



## THE CHILD GUIDANCE CENTER OF SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT

### PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

#### Overview

##### Description

The Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut is an independent non-profit agency that has served southwestern Fairfield County for 56 years. A staff of over 35 clinicians offers a full array of out-patient mental health services to children, adolescents, and their families. The agency's focus is to thoroughly evaluate each child and family so that treatment services can be matched to specific developmental, dynamic, systemic and behavioral needs.

Evaluations at the Center include, Developmental Evaluations of pre-schoolers, psychological and neuro-psychological testing, psychiatric and psychopharmacological evaluations, crisis evaluations, treatment for child victims of crime, and forensic evaluations of children having disclosed sexual abuse.

The Center also provides individual, group and family treatment along with psychopharmacological services. Psychodynamic, cognitive behavioral, interpretative play, and systemic, crisis intervention, multi-dimensional family therapy, and trauma focused CBT are among the treatment modalities employed at the Center.

The Center also provides consultative services to day care providers, Head Start and Early Head Start, public and private schools, and the local police departments. Community education is offered to community groups, parent groups and other professionals in the area.

The Center provides individual, weekly supervision to each member of staff, and a full schedule of seminars and case conferences that all staff and people in training attend. Each clinician also participates in weekly interdisciplinary treatment planning meetings.

##### Prerequisites

The Center requires that all internship applicants have completed their pre-doctoral course work in an area of psychology related to clinical work with children, adolescents and families. More specifically, we ask that applicants have prior clinical experience providing psychotherapy, and psychological testing, and that they have received close clinical supervision in each of these areas.

##### Internship Program Philosophy and Goals

The goal of the Child Guidance Center internship is to provide a varied, high quality training experience that will support interns in the development of their base of knowledge, their clinical skills, and their professional identity as clinical psychologists. Interns will receive training in individual, family, and group psychotherapy. As we are a community-based agency providing service to all segments of society, our interns will gain experience working with a patient

population that is diversified with regard to ethnicity, socio-economic status, diagnosis, and level of behavioral and cognitive functioning. Training therefore includes emphasis on the broad-based skills involved in listening and communicating with children, adolescent and adult patients. Training also includes a focus on diagnostic and treatment issues that may be specific to diagnostic groups. All aspects of training include emphasis on the development of cultural competence.

The program includes comprehensive training in clinical and developmental assessment with a strong emphasis placed on the synthesis of dynamic, systemic, cognitive, biological, environmental and cultural influences. Interns will gain experience in cognitive, educational, projective, and neuro-psychological testing. The focus will be on integration of all aspects of the testing process into a comprehensive and meaningful report. Interns will also participate on treatment planning teams, in staff seminars, and case conferences. All interns will be required to present at case conferences before the end of the internship year. There will also be the opportunity for interns to receive training in, or gain exposure to various specialty areas such as sex abuse investigations, crisis intervention, risk assessment, and interventions to community traumas. These topics will serve as points of focus for seminars designed specifically for psychology trainees. Additionally seminars in CBT, TF CBT, family therapy, group therapy, neuro-psychological and psychological testing will be available to interns. Consistent with our interest in community education, interns may have the opportunity to conduct community workshops, consultations with other agencies and schools, participate in interagency collaborations, and play an advocacy role on community resource teams. Every attempt will be made to provide interns with as well-rounded an experience as possible. Supervisory sessions will make use of process recordings and readings in order to add depth to the experience. Supervisors will also make efforts to design an experience that meets the specific interests of each intern whenever possible.

Training will take place through a variety of modalities including individual supervision for treatment cases, individual and group supervision on testing cases, participation in all staff and psychology seminars, staff case conferences, and staff administrative meetings. Opportunities for attending conferences and seminars at other sites will also be available and encouraged.

Interns will be expected to work a 40 hour/52 week work schedule, including a minimum of 6 evening (after 5:00 p.m.) hours per week; being entitled to 10 days of vacation, 10 sick days and 4 personal days per year. In accordance with our personnel policy, no vacation can be taken prior to completing 18 weeks of service.

The internship training year will extend from September through August. A flex-time schedule will be developed to suit the needs of interns and the Center. Given that we are a child, adolescent and family service, interns will be required to work 6 hours/wk after 5pm.

### Programs of the Center

The Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut provides the following programs:

*Child and Family Therapy:* The Child and Family Therapy Program offers treatment services to children aged 1-18 and their families. Children and parents seen in this program are those who are not in crisis and can wait for up to a week to be seen. Individual, group and family therapy may be offered depending upon the initial family assessment and the joint recommendation of

the clinician and the treatment planning team. Parents may also be seen for a variety of services including parental guidance, psycho-education and concrete services.

*Crisis Intervention Program:* The same services that are offered in the Child and Family Therapy Program are available in the Crisis Program, but the focus and intensity of the services differ. Children are assigned to this program when in a psychiatric emergency (e.g., suicidal, homicidal, traumatized, etc.). Children assigned to the Crisis Program are seen either the same day, or the next day depending upon the information gleaned by phone. We have the capacity to make this program mobile when necessary as well. The focus of treatment is to assess and to stabilize the patient and family and to make decisions concerning the need for further services.

