

Training Future Health Service Psychologists in Behavioral Health Practices for Children, Adolescents, & Families

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Clinical Health Psychology Emphasis

Mission

The Clinical Health Psychology (CHP) emphasis area within the APA-accredited Clinical PhD/Clinical PsyD programs at the California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University, Los Angeles uses a biopsychosocial approach to educate students. The purposes of this approach are 1) to train students in best practices for the assessment and treatment of individuals across the lifespan and 2) to prepare students for a career in health service psychology.

Goals

Students acquire comprehensive knowledge of:

- Prevailing theories/models of health promotion, disease prevention, and behavioral change
- Pathophysiology of disease, mind-body dualism, and behavioral health interventions designed to modify behavioral risk factors; increase stress management, coping, and resilience; and improve disease management and quality of life
- Various roles and responsibilities of clinical health psychologists working across diverse integrated healthcare settings (Rozensky, 2012)

Objectives

Students demonstrate skills in biopsychosocial assessment, case conceptualization, treatment planning, and clinical interventions informed by:

- Knowledge of bio-medical concerns
- Consideration of cultural and community-based risk factors and strengths
- Integration of evidence-based behavioral health interventions that mediate disease progression and quality of life (Rozensky, 2012)

Methods

Mentorship & Training

- Individual and personalized advisement relating to acquisition of CHP skills
- Facilitation of practicum and internship placements in interdisciplinary healthcare settings that treat children and families (Larkin, Bridges, Fields, & Vogel, 2015)
- Discussion of career opportunities in health service psychology with an emphasis in behavioral health treatment for children, adolescents, and families
- Organization of panels/forums designed to foster awareness of the connections between academic, clinical, and research contexts of behavioral health practices

Scholarship

- Sponsorship of student-faculty co-authored presentations at local/state/regional/national conferences
- Support of student-led initiatives, including brown-bag presentations based on current clinical and/or research activities

Professional Development

- Socialization of students with common interests through on-/off-campus events (e.g., speaking engagements on current issues/advances in the field; film screenings; neuropsychology/health assessment conference series) to promote networking and professional development opportunities with faculty members, other leaders in behavioral health field
- Encouragement of membership in and involvement with professional organizations (e.g., APA Div. 38: Health Psychology; APA Div. 54: Pediatric Psychology; Society for Behavioral Medicine)

Table 1. Courses Incorporating Education and Training in Child Behavioral Health

Course title	Program	Required or Elective
Psychology of Health & Illness	PhD/PsyD	Required class (CHP-specific)
Clinical Interviewing	PhD/PsyD	Required class (CHP content)
Advanced Psychopathology	PhD/PsyD	Required class (CHP content)
Psychodiagnostic Assessment	PhD/PsyD	Required class (CHP content)
Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions	PhD	Required class (CHP content)
Psychodynamic OR Systems Interventions	PhD	Required sequence; theoretical option (CHP content)
Child/Adolescent OR Family Interventions	PsyD	Required sequence; population option (CHP content)
Human Development	PhD/PsyD	Required class (CHP content)
Pediatric Psychology	PhD/PsyD	Elective (CHP-specific)
Neuropsychological Assessment	PhD/PsyD	Elective (CHP-specific)
Health Interventions Across the Lifespan	PhD/PsyD	Elective (CHP-specific)
Loss, Grief, & Bereavement	PhD/PsyD	Elective (CHP-specific)

Clinical Training: Practicum Placements in Child & Family Behavioral Health

Three years required for PhD & PsyD students.

Integrated/Behavioral Healthcare Practicum Sites

- Pediatric Minds (UCLA)
- BHC Alhambra
- Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
- Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) - Center for Cancer & Blood Diseases; Orthopaedics
- Children’s Hospital Orange County (CHOC)
- Harbor-UCLA – Behavioral Med.; Dual Diagnosis
- Jonathan Jacques Children’s Cancer Center
- Coastline Community College – TBI Program
- Ventura County Behavioral Health
- West Los Angeles VA Medical Center
- UCLA-Semel – Childhood OCD, Anxiety & Tic; Medical Psych. Assessment Center-Pediatrics
- Ronald McDonald House

Future Directions

- Enhance career advising considerations related to multiculturalism and trauma
- Recruit expert child and family behavioral health guest-speakers for lectures, webinars
- Incorporate child and family behavioral health training into every emphasis area class (Palermo et al., 2013)
- Increase faculty participation/collaboration across required courses to ensure a lifespan approach to education and training is used (Palermo et al., 2013)
- Mentor additional dissertations on child health topics
- Target CHP students early for mentoring in child health

References

Larkin, K. T., Bridges, A. J., Fields, S. A., & Vogel, M. E. (2015). Acquiring competencies in integrated behavioral health care in doctoral, internship, and postdoctoral programs. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology, 10*(1), 14-23. doi:10.1037/tep0000099

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Rozensky, R. (2012). Health care reform: Preparing the psychology workforce. *Journal of Clinical Psychology in Medical Settings, 19*(1), 5-11. doi:10.1007/s10880-011-9287-7