

Psychology Internship Training Program 2016-2017

VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System
2601 Veterans Drive
Harlingen, Texas 78550



MATCH Numbers:

General Psychology: 221311

Health Psychology: 221312

Applications Due: November 8, 2015

Accreditation Status

The Psychology Internship Program at the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System (VATVCBHCS) is an **APA-accredited program**. The next site visit is scheduled to occur in 2021.

Questions related to the program's accredited status should be directed to the Commission on Accreditation:

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation
American Psychological Association
750 1st Street, NE, Washington, DC 2002
Phone: (202) 336-5979/e-mail: apaaccred@apa.org
Web: <http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation>

VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend



The VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System is the newest Health Care System within the VA, having officially established itself in October of 2010. Prior to that time, the area now known as the VATVCBHCS was included in the South Texas Veterans Health Care System. The VATVCBHCS has clinics in Harlingen, McAllen, Laredo, and Corpus Christi. The VATVCBHCS Psychology Service has more than doubled in staffing and programmatic offerings since becoming an independent system and it continues to grow. Psychology Service currently consists of 28 staff psychologists as well as an Administrative Officer for the Mental Health Service Line. In addition, the Mental Health Service Line includes a full array of interdisciplinary staff such as Staff Psychiatrists, Clinical PharmDs, Mental Health Nurse Practitioners, Mental Health RNs, Marriage and Family Therapists, Licensed Professional Counselors, Peer Support Specialists, Psychology Technicians, and Mental Health Social Workers. Each clinical site within the VATVCBHCS hosts an onsite, interdisciplinary Mental Health Team. An environment characterized by collaboration and scholarly inquiry is encouraged.

The VATVCBHCS serves Veterans residing within the southern-most 20 counties of Texas, 80% of which are classified as rural, via four Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) and an Ambulatory Surgery Center. Of these facilities, three will serve as training sites for Interns: The McAllen VA Outpatient Clinic, Harlingen VA Outpatient

Clinic and the VA Health Care Center at Harlingen. The remaining two clinical sites are the Laredo VA Outpatient Clinic and Corpus Christi VA Outpatient Clinic. The VATVCBHCS is also one of the select few VA systems to operate a Mobile Medical Unit (MMU). The MMU deploys daily to the most remote, rural locations within the catchment area and is staffed to provide primary care and mental health services with supplemental care available via telemedicine. All inpatient care is provided via contracts and relationships with community hospitals which allows for ease of access to inpatient care across the expansive geographic area included in the VATVCBHCS.

McAllen is the largest city in Hidalgo County, Texas, United States. It is located at the southern tip of Texas in an area known as the Rio Grande Valley and is part of the American Southwest. Its southern boundary is located about five miles from the U.S.–Mexico border and about 70 miles west of South Padre Island and the Gulf of Mexico. The 2010 census put the city's population at 129,877 and the McAllen–Edinburg–Mission metropolitan area at 774,769. The University of Texas–Pan American (UTPA) is the tenth largest state university with over seventeen thousand students, located in neighboring Edinburg. Founded in 1927, it is a component institution of The University of Texas System offering baccalaureate, master's-level, and doctoral degrees. Travel to and from McAllen is easily facilitated through the McAllen-Miller International Airport. Miller International Airport is served by American Airlines, Continental, and Delta Air Lines. Some of the most prominent local attractions are The Botanical Gardens, State Farm Arena, McAllen Convention Center, Valley Symphony Orchestra and Quinta Mazatlan-World Birding Center. McAllen has over 800 restaurants representing a large variety of cuisine on varying budgets, as well as La Plaza Mall, Las Tiendas, and RGV Premium Outlets within close proximity for all your shopping needs. McAllen is home to many recreational and cultural arts activities, most of which can be discovered through www.mcallen.org.

