

**Psychology Practicum Training**  
**Cambridge Health Alliance/Harvard Medical School**  
**2026-2027**

Carolyn Conklin, Ph.D., Director of Psychology Practicum Training

David Klemanski, Psy.D., M.P.H., Chief of Psychology

**Adolescent Inpatient Service**

Sharmila Mehta, Ph.D., Clinical Director of Child and Adolescent Inpatient Services

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The Cambridge Health Alliance offers advanced practicum training at the pre-internship level. In order to help you get to know this particular practicum better, we provide this overview of what we anticipate offering for the 2026-2027 training year. Some of these program components may be subject to change.

**Eligibility**

Doctoral students in APA-approved clinical or counseling psychology graduate programs who are in at least their second year of graduate school may apply for a practicum to be completed in at least their third year of graduate training. Facility with verbal and written expression, as well as an excellent academic record, is essential. At least one year of prior clinical work in both therapy and assessment, commitment to work in the public sector, and experience with persons with severe and persistent mental illness are strongly recommended. People from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

**Clinical Program Description**

The Psychology Practicum offered by CHA's Adolescent Inpatient Service provides experience in assessment of and psychotherapeutic intervention with acutely distressed adolescents, ages 13-to-17, in an inpatient setting. Diagnoses of patients on the units include affective, anxiety, psychotic, trauma-related, autism spectrum, attachment disorders, and psychotic disorders, as well as intellectual and learning disabilities. The training experience occurs in the context of multidisciplinary care involving psychiatry, psychology, social work, nursing, occupational therapy, and other forms of intervention. Clinical interventions are patient-centered, culturally-responsive, and trauma-informed. They include individual, group, and milieu treatment integrating behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, and dynamic approaches. Trainees also develop skills in the negotiation of complex social systems (e.g., schools, social service agencies) that interface in the lives of youth. Individual and group supervision, multidisciplinary huddles and team meetings, inpatient psychology meetings, and case conferences enhance understanding of the assessment, formulation, diagnosis, and stabilization process with these acutely distressed patients.

## **Clinical Sites**

The CHA child and adolescent inpatient services are located at Somerville Hospital. There, two locked units service adolescent patients. The 2 North (2N) unit has 21 beds and the 5 West (5W) unit has 12 beds. The mission of these inpatient services is to deliver child- and family-centered care to patients in acute crisis. The typical length of admission for either unit is approximately 8-10 days.

If a trainee is interested, there may possibly be opportunities to extend training into the two Child Inpatient Units for patients aged 3 to 12, and/or the Neurodevelopmental Unit for children and adolescents with intellectual/developmental disabilities (e.g., autism).

## **Training Activities**

Practicum trainees will complete rotations on both adolescent units, serving as a psychological consultant to treatment teams, providing brief individual therapeutic intervention, group therapy, and psychological and/or safety assessments. Trainees will provide these services under the direction provided by the treatment team leaders (psychiatrist, social worker, and nursing leadership), and with clinical supervision provided by the unit psychologist. Depending upon a trainee's foundational level of testing experience, they will complete one-to-two testing cases over the course of the training year (either combined cognitive and personality batteries, or psychological batteries with threat assessment). During the two-to-three weeks needed to complete a testing assignment, trainees will not have individual psychotherapy patients assigned. The trainees will also co-lead at least two therapy groups per week. The first, a process group called Issues Group, is led by team psychologists and supports the adolescent patients in expressing their emotions and needs, offering one another validation and support, and engaging in collaborative problem solving. Trainees may choose a second therapy group from the various skills-focused groups (e.g., DBT) led by team social workers.

## **Yearly Schedule**

This practicum runs from September 1 through June 30. Practicum Trainees receive three (24-hour) weeks of vacation plus hospital holidays. Trainees may not take vacation time in the first and last month of their training year.

## **Weekly Schedule**

To help you anticipate what your weekly activities will be like, we provide this estimation of your 24 hour weekly arrangement.

- 2.0 hours Clinical Rounds (on a day trainee is scheduled to be at CHA)
- 1.0 hour Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy Seminar
- 1.0 hour Professional Development Seminar
- 1.0 hour Child and Adolescent Testing Seminar
- 2.0 hours individual supervision (more when doing testing)
- 1.0 hour group supervision or Psychology Team Meeting (alternating weekly)

- 2.0 hours group therapy (additional opportunities **optional**)
- 6.0 hours individual therapy (alternately, when working on a testing assignment, 6.00 hours test scoring, interpretation, and report writing; trainees will not conduct individual treatments when working on a testing case)
- 1.0 hours family assessment and intervention
- 3.0 hours collateral contact and team collaboration
- 4.0 hours documentation and other administrative tasks

The current schedule, which is subject to change, is as follows. Trainees are asked to be on site for parts of four days per week (for a total of 24 hours per week) in order to enhance continuity of care and training experience. However, when not possible due to academic and other constraints, three full days is acceptable. It is recommended that three full days be spread across the week such that there are no four-day gaps in care and training. A finalized schedule will take into account the needs of the unit as well as the responsibilities of the trainee outside of CHA. Attendance on Wednesday and Fridays is required in order to participate in didactic seminars and group supervision.

\*Team Huddles and Rounds Meetings: Practicum trainees will attend *one* huddle and *one* rounds meeting each week, depending on which day works best for their schedule, and only for the unit on which they are training at the time. (Practicum trainees will rotate through both units over the course of the year, switching their unit assignment mid-year.)

