

Psychology Practicum Training
Cambridge Health Alliance/Harvard Medical School
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Carolyn Conklin, Ph.D., Director of Psychology Practicum Training

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

Psychological Assessment Practicum Training

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. Students in school psychology programs are not eligible. Strong verbal and written communication skills, along with an excellent academic record, are required. Applicants should have some prior experience with psychological assessment, including administering and interpreting basic measures such as cognitive ability tests and common personality assessments. It is highly preferred that applicants have completed at least one or two full cognitive batteries and one or two comprehensive assessments that include integrated written reports. **Applicants must submit a sample de-identified assessment report with their application letter.

In alignment with Cambridge Health Alliance's mission, we seek trainees committed to public-sector work, safety-net health care, and health equity. Experience and interest in working with serious mental illness, trauma, neurodiversity, and culturally diverse populations are highly valued. We strongly encourage individuals from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and social backgrounds to apply.

Clinical Program Description

The Psychological Assessment Practicum offered by CHA's Neuropsychological and Psychological Assessment Service (NAPA) provides advanced training in outpatient psychological assessment with adults and older adolescents.

Trainees will gain experience conducting psychodiagnostic, cognitive, and personality assessments, as well as evaluations focused on executive functioning, pre-treatment evaluation, and clarification of neurodevelopmental and personality disorders. Referral questions range from complex diagnostic clarification in the context of serious mental illness and comorbid conditions

to more circumscribed questions regarding attentional problems, mood and anxiety disorders, and differential diagnosis.

All assessment work is person-centered, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed. A Therapeutic Assessment framework guides much of the process, with particular emphasis on collaborative testing, meaningful feedback, and the use of assessment results to enhance treatment engagement and recovery. Trainees learn to formulate cases that integrate test data, clinical interviews, collateral information, and sociocultural context in order to inform diagnosis, treatment planning, and systems consultation.

Trainees may consult with multidisciplinary teams involved in the patient's care and will routinely provide feedback to patients, family members when appropriate, and referring clinicians. Collaboration may include psychiatry, psychology, social work, nursing, primary care, and other outpatient services within CHA.

Clinical Sites

The practicum is based at the Cambridge Hospital campus of Cambridge Health Alliance, located at Cambridge Health Alliance, 1493 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139.

Trainees are members of the Neuropsychological and Psychological Assessment Service (NAPA), providing outpatient assessment services for adults and older adolescents within CHA. The majority of evaluations are conducted during a single visit, followed by a feedback session. Occasionally, trainees may undertake multi-session assessments, involving two or three visits, along with feedback. Optional activities include shadowing, conducting neuropsychological evaluations, observing or engaging in urgent or emergency assessments based on training level, and participating in relevant case conferences.

Training Activities

Practicum trainees in the Adult and Older Adolescent Psychological Assessment placement engage in the entire outpatient assessment process, from initial referral through feedback and documentation. Under close supervision, trainees review referral questions and available records, conduct diagnostic and semi-structured clinical interviews, and choose assessment tools that are suitable for the questions asked and aligned with the patient's cultural, linguistic, and educational background. They are responsible for administering, scoring, and interpreting standardized measures, and integrating test data with clinical observations, collateral information, and relevant history to develop cohesive, person-centered case formulations.

Throughout the training year, trainees complete a series of comprehensive assessment batteries and shorter focused evaluations, with the expectation that the complexity and independence of their work will increase as they gain experience. All assessments result in written documentation tailored to the referral question, including clear diagnostic impressions and treatment-informed recommendations. Trainees provide feedback directly to patients and, when appropriate, to family members, emphasizing therapeutic assessment principles, collaborative meaning-making,

and stigma reduction. They also communicate findings to referring clinicians and other members of multidisciplinary teams and may be asked to offer recommendations to outpatient programs and primary care providers involved in the patient's ongoing care.

Training activities place strong emphasis on working with a broad range of referral questions, including complex diagnostic clarification in the context of serious mental illness, trauma, and comorbid conditions, as well as more circumscribed evaluations on executive functioning difficulties, mood and anxiety disorders, and neurodevelopmental conditions in older adolescents and adults. Trainees are encouraged to think systemically about how their assessment findings inform level-of-care determinations, treatment planning, and coordination with community resources. As appropriate to developmental level and interest, trainees may also have optional opportunities to shadow neuropsychological evaluations, observe or participate in urgent or emergency-based assessments, and attend relevant case conferences within the Neuropsychological and Psychological Assessment Service and the broader Department of Psychiatry.