McAllen VA Outpatient Clinic (McAllen, TX) – Opened in 2014, this site serves as the primary care clinic for Veterans from four surrounding counties, three of which (75%)



are classified as rural. It is located 38 miles from the Health Care Center and the Harlingen VA Outpatient Clinic in Harlingen. In addition to primary care services, this facility also offers a full array of specialty care services such as mental health services, podiatry, lab, pharmacy, and infectious disease clinic. The McAllen VA Clinic also serves as the home station for the VATVCBHCS Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) which deploys daily

to the most rural, isolated communities within the valley sector to provide services to rural Veterans. Current rotations taking place at the McAllen VA Clinic include the Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Program rotations.

Harlingen, located at the southern tip of Texas and just minutes from beautiful South Padre Island, represents a blend of South Texas charm and the cultural traditions of

Mexico. Harlingen enjoys a year-round tropical climate, numerous outdoor activities, and was recently cited as having one of the lowest costs of living in the nation. With an estimated population of 75,000, Harlingen has its own International Airport making travel convenient and affordable. It is home to 17 elementary school, 5 middle schools, two high schools and an early college high school which allows high school seniors to graduate with an Associate's Degree. Adjacent to the South Texas VA Health Care Center is the University of Texas Regional Academic Health Center which serves at the Medical Education branch for the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio and boasts an array of classrooms as well as a full medical library (<http://www.rahc.uthscsa.edu/>). Texas State Technical College is also located within the city limits and the University of Texas at Brownsville is just 20 minutes to the South. Additional information is available at Harlingen Chamber of Commerce website: <http://www.harlingen.com/cwt/external/wcpages/index.aspx> or Wiki: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harlingen,_Texas

The South Texas VA Health Care Center, also referred to as the **Harlingen VA Outpatient Clinic** (Harlingen, TX) -

Constructed in 2007, this site is a contemporary ambulatory care facility designed to provide primary care as well as a host of specialty care services including: Mental health, social work, dental care, audiology, physical therapy, radiology, and women's health. Outfitted with 3 waiting areas, a pharmacy, dental suite, physical therapy lab, mental health suite, and numerous exam rooms, the



South Texas VA Health Care Center in Harlingen serves approximately 500 Veterans per day in a pristine 80,000 square foot facility. A portion of this facility is dedicated to clinical research and houses a 3-Tesla magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) system considered to be high-field strength for clinical research and diagnostic imaging. The South Texas VA Health Care Center is located on the campus of the Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC). The RAHC is a geographically separated campus of the University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio (UTHSCSA). Having opened its doors in 2002, this 94,000 square foot facility houses a medical library, conference rooms, an auditorium, classrooms of various sizes, simulation labs, computer lab, and offices for educational administration and student support services. As the Medical Education Division of the Regional Academic Health Center system, the RAHC maintains an Internal Medicine Residency Program which provides training to approximately 50 third and fourth year UTHSCSA medical students. The current rotation located at the Harlingen VA Outpatient Clinic include Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI).

The **Health Care Center at Harlingen** (Harlingen, TX) - Approximately ¼ mile from the Harlingen VA Outpatient Clinic and 38 miles from the McAllen VA Outpatient Clinic, the Health Care Center at Harlingen is a state-of-the-art ambulatory surgery center.



Activated in January 2011, this facility offers a full range of outpatient specialty services including six surgical suites, clinics for prosthetics care, oncology, specialty mental health, pulmonology, CPAP calibration, cardiology, orthopedics, dermatology, ophthalmology and outpatient surgeries including cataract removals, diagnostic colonoscopies, and prostate biopsies. The HCC serves Veterans from the entire VATVCBHCS catchment area which is

composed of 20 counties. Currently, the Health Care Center at Harlingen hosts the Trauma, Home Based Primary Care, and Bilingual rotations. Several of the minor rotations can take place in any of the three clinics.

