salt Lake City Healthcare System's policy on Authorized Leave is consistent with the national standard. You are welcome to discuss this with the Director of Training.

### DUE PROCESS:

All trainees are afforded the right to due process in matters of problematic behavior and grievances. Due process documents are a part of the orientation manual and are reviewed during orientation. A copy of our due process policy is available on request.

#### PRIVACY POLICY:

We collect no personal information from you when you visit our web site.

#### SELF-DISCLOSURE:

We do not require trainees to disclose personal information to their clinical supervisors except in cases where personal issues may be adversely affecting a trainee's performance and such information is necessary to address these difficulties.

#### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The VASLCHCS is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The Psychology Service actively supports and is in full compliance with the spirit and principle of Affirmative Action in the recruitment and selection of staff and interns. We provide equal opportunities in employment and training for all qualified persons and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disabilities, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. In accordance with federal government employment regulations, only citizens of the United States are eligible for training positions funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

## ABOUT SALT LAKE CITY AND UTAH

According to the 2010 census, Salt Lake City has a population of 186,400. The surrounding metropolitan area has over 2 million people. Individuals unfamiliar with Salt Lake City and the state of Utah are often quite surprised at the wealth and variety of things to do and see. Salt Lake City is a montage of modern high-rises, commercial centers, unique sightseeing attractions, classic buildings, historic sites, excellent restaurants, and beautiful shopping malls. The city is also home to acclaimed ballet dance companies, the Utah Opera Company, many fine art galleries, and historical and art museums. Professional sports fans enjoy cheering for the Utah Jazz, Utah Grizzlies and Real Salt Lake. During the summer, baseball fans flock to Franklin Covey Field to watch the Salt Lake Bees, the Triple-A affiliate of the Anaheim Angels. Finally, fans of college sports find one of the NCAA's most entertaining and bitter rivalries between the Brigham Young University Cougars and the University of Utah Utes, both of whom are nationally ranked in football.

For the outdoor recreational enthusiast, Utah is truly a paradise. During the winter months, Utah has "The Greatest Snow on Earth." Eleven resorts are within an hour drive of Salt Lake City. During the summer months, Utahans take advantage of over 1,000 lakes, rivers and streams. Sailing, wind surfing, kayaking, rock climbing and mountain biking are extremely popular during the warmer months as well. Utah has five national parks: Arches National Park, Bryce Canyon National Park, Canyonlands National Park, Capitol Reef National Park, and Zion National Park. We're a short drive to Yellowstone and Teton National Park as well.

## TRAINING STAFF

We encourage you to contact staff members if you have any specific questions for them.

*Steve Allen, Ph.D.*

**Training Background:** Ph.D., Clinical Psychology – University of Wyoming

**Predoctoral Internship:** Martinez VA

**Current Position:** PTSD Clinical Team Supervisor

**Areas of Interest/Expertise:** Treatment of PTSD and psychological assessment; community outreach and education, including law enforcement and clergy; process oriented group psychotherapy; development of psychology professionals.

E-mail: [Steven.Allen@va.gov](mailto:Steven.Allen@va.gov)

*James Asbrand, Ph.D.*

**Training background:** Ph.D., University of Utah

**Predoctoral Internship:** Brigham Young University Counseling Center

**Current Position:** Staff Psychologist, PTSD Clinical Team

**Areas of interest/expertise:** PTSD, Military Sexual Trauma, Diversity as related to therapeutic relationship.

Email: [james.Asbrand@va.gov](mailto:james.Asbrand@va.gov)

*Jacek Brewczyński, PhD*

**Training background:** PhD, Clinical Psychology, University of Detroit

**Predoctoral Internship:** Tampa VAMC

**Postdoctoral Fellowship:** Clinical Psychology, VA Salt Lake City Health Care System

**Current Position:** PTSD Clinical Team and the Substance Abuse Treatment unit.

**Areas of interest/expertise:** Psychological interventions for veterans with co-morbid diagnoses of PTSD & SUD; psychological & neuropsychological assessment, including personality assessment; transpersonal interventions, such as mindfulness & meditation-based treatment.

Email: [jacek.Brewczynski@va.gov](mailto:jacek.Brewczynski@va.gov)

*Jinna Lee, Ph.D.*

**Training background:** Ph.D., University of Utah

**Predoctoral Internship:** VA Salt Lake City Health Care System

**Current Position:** Staff Psychologist, PTSD Clinical Team

**Areas of interest/expertise:** PTSD, Veterans of color.

Email: [jinna.Lee@va.gov](mailto:jinna.Lee@va.gov)

*Tom Mullin, Ph.D., Clinical Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Co-Director*

**Training Background:** Ph.D., Counseling Psychology, University of Utah

**Predoctoral Internship:** VA Salt Lake City Health Care System

**Current Position:** PTSD Clinical Team

**Areas of Interest/Expertise:** PTSD, readjustment after OEF/OIF/OND deployment, psychological assessment, evidence-based treatment for PTSD, Prolonged Exposure Consultant, veteran outreach programs

Email: [Thomas.Mullin2@va.gov](mailto:Thomas.Mullin2@va.gov)

*Gita Rakhsha, Ph.D., Psychology Practicum Training Director*

**Training Background:** Ph.D., Counseling Psychology, University of Utah

**Predoctoral Internship:** University of Utah Counseling and Psychological Services

**Current Position:** PTSD Clinical Team

**Areas of Interest/Expertise:** Trauma-focused therapies, Self-psychology, Cross cultural psychology,

Updated September 29, 2014

Geriatric psychology, Suicidology.

E-mail: [Gita.Rakhsha@va.gov](mailto:Gita.Rakhsha@va.gov)

*Sarah Turley, Ph.D., Training Director*

**Training Background:** PhD, Counseling Psychology, Southern Illinois University

**Predoctoral Internship:** Long Beach VA Healthcare System

**Current Position:** Psychology Training Director

**Areas of Interest/Expertise:** ACT, Behavioral Medicine, Medical Decision-Making, Palliative Care, Ethics, and Brief Treatment.

E-mail: [Sarah.Turley@va.gov](mailto:Sarah.Turley@va.gov)

*Harrison Weinstein, PhD*

**Training Background:** PhD, Clinical Psychology, Palo Alto University

**Predoctoral Internship:** Southern Arizona VA Health Care System

**Current Position:** Staff Psychologist

**Areas of Interest/Expertise:** Assessment, PTSD

Thank you for your interest in this fellowship program and we wish you the very best during this exciting time. If you have questions about the postdoctoral fellowship or about the Salt Lake City VA please feel free to contact me:

Sincerely,

Tom Mullin, PhD

Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Program Co-Director

Department of Psychology

VA Salt Lake City Health Care System

500 Foothill Blvd. (116OP)

Salt Lake City, UT 84148

Phone: (801) 585-1565 ext. 2382

e-mail: [Thomas.Mullin2@va.gov](mailto:Thomas.Mullin2@va.gov)