

## **Organization of the Doctoral Internship Curriculum**

The doctoral internship program is designed to be completed within a full-time, 50 week year. Approximately half of the intern's time is spent in direct service provision, 15% in related support or indirect services, and the remaining 35% is committed to didactic learning including seminar attendance and individual and group supervision.

Interns participate in constructing their individualized programs within a broad general framework that provides experience with diverse diagnostic groupings, a full range of treatment interventions and modalities, and a comprehensive understanding of working with children and families within the broader context of their community. Interns gain significant exposure to evidence-based and empirically supported intervention strategies. Throughout the year, the interns' programs are monitored and modified to meet the individual needs of each intern, provide a broad range of clinical experiences, and allow for remediation of any areas of weakness.

In all programs, there are opportunities for experience and didactic training relevant to cultural variables in mental health service delivery as well as family / community organization situations. The community we serve is characterized by rich cultural and socioeconomic heterogeneity, and includes areas of economic deprivation and barrios with multiple problems including high incidence of crime and youth gang activity, physical and emotional abuse and neglect of children, domestic violence, high unemployment, problems relating to undocumented legal status, and so on. The most numerous of the groups currently served by the Center are of Hispanic or Latinx heritage.

Because of our large and continually increasing population of Latinx families, the internship program is uniquely suited to providing a variety of opportunities for training interns who are fluently bilingual in English and Spanish, including opportunities to provide individual, family and group psychotherapy with bilingual or Spanish-only clients, psychological testing with use of instruments appropriate for bilingual children and adolescents, supervision in Spanish, and so on. The Center has a strong commitment to training both staff and trainees for work with Spanish-speaking families. Issues related to culture are suffused throughout our work, but there is also focused training on increasing the bilingual therapist's skill in service delivery to clients and parents who speak primarily or only Spanish. Particular attention is paid to the problems that can emerge for families when there is an intergenerational difference in the acculturation process.

Once interns are matched with our agency, they are assigned to a Major Assignment at one of the CFGC sites in the San Fernando Valley, where they will spend the majority of their direct service and supervision time (75 to 80%) for the course of the training year. Our goal wherever possible is to match interns with major assignment sites based in expressed interests. During Orientation in the fall of the internship year, interns also select a Minor Assignment; these minor assignments are designed to meet the needs of the intern as well as the needs that exist within the agency at the beginning of the training year. The minor assignments are designed to round out the interns' training by providing additional experiences not covered in the Major Assignment activities.

Technical support includes a computer at each intern work station on site, and they are also provided with a laptop for remote (work from home) service delivery and documentation needs. These computers have been programmed with software which assists in significantly decreasing the amount of time spent in documentation of services (this involves the utilization of charting assistant software designed specifically for use within our agency). In addition, interns have access to scoring software for a variety of psychological testing instruments commonly used with children and adolescents. Interns also have access to the internet at all sites. In addition to regular ongoing contact with general support staff responsible for billing, medical records, reception, and so on, interns also have access to the Training Department Administrative Assistant for a variety of functions, including checking out testing materials,

## Major Assignments

CFGC as an agency provides services at a large number of locations in the San Fernando and Antelope Valleys of the greater Los Angeles, as well as in schools, client homes, and other community settings. Interns will be based at one of three sites in the San Fernando Valley. Overall, the role and clinical experience for all interns will be the same regardless of their major assignment site. All sites provide outpatient psychotherapy and related services. All programs provide a broad array of prevention, early intervention, and treatment services for youth with emotional and/or behavioral difficulties. We offer treatment for children, adolescents and transitional age youth age 0 to 25 years. These children and adolescents present with a variety of diagnostic issues as well as complex environmental and family stressors. We serve a significant number of Latinx families, so we often need clinicians and other service providers who can provide services equally competently in Spanish and in English.