Training Model and Program Philosophy

The philosophy of the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System (VATVCBHCS) Internship Program is that all practicing psychologists should have a solid foundation in general clinical psychology including the ability to apply empirical data to clinical procedures and assessment. Given this philosophy, our program is based on a scientist-practitioner model and provides a year of training in evidenced-based practices and general clinical or health psychology. All Interns are required to obtain training in assessments and interventions across an array of Veteran populations. Rotations are designed for maximizing Intern professional experience with various diagnostic, cultural, and age groups complemented by brief training experiences, which allow for more focused training in the Intern's area of interest.

The mission of the VATVCBHCS and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is to honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves Veterans' health and well-being. The VATVCBHCS fully supports this mission through its aim to train highly qualified graduate psychologists who are well prepared to utilize empirically grounded interventions, serve as valued members of interdisciplinary teams, lead in the development and research of innovative models of care, and employ a scientist-practitioner approach to health and well-being. The main goal of VA internship programs is to prepare psychologists for positions within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Program Goals & Objectives

During orientation, Interns' prior training experiences are reviewed. This is done to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, in order to facilitate the development of a training program that best meets the specific training needs of each Intern. In keeping with our generalist philosophy, Interns are encouraged to address those areas in which

they have had limited experience (e.g., working with certain populations such as those with serious mental illnesses or substance use problems, particular assessment approaches such as personality testing, or exposure to various theoretical orientations).

It is expected that upon completion of the program all Interns will demonstrate competence in the following seven general domains:

- A. Intervention
- B. Assessment
- C. Teaching/Supervision
- D. Scholarly Inquiry
- E. Professional Issues
- F. Ethics/Law/Diversity
- G. Consultation/Evaluation

These competencies are assessed within a framework of increasing understanding and sensitivity to individual and cultural diversity in the delivery of psychological assessment, treatment, consultation and liaison and in the Intern's development of a code of professional ethics. Competency is enhanced by both supervised clinical experience and didactics.

Training Schedule and Rotations

During orientation, Interns meet with the Training Director to plan their training schedule for the entire year. The 12-month (2080 hour) internship year will be divided into three rotations, each lasting four months. Each intern will complete all three major rotations with the option to incorporate brief training experiences during the second and third rotations. The specific Training Plan developed by each Intern must be approved by the Training Director and Training Committee.

Major Rotations

Outpatient Mental Health Rotation – The Outpatient Mental Health Rotation affords Interns with generalist training in the provision of care to a broad array of Veterans with Axis I and Axis II diagnoses. Emphasis on the application of specific empirically-based treatments will include training in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Prolonged Exposure (PE), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for Depression, Motivational Interviewing, and CBT for couples. Interns will have ample opportunity to develop such skill sets in both individual and group therapy formats. During the course of this rotation, Interns will be expected to complete a minimum of two comprehensive psychological evaluations which combine data from both a clinical interview and objective assessment (e.g., MMPI-2, WAIS-IV, WMS-IV, Cognistat, etc.). The Veteran population served in this context will include primarily Vietnam-era Veterans of Hispanic descent although Interns will also be exposed to an ever-increasing cohort of OEF/OIF/OND Veterans as well as a smaller subset of Desert Storm, Korea, WWII, and peace-time enrollees. In addition, Interns rotating in Outpatient Mental Health during the months of

October to May will encounter "Winter Texan" Veterans who will require time-limited services with care coordination back to their assigned VA facility upon termination.

Substance Abuse Treatment Program (SATP) Rotation – The SATP is uniquely designed to project its services, via telemental health, to Veterans at all VATVCBHCS clinical locations. The SATP offers the following services through both face-to-face and telemental health formats: an Intensive Outpatient Program, Prevention and Intervention Group, After Care Group, Seeking Safety, individual therapy for dual diagnosis, pharmacotherapy, and coordination of care for residential and detoxification admissions with contract facilities and neighboring VA Medical Centers. The SATP rotation offers a broad exposure to a variety of addictive disorders most of which are co-morbid with other Axis I or II conditions. Interns will develop skill in differential diagnosis, risk assessment, empirically-based treatments, and telemental health services.

