Clinical internship 2017-2018 for students enrolled in the MA program

The Leonard Krasner Psychological Center (KPC) offers a 12-month clinical internship to qualified students enrolled in M.A. program in psychology at Stony Brook University (SBU). The goal of the internship is to provide the intern with training and practicum experience in several areas of clinical psychology, program administration, and key leadership experiences related to learning how an evidence-based outpatient mental health facility operates.

What is the KPC?

The KPC is an outpatient mental health facility affiliated with the doctoral program in clinical psychology at Stony Brook University (SBU). Dr. Dina Vivian is the KPC Director as well as the MA Internship Coordinator. Advanced trainees in the clinical psychology program, including externs, pre-doctoral interns, and post-doctoral fellows provide high quality psychological services under the close supervision of Dr. Vivian and faculty members, all of whom are clinical psychologists.

At the KPC, clinical training bridges research and treatment. We keep informed about the most recent developments in psychological research, and only provide treatments that have been proven to be effective through multiple scientific studies. The treatments that we provide align themselves with cognitive-behavioral approaches, and the clinical practicum at the KPC is based on the Evidence Based Practice in Psychology model (EBPP), encompassing the notion that best practice is based on the integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of key patient characteristics (including culture and preferences).

The patients seeking psychological services are self-referred or referred by other providers, including other campus facilities –such as the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and various departments of the SBU Hospital. The range of clinical problems treated at the KPC are typical of outpatient mental health facilities, and include anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, adjustment disorders, stress related problems, couple issues, disordered eating, phase of life difficulties, learning difficulties, ADHD, obesity, childhood externalizing and internalizing problems, family issues, and/or combinations of all these problems. For additional information, please go to our website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/krasnercenter/.
What time commitment does the internship encompass?

Currently in its fifth year, the KPC internship involves approximately 10-12 hours of effort weekly, and, due to the substantial amount of training in the initial 2-3 months, the KPC internship starts as soon as the MA program starts (i.e., end of May/first week in June). Additionally, due to the fact that the KPC operates year round (except for national holidays), the KPC internship continues for 12 months (including winter intersession and spring break) to the end of the MA program. The interns, however, are only required to register for 3 credits in the Fall Semester and 3 credits in the Spring semester (PSY 695, section 23).

What types of experiences does the KPC internship provide?

As listed below, the internship includes a wide variety of training and practicum experiences in clinical, management, and program evaluation issues applied to the management of a university-based mental health facility. Each of these experiences is described next in detail.

(a) General and specific readings. Early in the internship and in preparation for discharging various patient-based, program evaluation, and/or research activities, we expect the intern to become acquainted with basic readings in clinical psychology, including as follows: 1) psychopathology and abnormal psychology (e.g., depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, childhood disorders, personality disorders); 2) risk assessment (i.e., intimate partner violence, suicidality, and child abuse); 3) ethics (e.g., confidentiality); and 4) basics of clinical interviewing. We may also include literature concerning bio-psycho-social factors related to obesity and psychological/medical issues in patients seeking bariatric surgery.

(b) Training in phone screening/triage. As one of the primary internship practicum experiences involves conducting phone screens and initial psychological evaluations/triage with clients calling the KPC, the intern receives extensive training, including shadowing the Assistant to the Director, Ms. Jenna Adamowicz, who manages the front desk at the KPC, weekly class work, and direct face-to-face training and supervision from key personnel at the KPC, including Dr. Vivian, Ms. Adamowicz, the Student Assistant Director, and advanced trainees in the doctoral program.

(c) Formal course work. In addition to the general readings and training, we expect the KPC intern to be enrolled in a clinical course designed for students in the MA program, PSY 610 (Surveys of Clinical Psychology), which is team-taught by the faculty in the clinical program. PSY 610 is a 3-credit course and is typically offered in the Fall semester.

(d) Front Desk coverage. The competencies necessary for manning the front desk at the KPC are extensive, including good communication and social skills, clinical sensitivity, demonstrated knowledge of the psychopathology literature, risk assessment and crisis management skills, and good writing skills. The interns who, as a result of the training, will demonstrate competence in these areas will be able to participate in front desk activities; for example, they may spend part of their time answering the phone, giving information about the KPC to interested callers, receiving clients who come in for therapy, conducting phone screens with prospective clients, writing-up initial phone screen reports, identifying appropriate referrals
for clients who are not appropriate for our clinic, and interfacing with other providers, as well as with all the other KPC personnel.