**Due to cultural and linguistic factors, we are especially interested in matching with interns who are fluently bilingual in English and Spanish.**

Role of the intern: In all programs, interns have opportunities to provide brief and extended individual and family treatment for children and adolescents. Given the breadth of symptom presentation, interns may have opportunities to work with children with typical symptoms of anxiety, depression and disruptive behaviors, as well as potentially more severe, chronic conditions, trauma, abuse, autism spectrum, co-occurring substance use, and so on. The majority of clients will be between 6 and 18 years of age; however, interns may have cases from the 0-5 program or transitional aged youth. Interns are exposed to and trained in evidence-based practices, multisystemic and contextual treatment approaches and community and home-based services. Interns also have opportunities to provide group therapy.

Interns receive training and supervision in providing telehealth. It is impossible to predict what the status of the COVID19 pandemic will be by September of 2022; however, it is predictable that at least some of the direct intervention and some portions of psychological testing will continue to take place remotely rather than on-site and in-person. Thus, interns can expect to be working in a “hybrid” model, with some of their work taking place in the office and some at home via Zoom.

## Minor Assignments

The goal of the Minor Assignment is to provide interns with experiences that are different from their Major Assignment activities in order to round out their internship experience. While the Major Assignment is assigned when interns are matched with us, the selection of their Minor Assignment is made during orientation at the beginning of the internship year. Every year, the minor assignment options change as the changing needs of the various programs create new opportunities for interns. Listed below examples of the kind of minors that may be available in the Fall of 2022:

1. Adult Services Team – Although the majority of services our agency provides are for children and youth and their families, we have been expanding our services to adults in our community, including transitional youth up to age 25 years, and the parents of our child clients. Interns who elect this minor assignment carry two to three young adult (18-25 years old) and/or adult clients (26 years +).
2. Intake Assessment Team – Interns join other Center clinicians in conducting initial assessments of clients to determine which programs and treatment models will best meet the needs of the child and family. Interns have the opportunity to refine diagnostic

- interviewing skills, develop treatment plans, and learn about the range of services provided by CFGC.
3. Psychodiagnostic Assessment – all Interns will participate in psychodiagnostic assessment through their major assignment as described below. However, an intern wishing to obtain more psychodiagnostic experience may elect additional time focused on assessment. This opportunity may be appropriate whether the intern seeks to fill gaps in their assessment experience or seeks to expand an already strong base in assessment.

### **Psychodiagnostic Assessment**

All interns participate in providing psychological testing services for clients of the Center. Interns are typically expected to complete five to six comprehensive diagnostic assessment batteries over the course of the year. The Psychodiagnostic Assessment Seminar supplements weekly individual supervision sessions in providing interns with opportunities to expand their skills in this area. Care is taken in the assignment of testing cases to ensure that each intern's testing experience is characterized by a wide range of ages, diagnostic categories, and referral questions.

All testing currently provided by interns is with cases that are already in treatment at the Center. The typical age range for testing is 5 – 18 years, and most are 8 – 16 years of age. Referrals come from a wide range of programs but many referrals will be from the interns' Major Assignment site. Referrals are generated by therapists who require assistance with differential diagnosis and so the assessments cut across diagnostic categories using multiple assessment techniques to assist with case formulation and recommendations for treatment. Results may also be used to advocate for services outside of CFGC, particularly in the schools.

### **Evidence Based Practices**

In cooperation with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, the Center implements a number of EBPs under the county's Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Program. These EBP offerings include Child Parent Psychotherapy, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), Seeking Safety, Positive Parenting Program (Triple P), Aggression Replacement Training, and Managing and Adapting Practice (MAP). Treatment with these EBPs currently comprises about half of the services provided by the Center.

All interns will participate in the Managing and Adapting Practice (MAP) program. For a more complete description, see the section about MAP under Didactic Component below. Training in Seeking Safety is also likely to be available. Interns may also be trained in other EBPs depending on the needs of their Major Assignment program and on the availability of training slots in the departments in which they Major Assignment takes place.

While some of the EBPs are limited to specific sites within the Center, most have been implemented across all sites, including all of the sites in which interns will work. Our contract with the County Department of Mental Health requires that all clinicians implementing these EBPs be trained by developer-approved trainers. Because of this, interns may have limited access to formal training in some of the EBPs during their internship year. The Center currently has certified trainers in some of the EBPs, including MAP, Seeking Safety, and Aggression Replacement Training.