Primary Care-Mental Health Integration (PCMHI) Rotation – The PCMHI rotation will afford Interns with experience in the application of Health Psychology and integrated care. Clinical experience will emphasize the delivery of time-limited empirically based evaluation and intervention for both Mental Health conditions and Physical Health conditions with a behavioral component. The focus of PCMHI training includes: Application of the consultation model, understanding of Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) services, same-day access to PCMHI services, brief evaluation and therapy, shared medical appointments, familiarity in delivering evidenced based treatment (Motivational Interviewing, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Chronic Pain, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Depression) in a primary care setting. Additionally, Interns may gain experience in the administration, interpretation, and documentation of bariatric and transplant evaluations as well as brief cognitive evaluations for dementia

Home-Based Primary Care (HBPC) Rotation – To gain experience in HBPC interventions, Interns may rotate with the HBPC program wherein the focus is the provision of care within an interdisciplinary team context, cognitive evaluations, time-limited and empirically-based interventions for behavioral health conditions often for older adult Veterans with multiple chronic medical conditions. Additionally, Interns gain experience utilizing empirically-based treatments for individuals acting as caregivers for Veterans with major/minor neurocognitive disorders. All HBPC activities take place under the direct supervision of the HBPC Psychologist. The Intern is accompanied by the supervising psychologist for initial home visits until an appropriate level of independence is achieved at which time care may be delivered by the Intern with the HBPC psychologist being immediately accessible by phone for consultation.

Trauma Treatment Rotation - The Trauma Rotation will allow Interns the opportunity to assess and treat Veterans with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other trauma-related presentations. Regarding assessment, interns

will develop skills in differential diagnosis of PTSD, determination of readiness for trauma-focused treatment, and consultation with other clinical providers. Interns will be trained on use of the Clinician Administered PTSD Scale for DSM-5 (CAPS-5) as part of the intake process. Interns will also have the opportunity to complete more comprehensive assessments of personality and possible malingering which will count toward the six required comprehensive assessments for the internship year. In terms of treatment, this rotation emphasizes Empirically-Based Psychotherapies (EBPs) including Cognitive-Processing Therapy (CPT), administered in both individual and group formats, and Prolonged Exposure (PE). Other treatments that may be used while on this rotation include Anger Management, Imagery Rehearsal Therapy (IRT) for nightmares, sleep management, Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP), and general Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Since PTSD is highly comorbid with Substance Use Disorders (SUD), Interns will have the opportunity to learn Seeking Safety. Interns will work with Veterans ranging in era from Vietnam War to OEF/OIF/OND. Veterans primarily present with combat stressors, but Interns who are interested will be given priority for working with Veterans who have Military Sexual Trauma (MST), childhood sexual abuse, or other non-combat trauma. Interns on this rotation will be encouraged to participate in local and national didactics such as the VA PTSD Consultation Program Lecture Series, the Advanced PE Seminar Series, and the MST Teleconference Training Series.

Brief Training Experiences – In addition to the above major rotations, Interns have the opportunity to participate in the following brief training experiences:

Telemental Health – In addition to participation in telemental health activities as they are woven into the SATP rotation, Interns may select a brief, focused telemental health training experience under supervision of a Telemental Health Psychologist. Brief experiences may consist of completing 2 time-limited, individual evidence-based treatment cases. Interns are required to demonstrate competencies in the above skills in a face-to-face format prior to advancing to the telehealth medium.

Bilingual Clinical Services – For Interns fluent in Spanish and desiring to conduct concentrated mental health care in Spanish with receipt of Spanish-language supervision, this brief training experience may be selected. Interns may choose to complete two cases of time-limited, evidence-based-treatment therapy with Spanish-speaking Veterans, a time-limited workshop for Veterans and their loved ones, or two comprehensive, integrated psychological evaluations in Spanish. Supervision is provided by a licensed Psychologist with bilingual (Spanish and English) capabilities.