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>2N Team Huddle*</b> 8:40-8:50	<b>2N Team Huddle*</b> 8:40-8:50	<b>2N Team Huddle*</b> 8:40-8:50	<b>2N Team Huddle*</b> 8:40-8:50	<b>2N Team Huddle*</b> 8:40-8:50
<b>5W Team Huddle*</b> 8:50-9:00	<b>5W Team Huddle*</b> 8:50-9:00	<b>5W Team Huddle*</b> 8:50-9:00	<b>5W Team Huddle*</b> 8:50-9:00	<b>5W Team Huddle*</b> 8:50-9:00
<b>2N Team Rounds*</b> 9:30-11:00	<b>2N Team Rounds*</b> 9:30-11:00	<b>Professional Development Seminar</b> 9:00-9:50 (Attend virtually)	<b>2N Milieu Rounds*</b> 9:30-10:00	<b>2N Team Rounds*</b> 9:30-10:00
<b>5W Team Rounds*</b> 9:30-11:00		<b>Testing Seminar</b> 10:00-10:50 (Attend virtually)		<b>5W Team Rounds*</b> 10:00-11:00
		<b>Child &amp; Adolescent Psychotherapy Seminar</b> 11:00-11:50 (Attend virtually)		<b>Group Therapy Supervision/ Psychology Team Meeting</b> 12:00-1:00 (alternating weekly)

## **Seminars**

**Advanced Psychological and Neuropsychological Testing Seminar:** This seminar, offered through the Neuropsychological and Psychological Assessment Service (NAPA), provides didactic instruction and case-based learning in key areas of assessment practice. Topics include diagnostic interviewing and case formulation; cognitive and neuropsychological screening; personality assessment and interpretation of multi-scale instruments; ADHD and learning-related assessment in adults and older adolescents; and culturally responsive, trauma-informed approaches to assessment. Additional seminar content focuses on risk assessment and the interfaces between psychological assessment and broader systems of care, as well as feedback delivery, collaborative report writing, and the use of assessment findings to guide treatment planning and level of care decisions.

**Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy Seminar:** This seminar examines the fundamental concepts in psychotherapy with children and adolescents. Children in psychotherapy live and develop within various contexts (home, school, peer groups, neighborhoods, community and religious institutions etc.). As such, emphases are placed on exploring the individual as well as familial, systemic, and cultural aspects of case formulation and treatment with youth. Lectures, critical discussion of reading assignments, and presentation of case material (by instructors and trainees) will provide the mechanisms for trainees to learn pragmatic and culturally-relevant psychotherapeutic approaches to working with children and adolescents, and their families. Seminar modules cover play therapy, working with parents and parent/child dyads, exploring sexual and gender identity in childhood and adolescence, acute care in child/adolescent psychiatry, assessing and managing risk, working with neurodiverse children/adolescence, sociocultural and identity dynamics, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), substance abuse treatment, and ending therapy.

**Psychology Practicum Professional Development Seminar:** Trainees from all psychology practicum programs attend this seminar, instructed by the Director of Psychology Practicum Training, Dr. Carolyn Conklin. The seminar addresses professional clinical issues relevant to all practicum-level trainees, such as making use of supervision, vicarious trauma and clinician self-care, organizational dynamics, case formulation and presentation, and preparing for internship. The seminar also provides space for trainees to share clinical and professional challenges, and enjoy supporting and learning from one another.

## **Additional Options**

The Cambridge Health Alliance Department of Psychiatry also has an extensive offering of elective seminars and conferences which are available to the trainee, with topics such as the treatment of severely disturbed persons from various theoretical orientations, behavioral medicine, trauma, couples and family therapy, treatment of narcissism, cross-cultural issues, and psychopharmacology.

The Psychiatry Department's weekly academic Grand Rounds draws speakers on current clinical, theoretical, and research issues.

Continuing Education courses are offered throughout the year sponsored by the Department of Psychiatry alone, or jointly with the Harvard Medical School. These optional courses include nationally recognized speakers on topics such as Psychotherapy, Substance Abuse, Suicide, Women's and Men's Issues, Spirituality, Couples and Family Treatment, and Psychopharmacology. Practicum trainees may attend these conferences at a scholarship rate as trainees of Harvard Medical School and Cambridge Health Alliance.

### **Supervision and Precepting**

Practicum trainees receive an average of *2.5 hours of face-to-face clinical supervision* per week provided by inpatient psychologists (two hours of individual supervision weekly, and one hour of therapy group supervision on alternate weeks).

*Primary individual supervision* is provided by Dr. Sharmila Mehta, the Clinical Director of Child and Adolescent Inpatient Services and the Director of Child and Adolescent Inpatient Psychology Training. A *second hour of weekly supervision* is provided by a staff psychologist on the adolescent units.

Dr. Mehta, along with other unit psychologists, provide *therapy group supervision* for one hour on alternate weeks. This is attended by psychology and psychiatry trainees who co-lead inpatient child and adolescent therapy groups.

On alternate weeks, Dr. Mehta conducts a weekly *Inpatient Psychology Team Meeting* with all child and adolescent inpatient service trainees to provide system-focused supervision related to the role of psychology on the inpatient service, and to coordinate psychological care for patients served by the psychology team.

*Additional direction* is provided by the team's attending psychiatrist. Team social workers and case managers provide guidance with regard to systems-oriented matters. The Medical Director of Child and Adolescent Acute Services is also available for consultation.

### **Location**

The Adolescent Unit are located on the second and fifth floors of Somerville Hospital, located at 33 Tower Street, Somerville, MA 02143. Some didactics take place on the Cambridge Hospital campus at 1493 Cambridge Street, Cambridge MA 02139. The psychology team has a beautiful training space at Somerville Hospital from which trainees may join any seminars conducted remotely.