*Child Guidance-Community Policing Program:* This program is a replication of the program prototype developed between the Yale Child-Study Center and the New Haven Police Department. It was the 9th of such sites in the nation. Staff in this program are available to the Stamford Police Department 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We offer to the police mental health consultation or direct intervention for any police matter affecting a child. Examples of circumstances for which we have been called have included such things as the suicide of a parent, apparent child neglect, the arrest of a family member, and exposure to domestic violence, or exposure to a violent crime. The program also includes a weekly meeting with members of the police department to review old and plan for new cases. We are also involved in training police officers in matters involving child development and mental health issues, while our participating staff is trained by police officers on police procedures.

*Sexual Abuse Response Team (SART):* SART is a collaborative formed by this agency along with representatives of the local police departments, child protective services, the Sexual Assault Crisis Center, the State's Attorney's Office, and others. This team's purpose is to see to it that child victims of sexual assault are investigated in a timely, thorough and sensitive manner, and to see to it that they and their families are supported, in whatever ways necessary, throughout their ordeal. The Child Guidance Center is responsible for investigative interviews of children in lower Fairfield County who have disclosed sexual abuse, as well as providing treatment for children who have been victimized and are in need of therapeutic intervention. We also serve a consultative role with police, school systems, the court system, and protective services.

*Intensive In-Home Treatment Program:* The In-Home Program has been in existence since 2003. The program is designed for the intensive treatment of adolescents with multiple and severe behavioral problems including substance use, violence and school failure. Multiple Dimensional Family Therapy is the evidence based treatment modality employed. Children are seen individually and with their family and extended family members, both in their homes and at the Center.

*Trauma Focused CBT:* TF CBT is an evidenced based, manualized treatment program added to the agency's list of available treatment modalities in 2008. The treatment is offered to children or adolescents who have suffered an aversive event which is thought to be responsible for post traumatic symptoms and which occurred more than 30 days prior to the start of treatment. It is a short term treatment program with treatments intended to be completed within 6 months. The treatment will be supported by a clinical team, led by a supervisor trained in this modality.

## Core Training Experiences

### **Treatment Services**

Approximately 50% of each intern's time will be spent providing direct clinical services to patients. Patients seen range in age from 3 to adult (though parent guidance is offered to parents of infant children as well), and are diverse with regard to socio-economic status, ethnicity and diagnosis.

- Child psychotherapy cases: Interns will be expected to do initial assessments of incoming patients. These assessments will include family and developmental histories, and all pertinent information necessary for making a diagnostic and dynamic formulation. Interns will be asked to collaborate with families to formulate treatment plans and will also participate with clinical staff as part of an interdisciplinary treatment planning team. The range of available treatment interventions at the Center includes individual, group, and family therapy, and psychopharmacology, as well as parent guidance, and case management.
- Interns will be expected to provide a minimum of 15 direct service hours per week. These will be face-to-face contacts for treatment or testing. Child and adolescent patients, across age groups, will be seen on either a once or twice weekly basis. Adult patients may also be seen for "parent guidance" or for intensive services. Caseloads may be skewed toward the intern's training preference or needs, and will be gradually built over the first months of the training year.
- Interns will develop and co-lead one or more time limited groups during the course of the academic year.
- Interns will be expected to administer, score, and analyze up to one psychological or neuropsychological test battery approximately every other month.
- Interns will be given the opportunity to observe and/or participate in sexual abuse investigations.
- Interns will be the opportunity to carry cases utilizing Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.
- Interns will be the opportunity to carry at least 1 case utilizing Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.
- Interns will be given the opportunity to observe and/or participate in the developmental evaluations of children under age 6.
- Interns will be required to do one formal case presentation to the staff before the end of their internship year.
- Interns will do a 3 month rotation in the Crisis Program, with the opportunity to extend their participation.

- Interns will be encouraged to participate in all of the programs of the agency, including continuing education provided throughout the academic year to the clinical staff.

### **Supervision**

Each intern will be provided with a minimum of 2 individual supervisory sessions per week. These supervisory hours will focus on individual, group and family treatment. An additional hour of weekly group supervision that will focus on psychological and neuro-psychological testing will also be provided. The neuro-psychological testing seminar will also have a didactic component to it. These testing seminars are required for all interns. Interns also have the opportunity to participate in weekly or bi-weekly seminars in Family Systems treatment, group treatment, TF CBT, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, all of which will have a didactic component followed by a group supervisory component.

Additional learning opportunities will be offered in the form of collaboration with senior staff involved in the various specialized programs of the Center including, the intern's participation in and observation of sexual abuse investigations and developmental evaluations of children under 6, children exposed to violence and other forms of trauma, and the intern's work with children seen through our crisis intervention program. Interns will also receive supervision for any community service they provide (e.g., Parent-Child Resource Teams, System of Care meetings, presentations to community groups, attendance at school meetings, etc.)