Administrative Project – Interns are encouraged to incorporate one administrative project into their Internship year. Administrative projects may include but are not limited to: Program evaluation, needs assessment, participation in facility level workgroups, or development of

informational/outreach campaign materials. Such activities are intended to reinforce and hone Interns' critical thinking skills, ability to contribute administratively to their team/facility and develop quality administrative products that serve to enhance Veteran care and contribute to the overall mission of the organization.

Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) -- This brief experience will offer the opportunity for interns to participate in the VA training initiative for this evidence-based trauma-focused intervention. CPT involves teaching Veterans to identify how traumatic experiences have impacted their thinking, and to challenge their own thoughts. Interns must commit to learning the intervention including participation in the 3-day workshop, and a minimum of 6 months of weekly 1-hr long group phone consultation sessions. During the course of the 6 months consultation, Interns will work towards successful completion of a minimum of 2 individual cases or one CPT group. Successful completion renders the Intern eligible for provider status in CPT once licensed, a nationally recognized merit. Interns will also participate in 1 hour of group supervision for these cases.

Program Structure

Each Intern has a primary Supervisor for each of the three main rotations throughout the year. The Supervisor is responsible for the training experience on their specific rotation and assists in selecting psychotherapy cases, making referrals, along with scheduled supervision sessions. At a minimum, 2 hours per week are devoted to individual supervision from the rotation Supervisor. In addition, each Intern is also matched with a Preceptor who provides supervision over the course of the entire year with additional emphasis on professional development. Interns meet with their Preceptors once per week for one hour throughout the training year. Interns also participate in 1 hour per week of group supervision. In addition to the main rotation Supervisors above, if minor rotations are selected by the Intern such experiences may be supervised by a separate psychologist, typically for one hour each week.

The degree of responsibility given the Intern and the amount of structure provided depends on his or her level of development and competence. The program also includes educational opportunities such as seminars, journal clubs, and case conferences.

Didactics

The Intern Didactics seminar takes place weekly for 3 hours and is composed of topics such as issues of diversity, ethics, behavioral health consultation, psychopharmacology, psychological and neuropsychological assessment, evidence-based psychotherapy, and various professional development issues (e.g., career development and job seeking strategies). Didactic seminars are conducted by staff members and include 2-hour presentations followed by a 1-hour journal club discussion each week. The didactic seminar also provides opportunity for case presentations by Interns.

Facility and Training Resources

All Interns are provided with office space and secure networked computers necessary for Veteran care and administrative responsibilities. They have access to the VA Medical Library services as well as VA Intranet and Internet resources for clinical work and research.

Administrative Policies and Procedures

Leave Requests: The VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System's policy on Authorized Leave is consistent with the national standard. Interns will earn 13 days of sick leave and 13 days of annual leave by the end of the internship year.

Due Process for Grievance and Remediation Procedures: All trainees are afforded the right to due process in matters of problematic behavior and grievances. A due process document will be distributed to all Interns during orientation and reviewed with them subsequently.

Privacy policy: We collect no personal information from you when you visit our Website.

Self-Disclosure: We do not require Interns to disclose personal information to their clinical Supervisors except in cases where personal issues may be adversely affecting an Intern's performance and such information is necessary to address these difficulties.

Training Staff

ALEX BIONDOLILLO

**PhD, 2013, Clinical Psychology, University of Southern Mississippi
Harlingen VA Outpatient Clinic – MHICM E-RANGE Staff Psychologist**

Dr. Biondolillo earned his degree from the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, MS. He completed an APA-accredited internship at VA Connecticut Healthcare System in West Haven, CT, where he remained to complete a postdoctoral fellowship in psychosocial rehabilitation for Veterans with severe mental illness at the West Haven VA in conjunction with the Yale School of Medicine. His current clinical focus follows this line of specialization, providing individual and group therapy as well as case management services to Veterans who have severe mental illness in rural community and home based settings.