When an intern is deemed ready for conducting phone screens/triage independently (usually after two months of training and supervision), s/he will cover the KPC front desk for periods of time (e.g., two 4-5 hour shifts at different days) and will interface directly with clients who call the KPC or come to the KPC to receive services. This type of experience provides the intern with a rich and broad knowledge base about the range of psychological problems motivating people to seek psychological services/treatment in outpatient facilities.

The interns will also be in charge of collecting treatment fees and do billing work with a software program called Titanium Schedule, an experience that enables them to acquire very useful skills in practice management that can be applied to future work in a similar settings or private practice. Other types of practice related administrative and public relations tasks (e.g., letters to clients, communicating with CAPS on campus, communicating with other providers in the community) enable the interns to acquire management and administration skills in mental health.

The interns’ schedule at the KPC front desk is designed to be integrated with and accommodate their classwork schedule in the MA program.

(e) Behavioral medicine/Obesity program. If the interns choose to participate in additional practicum experiences in addition to their general internship at the KPC, and contingent on their level of competence in psychological assessment skills, they will have the opportunity to work with Dr. Genna Hymowitz, the Director of the Behavioral Medicine/Obesity program at the KPC. This program is a cross-departmental joint initiative between the KPC and the Dept. of Surgery, School of Medicine, and it includes learning to conduct psychological evaluations with patients seeking bariatric surgery, data management, research, clinical report writing and sitting-in in group therapy. The intern’s participation in submitting IRB applications for research may also be part of this involvement.

(f) Participation in outcome data collection with KPC patients. Before treatment begins, we collect information from our patients concerning a number of relevant individual factors and demographics via an electronically-based Personal Data Questionnaire (PDQ). Changes in therapy are also evaluated on a bi-weekly basis from the first session and throughout therapy using an on-line assessment questionnaire called Treatment Outcome Package (TOP); the interns will assist Ms. Jenna Adamowicz in monitoring procedures to ensure that the therapists will reliably administer pre-post evaluations, and TOP bi-weekly ratings.

(g) Participating in setting up and maintaining an outcome database, and conducting research at the KPC. Depending on the interns’ interest and data management skills, they may assist Dr. Vivian and the Student Assistant Director in setting up a data base at the KPC (e.g., review charts, input data) to conduct program evaluation and research. Furthermore, they may also conduct some pilot studies on the utilization of therapy, effectiveness of therapy, factors associated with premature termination. If an intern becomes involved in these types of internship activities, s/he may also participate in submitting IRB applications for research.
(h) **Psychoeducational Testing program.** Interns who exhibit advanced clinical skills and competence may also be trained to administer IQ assessments (e.g. WAIS-IV) under the supervision of Dr. Vivian and other advanced clinical trainees.

(i) **Referrals, PR, and client recruitment.** This aspect of the internship includes updating, researching, and maintain a current list of referrals for facilities, specialized psychological programs, and providers (e.g. pediatricians) in the area. Relatedly, interns are expected to communicate with various referring entities (e.g., CAPS, Outpatient Child Psychiatry, local school districts) to let them know about services we provide at the KPC (e.g. a new group for ADHD, a new pilot program for pediatric populations).

(j) **Preparing treatment materials for specialized group intervention programs.** From time to time, we develop specialized time-limited group interventions based on adaptations of existing evidence-based treatments (e.g., treatment of ADHD with young adults, “healthy kids program,” etc.). We often pilot these programs at the KPC, typically in a group format and for a limited number of sessions. Interested and competent interns can assist the KPC personnel in creating and evaluating the effectiveness of these programs (e.g., by conducting reviews of the literature, creating session-by-session hand-outs, designing flyers and brochures, and/or assisting the trainee in collecting outcome data).

(k) **Therapist extenders.** Occasionally, the intern may be asked to assist a therapist in implementing treatment procedures (e.g., role-plays, communication skills training, exposures for social anxiety). These activities are carried out under the direct supervision of a graduate student therapist as well as Dr. Vivian’s umbrella supervision,

**What kind of supervision will the interns receive overall?**

The interns are directly and continuously supervised by Dr. Vivian as well as other key personnel involved in the MA Internship program (namely, Ms. Adamowicz, and the Student Assistant Director).

**A final requirement: A brief paper concerning the KPC internship**

We require the interns to monitor and keep track of their participation in the various internship experiences at the KPC throughout the year. A brief written paper is due at the end of the internship (about 1-2 pages single spaced) describing the projects and activities that each intern was involved in and the impact of these experiences on his/her professional development and training.

**General Information**

Although we provide a wide range of involvements and possible experiences in the course of the KPC internship, we certainly do not expect an intern to be involved with all the projects included above; rather, in keeping with our work with present and past interns, we will create a flexible
and individualized internship program based on integrating the intern’s interests and qualifications/experiences, while addressing the needs of the KPC.