## DIDACTIC COMPONENT

*This component has two clusters of programming which are operationalized as follows:*

1. Major learning is accomplished through individual and small group supervision which is designed for intensive, individualized instruction in the assessment or intervention strategies for given clients and their families.
2. Attendance at the following seminars is designed to enable interns to develop a knowledge base required of those who pursue the profession of child mental health in community-based treatment networks:
  - a. Clinical Issues Seminar  
This seminar, which meets for 1 ½ hours each week throughout the course of the training year, is designed to cover topics related to child psychotherapy, child development, and cultural competence. Using both lecture and group discussion, a variety of areas are addressed. Certain topics are covered each year (e.g., attachment, the developmental impact of child maltreatment, resilience, and cultural competence). However, intern interests drive this course, and each year these interests change, depending on the intern group. Interns are invited and encouraged to discuss their research on issues relative to their individual domains of expertise. They are also encouraged to introduce topics for discussion.
  - b. Psychodiagnostic Assessment Seminar  
The assessment seminar offers interns graduate level instruction and practice in administering a broad range of tests and other procedures for gathering data; organizing the resulting observations and data into relevant, useful inferences or impressions; and writing concise client-focused reports. Prior basic experience with and understanding of the methods, principles and theories underlying psychodiagnostic assessment is expected. Emphasis is placed on acquisition of practical skills permitting interns to function as increasingly independent consultants to colleagues and parents. Course content balances the pragmatics of mastering test selection, administration, and interpretation of assessment batteries for a range of childhood problems with exploration of the assumptions and limits (i.e., implicit personality theories, related philosophical beliefs, and empirical constraints) challenging current practice. Seminar topics focus on the construction of dynamic formulations and common differential diagnoses. Given the high proportion of Latinx clients, issues relevant to assessment of Latinx children are addressed throughout the seminar and more explicitly through topics such as assessing monolingual/bilingual children and acculturation. This seminar begins with a 2-3 day workshop in September, followed by a weekly 2-hour meeting.
  - c. Professional Development Seminar  
This seminar, which meets three to four times each month beginning in October, has two basic purposes. One is to provide a forum for addressing issues related to the APA ethics code and the internship program's expectations regarding development of professional identity. The other purpose is addressing issues related to life after internship. Typical topics covered include making decisions about the post-doc year (e.g., choosing between academic or clinical positions, deciding between entry-level jobs or formal post-doc training, etc.). Included in this seminar is a multi-week module on preparation for providing clinical supervision. While the focus of this seminar is on important post-doc decisions,

time is also made available for research presentations or discussions of other issues of interest to the interns.

d. Managing and Adapting Practice (MAP) Group Supervision Seminar

Rather than a single-protocol EBP, MAP is a program designed to improve the quality, efficiency, and outcomes of children's mental health services by giving practitioners easy access to the most current scientific information and by providing user-friendly monitoring tools and clinical protocols. Using an on-line database, the system can suggest formal evidence-based programs or, alternatively, can provide detailed recommendations about discrete components of evidence-based treatments relevant to a specific youth's characteristics. MAP as practiced at the Center focuses on four common symptom areas with children and adolescents: anxiety, depression, disruptive behaviors and trauma. This seminar begins with a 5-day intensive training in the Fall. Interns then participate in weekly group supervision for their MAP cases for one hour for the duration of the internship year. The seminar meets the developer requirements for participant certification as a MAP Therapist.

e. Continuing Education Experiences

There are continuing educational experiences for senior staff which are available to interns as well. Regularly scheduled interdisciplinary inservices provide an opportunity for staff and interns to hear presentations and discuss various topics, including perspectives on treatment, ethical and legal issues, child and adolescent psychopharmacology, and new developments in treatment approaches and mental health service delivery. The Center is an approved provider of continuing education as mandated by law for licensed psychologists, LCSWs and MFTs. In this capacity, the Center also offers periodic seminars and workshops which are available to other mental health professionals in the community.