BERNARDO FLORES

**Psy.D., Clinical Psychology, The Illinois School of Professional Psychology, 2009
McAllen VA Outpatient Clinic – SATP Psychologist and Clinical Director**

Dr. Flores earned his degree from Illinois School of Professional Psychology. He completed his internship at community mental health center in Northwest Indiana and focused his delivery of clinical services to the underserved Latino mono-lingual population. Dr. Flores' professional/research interests include the impact of diversity on the assessment and treatment of mental health clients, as well as forensic psychological testing. Dr. Flores is currently designated as the Clinical Director of the Substance Abuse Treatment Program (SATP) and the Substance Use Disorder Psychologist serving the McAllen VA Outpatient Clinic. His current clinical focuses are in the provision of group and individual evidence-based treatments. He provides consultation on a variety of evidence based group and individual treatments for Veterans and supervises Interns on the SATP Rotation at the McAllen VA Outpatient Clinic.

JESSICA E. GROGAN

**PhD, Clinical Psychology, University of Houston, 2011
Harlingen VA Health Care Center – PTSD Telemental Health Psychologist and
Local Evidence-Based Psychotherapy (EBP) Coordinator**

Dr. Grogan earned her degree from the University of Houston in 2011. She completed her internship and a postdoctoral fellowship specializing in PTSD at the VA Pittsburgh Health Care System. Her clinical interests include differential diagnosis of PTSD and other combat stress reactions, transdiagnostic treatment of anxiety spectrum disorders, and use of innovative treatment modalities to provide services to veterans in rural areas. Dr. Grogan also serves as the Evidenced Based-Psychotherapy Coordinator for Valley Coastal Bend and is strongly invested in increasing access to evidence-based treatments. Dr. Grogan enjoys running, Boston sports teams, and bad reality TV shows.

JEREMY HENN

**Ph.D., Counseling Psychology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2010
San Antonio VA Medical Center – Telemental Health Psychologist –**

Dr. Henn completed internship at the Southern Arizona VA Health Care System and postdoctoral residency at the South Texas Veterans Health Care System. His theoretical orientation is primarily cognitive behavioral with an emphasis on acceptance-based treatments. Clinical services are primarily delivered via telehealth and include individual therapy, group therapy, and psychological assessment to several clinics as well as directly to Veterans' homes. Special interests include unified treatment approaches to trauma and emotional disorders and the role of individual differences (e.g., interests, values, personality) in learning and treatment outcomes.

JINA JENSEN

Psy.D., Clinical Psychology, University of Denver Graduate School of Professional Psychology, 2007

**Harlingen VA Outpatient Clinic – Primary Care Mental Health Integration
Psychologist and Program Manager; Psychology Internship Training
Director**

Dr. Jensen completed an APA-Accredited internship at the Texas Tech University Counseling Center in Lubbock, Texas. She returned to Denver and worked at the Regis University Counseling Center for 6 years, serving in the role of Training Director for 5 of those years. Her interests include treatment of insomnia, chronic pain, substance abuse, eating disorders, mood disorders, anxiety, and providing supervision. She has experience with individual, group, and couples therapy.

SEAN P. MCGOWAN

Psy.D., Clinical Psychology, Graduate Program in Clinical Psychology, Baylor University, 2012

McAllen VA Outpatient Clinic – General Mental Health Psychologist

Dr. McGowan completed an APA-Accredited predoctoral internship at Cornerstone Behavioral Health in Evanston, Wyoming. He also completed 6 months of a post-doctoral fellowship in Psychosocial Rehabilitation at the Central Texas VA Health Care System. In these settings, he received extensive training and experience in outpatient/inpatient psychotherapy and psychodiagnostic testing with adults. Other clinical experiences include group psychotherapy, crisis intervention, and psychotherapy with individuals who have severe and persistent mental disorders. Dr. McGowan's special interests are related to motivational interviewing, treatment planning, the interpersonal process in therapy, and psychological assessment. He is a member of the American Psychological Association and the Texas Psychological Association.