However, all interns are expected to start their internship by becoming initially involved with the first two training requirements on the list, namely (a) General and specific readings, and (b) training in phone screening/triage; additionally they are expected to take the PSY 610 course and be involved in front desk coverage. As stated above, additional involvements will be discussed directly with the intern and tailored to his/her needs, skills, and interests.

**How to apply for the KPC internship**

Interested students should contact Dr. Vivian directly (see information below) by sending her a short cover letter expressing interest in the internship, what they would like to get out of this experience, and reasons why they believe they would be a good fit for the internship. Additionally, the letter should include written permission for Dr. Vivian to access the applicant’s academic file in the psychology graduate office. Dr. Vivian will call back all applicants who seem to be a good fit for the internship and will set up face-to-face interviews with them.

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Appendix: Where are they now?

Career updates from current and past interns regarding their internship at the KPC

'16-'17 Interns:

Jessica Cannone, B.A. is a Research Coordinator at SBU (working with Daniel Klein)
Shannon Fitzgerald, M.A. is a Research Analyst at SBU (working with Fred Friedberg)
Nicole Hoehn, M.A., is applying to clinical psychology doctoral programs this Fall
Stephanie Lawrence, M.A., is applying to social work programs this Fall

'15-'16 Interns:

Nicole Barle, M.A. is a first-year Ph.D. student at SBU
Rachel Bloom, M.A. is in the accelerated BSN program at the University of Buffalo
Anthony Burns, M.A. is a Research Coordinator at the AARTS center in Chicago, IL
Christopher Kleva, M.A. is a Research Coordinator at SBU (working with Roman Kotov)
Suzanne Vacarro, M.A. is a first-year PhD student at the University of New Mexico

'14-'15 Interns:

Lorraine Rosenzweig, M.A. is a third year Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine student in Pennsylvania
Jaimee Saponieri, M.A. recently graduated from the MSW program at SBU

'13-'14 Interns:

Tony Petruzzella, M.A. is a third year doctoral student at the University of Georgia- Athens
Jamiesyn Aliano, M.A. is a first year Law Student at NYU
Appendix:
Feedback from current and past interns regarding their internship at the KPC

-The absolute highlight of the internship for me was participating in the clinic’s weekly Didactics seminars. Through these seminars, in an intimate and personal setting, I was exposed to experts in their fields, as they presented topics such as working with transgender clients, dealing with issues of SES in therapy, understanding ADHD, treating adults with autism, and using mindfulness in therapy, just to name a few.

-A highlight of the program was the phone screens, in which I obtained demographic information and a psychological history from the interested, potential client. It gave me clinical insight into what it would be like to see clients in a therapy session.

- This internship has helped me develop a clinical voice, and has provided me with a deeper understanding of mental illness and their clinical presentations.

-Personally, the aspect of the internship that I enjoyed the most was interacting with the PhD students. Through speaking with them I was able to learn more about the therapeutic process and what it takes to be successful in a PhD program.

-This internship allows you to gain a much deeper understanding of various psychopathologies as well as an inside look into how a psychological training clinic operates. It is also a good way to gain professional skills for future employment. I found my time at the Krasner Psychological Center to be a rewarding aspect of the MA program.

-The Krasner Psychological Center internship is a great way to develop skills in communication, managing patient medical records, and professionalism in the work force. You gain experience as an office manager and lend a hand in therapeutic methods and counseling services.

-As an intern, I have been a part of a number of therapy sessions in which I was able to do one-on-one sessions with clients in need of social skills training or who struggled with social anxiety under the guidance of a therapist. This allowed an opportunity to further develop skills such as: establishing rapport with a client, carrying out an exposure, and creating and enacting scenarios with a client.

-Prior to completing my MA program, I secured multiple offers for clinical research positions at a variety of institutions and organizations. I firmly believe my clinical training through the KPC was fundamental in making me a competitive applicant for these types of positions.

-Screening prospective clients over the phone was, for me, the most interesting and informative aspect of working at the clinic. It involves an extensive training process, which equips you with the appropriate clinical knowledge and interviewing skills to ask relevant questions about psychological issues. Reading a textbook or an empirical article about a psychological disorder is one thing, but actually speaking to numerous real patients and patients’ parents gives you an entirely new perspective on psychological disorders. During the training process, you also learn how to conduct various risk assessments, including suicide and interpersonal violence. The knowledge and clinical interviewing skills you learn at the beginning of the internship only grow throughout the year as you gain more and more hands-on experience.