### **Didactic Seminars and Treating Planning Team Participation**

Each intern will have the opportunity to participate in one or more of the Treatment Planning Teams that meet weekly at the Center. Team meetings are all interdisciplinary and meet for 90 minutes approximately once each week.. Active Teams at the Center include those for Child and Family Therapy, and the Crisis Intervention Program. Interns will, during the course of their tenure, also sit in on the meetings of the Child Guidance-Community Policing Collaboration, the Sex Abuse Response Team, and the Child-Parent Resource Team. These community collaboratives meet weekly, bi-weekly and monthly, respectively.

Interns will be included in all in-service didactic staff training that takes place at the Center. Didactic staff seminars occur approximately twice monthly throughout the academic year with speakers from outside the agency and speakers within the agency who present on topics selected by a staff committee that meets during the summer months. Topics include areas of training that the staff and administration of the Center feel most relevant to the work being done at the Center and to programs being developed.

There is a menu of additional didactic seminars specifically designed for interns. These are seminars in group, and family therapy, TF CBT, and CBT. All interns also participate in a monthly professional seminar/focus group. This hour is spent with a member of the clinical staff who is outside of the agency's management group. It is a confidential time meant to allow interns the opportunity to discuss their internship experience and challenges, along with issues of professional concern. There are also 2 hour-long weekly seminars on neuropsychological/ cognitive testing and projective testing. The former is attended by interns and post docs, the latter by interns and the psychology staff. All interns will also attend a weekly "survey" seminar that will run through the month of April, and encompass topics relevant to clinical practice in a community-based, out-patient, child and adolescent mental health facility.

Each intern will also be invited to attend conferences and seminars sponsored by the Connecticut Association of Mental Health Clinics for Children, a consortium of all the independent Child Guidance Centers throughout the state. Each intern receives a \$200 allowance to offset the tuition costs for attending professional conferences outside of the agency. These attendance at these conferences require the approval of the Clinical Director.

Additionally, interns will attend formal case conferences held at the Center bi-monthly. Interns will also be required to present a case of their own during the spring of their internship year. Additional supervision on this process will be provided.

### **Psychological Testing**

Interns will receive extensive training in psychological and neuro-psychological testing. Individual testing supervision and 2 weekly testing seminars will be offered to all interns. Supervision will focus on the integration of cognitive, developmental, behavioral, personality and neuro-psychological findings. Supervisions will also accentuate report writing, and feedback with patients, parents and schools. Because of Connecticut Medicaid regulations interns will only have access to testing patients with commercial insurance coverage or those that are willing to pay out-of-pocket for the service.

### **Research**

Interns and staff are encouraged to propose research ideas and will be supported in efforts to conduct approved research at the Center. Interns may be asked to assist with any research that is conducted by members of the psychology staff. Interns may be asked to participate in research being conducted in the service of program development and/or program assessment.

### **Evaluations**

Interns will be formally evaluated midway through the internship year, and at the end of their internships. Written evaluations will be reviewed with interns before being forwarded to the Director of Training of the intern's university.

### **Grievance Procedure**

Interns who have concerns about their internship experience, supervision, or other work related matters should first discuss the matter with their supervisor. If this proves unsatisfactory, the matter should be taken to the Internship Director of the Center. If the issue of concern is still remains unresolved, a meeting should be set with all parties involved and the field supervisor for that intern. A copy of the Grievance Procedure will be mailed to each intern as part of the packet of materials sent to them prior to the start of their internship year. The procedure will also be discussed with the interns during their orientation sessions at the start of the internship year.

When performance issues arise, these matters will first be addressed by the primary supervisory in individual supervision. This should follow the supervisor's discussion of these performance concerns with other members of the agencies Trainee Supervisors Committee (this committee meets monthly). The supervisor and the intern will develop a plan for remediating the issue, with a timeline for improvement to be seen. If the goals of this plan are not met, the supervisor will discuss the matter with the Clinical Director, and the intern's field advisor. All parties will have input into a remediation plan to be written which will state the nature of the problem, the previous attempts at remediation, a clearly stated plan for assessing the desired improvement, the date by which these goals will be met, and the consequences for

not meeting these goals. This plan will be signed by both the intern and the supervisor, submitted to the Clinical Director and the intern's field advisor, mailed to the intern's field advisor, and placed in the personnel file of the intern. If this plan is not adhered to and disciplinary action is taken, the intern will have the option of requesting a hearing of the matter which would involve the Clinical Director and the intern's university Department Chairperson, or designee.

#### Application Process

- Applicants are asked to mail their:
- Curriculum vitae
- APPIC application packet
- A copy of two anonymous psychological and/or neuro-psychological test reports
- A case study
- A letter of recommendation from a clinical supervisor outside to their university
- A letter of recommendation from a supervisor or professor within their university

To: Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut, Inc.  
103 West Broad Street  
Stamford, CT 06902  
Attn: Clinical Director

*To gain further information about our internship and postdoctoral training programs for graduate and post graduate students in psychology please visit [www.appic.org](http://www.appic.org).*