SHANNON MOORE

Ph.D., Clinical Psychology, Jackson State University

**McAllen VA Outpatient Clinic – Primary Care Mental Health Integration
Psychologist**

Dr. Moore completed an APA-Accredited internship at Cherokee Health System (Knoxville, Tennessee), where she trained in providing integrated primary behavioral care, traditional outpatient mental health care, psychosocial rehabilitation and crisis stabilization services. Dr. Moore completed an APA-Accredited postdoctoral fellowship at G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center (Jackson, MS) where she gained advanced training and understanding of medical and mental health needs of individuals with Hepatitis C Virus (HCV), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and co-occurring substance use disorders. She has received extensive training in Primary Care-Mental Health Integration providing mental health services to Veterans.

DESI ALONZO VÁSQUEZ**Ph.D., Counseling Psychology, University of Oklahoma, 2008****VATVCBHCS – Chief, Psychology Service**

A 5th generation Laredoan, Dr. Vásquez earned his PhD in Counseling Psychology, with a minor in Quantitative Psychology, from the University of Oklahoma in 2008. He completed his pre-doctoral psychology internship (clinical child track) at the Charleston Consortium (Medical University of South Carolina/VAMC) in Charleston, SC, and his postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Virginia Health System (UVaHS) with a concentration on behavioral health technology and the neurocognitive assessment laboratory in Charlottesville, VA.

Prior to his work in Laredo, Dr. Vásquez served as the Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator at the South Texas Veterans Health Care System in San Antonio, TX where he assisted in developing area Veteran treatment courts. Dr. Vásquez is a 2012 graduate of VISN 17's Leadership Development Institute. In 2013, he both earned a Lean Six Sigma (LSS) Black Belt/Toyota Experience certification in hospital systems redesign, and completed the VHA Health Informatics Certificate Program (AMIA 10x10). Dr. Vásquez has published in areas of trauma-related dissociation, hypermasculinity and masculine gender role conflict, internet delivered cognitive-behavioral therapy interventions, and the psychological care of student-athletes. His theoretical orientation is behavioral.

BRENDA VERASTIGI**PsyD, 2015, Counseling Psychology, Our Lady of the Lake University****VA Health Care Center at Harlingen – Home Based Primary Care Psychologist**

Dr. Verastigi completed an APA-Accredited predoctoral internship at VA Black Hills Health Care System (Ft. Meade, South Dakota), where she trained in providing Primary Care-Mental Health Integration, Integrative inpatient/outpatient mental health care, Neuropsychology, and PTSD Clinical Team. Her interests include health psychology and bilingual therapy. She has received extensive training in health psychology integration, providing bilingual mental health and caregiver support services to Veterans, caregivers, and their family.

MEGHAN I. VON LINDEN**Ph.D., Clinical Psychology, St. Louis University, 2011****Plaza Lecea – VISN 17 Telehealth EBP for PTSD Psychologist**

Dr. von Linden completed Internship in Medical Psychology at the Phoenix VA Health Care System in 2011, followed by Residency in Rural Mental Health/Telehealth at the South Texas Veterans Health Care System in 2012. Her theoretical orientation is primarily cognitive-behavioral, she is trained in Cognitive Processing Therapy, Prolonged Exposure, and Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Regulation for PTSD, and is focused on providing these treatments to Veterans in rural locations throughout the VISN. She is currently involved in disseminating CPT for PTSD and Military Sexual Trauma (MST) via telehealth across the VCB health care system and directly into Veterans' homes. She is also a Regional CPT Trainer. Her clinical interests include: PTSD assessment, provision and evaluation of telemental health EBPs to rural

settings, stress and coping skills enhancement, and retention and treatment of OEF/OIF veterans.