Throughout the year, there is a consistent emphasis on culturally responsive assessment and on the thoughtful selection and interpretation of measures that are sensitive to culture, language, educational background, and social determinants of health.

Training in projective assessment is not part of this practicum.

Yearly Schedule

This practicum typically runs from **either July 1 or September 1 through June 30**. Specific start dates are determined by the service's needs and the trainee's academic program. Practicum trainees receive three 24-hour vacation weeks, plus hospital holidays. Trainees may not take vacation time in the first and last months of their training year.

Weekly Schedule

The practicum is designed to be offered at **approximately 16 to 20 hours per week**, with some flexibility. A consistent schedule is agreed upon prior to the start of training in collaboration with the trainee and the service. There are no fixed required days, though attendance at selected seminars and supervision times is expected once agreed upon.

To help you anticipate your weekly activities, we provide the approximate distribution below. Actual time will vary by week depending on case assignments and testing demands.

- **Clinical interviews and test administration:** Approximately 2 to 6 hours per week
- **Scoring and data review:** Approximately 2 to 4 hours per week
- **Report writing and formulation:** Approximately 2 to 4 hours per week
- **Feedback sessions with patients and families:** Approximately 1 to 2 hours per week
- **Team meetings, consultation, and case discussion:** Approximately 0 to 2 hours per week
- **Didactic seminars:** Approximately 2 hours per week

- **Individual supervision and related supervision activities:** At least 2 hours per week, often more when working on complex cases
- **Documentation and other administrative tasks:** At least 1 hour per week in addition to time for report completion

Clinical interviews and test administration are typically conducted in person. Some interviews or feedback sessions may be held via telehealth when clinically appropriate and in accordance with CHA policies. Scoring and report writing can be done remotely as agreed upon with the supervisor, in line with service needs and hospital guidelines.

Trainees receive training and access to the Epic electronic medical record system and are expected to document assessment contacts in accordance with CHA standards.

Most clinical and supervisory activities may be scheduled around your availability. The fixed-schedule training activities, which are subject to change, are as follows:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		Professional Development Seminar 9:00-9:50 (Attend virtually)		
	NAPA Team Mtg 4:00-4:30 (Macht Building; held monthly; may possibly end at 4:45 in 2026-2027; attend as needed, see meeting description below)	Testing Seminar 10:00-10:50 (Macht Building)		

Seminars and Meetings

NAPA Team Meeting. This meeting is held monthly. While trainees are welcome to attend regularly, trainees are only required to attend as needed in order to consult with the team on a testing case or provide testing feedback to the team.

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.

Advanced Psychological and Neuropsychological Testing Seminar: This seminar, offered through 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.

Trainees may also have access to additional seminars, conferences, and educational offerings within the Department of Psychiatry, subject to scheduling and training needs.

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).

Practicum trainees receive an average of at least 2 hours of face-to-face clinical supervision per week, with additional supervision time provided as needed around complex assessment cases, scoring, and report writing.

- **Primary supervision and precepting:** Primary individual supervision is provided by a licensed psychologist within the Neuropsychological and Psychological Assessment Service who serves as practicum preceptor.
- **Secondary supervision:** Additional supervision may be provided by staff psychologists and postdoctoral psychology fellows within NAPA, as appropriate to the trainee's developmental level and training needs.

Supervision focuses on all aspects of the assessment process, including refinement of referral questions and case conceptualization, selection of appropriate instruments, administration and scoring practices, interpretation of test findings in context, and the integration of multicultural and systems perspectives. Supervisors work closely with trainees to support the development of clear, clinically useful reports and recommendations, as well as the preparation for and delivery of feedback to patients, families, and treatment teams. Supervision may include direct observation of interviews or feedback sessions, structured review of test protocols and draft reports, and rehearsal of feedback conversations. Direction and consultation are also available from collaborating psychiatrists, social workers, and other members of the multidisciplinary teams who are involved in the care of patients referred for assessment.

Location

All in-person assessment activities take place at the Cambridge Health Alliance on the Cambridge Hospital campus, located at 1493 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139.

Some didactics may occur at other CHA campuses or virtually. Trainees have access to the office and testing space associated with the Neuropsychological and Psychological Assessment Service and may join remote seminars from designated workspaces.