JENNIFER A. VANECEK WOOD

Ph.D., Clinical Psychology, University of Mississippi, 2005

Harlingen VA Health Care Center – VATVCBHCS Associate Chief of Staff for Mental Health

Dr. Wood is a graduate of the South Texas Veterans Health Care System training program, having completed her Internship and Residency in Geropsychology in 2005 and 2006 respectively. Her theoretical orientation is primarily cognitive-behavioral with an emphasis on time-limited and group interventions. She has a strong interest in improving access to mental health resources in rural settings and the use of technology to augment traditional behavioral healthcare services. Her clinical and research interests include: evaluation of telemental health interventions, service delivery systems in rural settings, geriatric assessment, treatment for OEF/OIF veterans, and evaluation of group interventions.

Application & Selection Procedures

Criteria for Acceptance into the Program

The Psychology Internship Program at the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System offers 2 General Psychology internship positions and 1 Health Psychology internship position to U.S. citizens who are pursuing a doctoral degree in clinical or counseling psychology from an APA-accredited institution. To be considered, students must demonstrate completion of at least three years of graduate course work and a minimum of 1000 hours of practicum experience including assessment and intervention with a range of psychopathology across varied populations and settings. Applicants must be certified as ready for internship by their Director of Training. Only 52-week full-time internships are available.

Application Process

We rely on the APPIC portal for all application materials. Students interested in applying must submit the following through the APPIC Application for Psychology Internship (AAPI) online system:

1. A required cover letter
2. Online AAPI
3. A current vita
4. Three letters of recommendation from individuals who are acquainted with your academic performance and/or training experience.
5. Original (official) transcripts of all graduate work

6. Deidentified assessment report

The VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System Psychology Internship Program does not ask for any other information than is requested by the APPIC Application for Psychology Internships (AAPI Online). To be considered, all application materials for the 2016-17 internship year are due by **November 8, 2015**.

Application Steps

1. Complete the online AAPI, which is available on APPIC's website, www.appic.org.
2. Submit all materials by **November 8, 2015**.
3. Note: No paperwork needs to be submitted to us; use the AAPI application online system. The letters of recommendation are sent through the online AAPI, which has blank sections for these other materials to be submitted.
4. Applications will be reviewed and applicants no longer under active consideration for interviews will be notified via e-mail and mail by **November 27, 2015**.
5. Onsite interviews are scheduled for applicants under active consideration in early January. Email notification will be sent to each applicant who remains under consideration with an invitation to attend an onsite interview session. Applicants are responsible for responding to the invitation to interview and securing an interview time and date from the options provided in the email notification.
6. Applicants matched with this internship program will be notified of acceptance by APPIC on Match Notification Day.

Applicants should feel free to contact the Training Director by e-mail or phone with any questions regarding the application process.

Our program follows all APPIC policies regarding the intern selection process. This internship site strictly abides by the APPIC policy that no person at this training facility will solicit, accept, or use any ranking-related information from any applicant. You are encouraged to read or download the complete text of their regulations governing program membership and the match process from the APPIC website.

Director of Training

Jina Jensen, Psy.D.
Director of Training
Psychology Service (116B)
VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System
Health Care Center at Harlingen
2601 Veterans Drive
Harlingen, TX 78550
Phone: 956-366-4500 x67654
E-Mail: Jina.Jensen@va.gov

Candidate Interviews

All personal interviews are conducted individually and by invitation only. Candidates will be informed via e-mail by November 27, 2015 concerning whether or not they have been invited for a personal interview. We regard interviews as a two-way process: a chance for us to meet and learn more about you, and an opportunity for you to meet us and get a better understanding of our program. During this process, candidates will have the opportunity to interview with at least three faculty members as well as meet the Training Committee, Training Director, and current Interns. The total interview process should take about 4 hours. Telephone interviews are not offered at this time. We adhere strictly to the selection process guidelines established by the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC).

Match Process

We will follow the match policies established by APPIC. Our Program uses one match number for the two General Psychology Internship positions and a separate match number for the Health Psychology Internship position. Applicants may choose to be considered for both the General Psychology and Health Psychology positions or for one or the other. The only information that we may communicate to applicants prior to the February deadline is whether they are still under consideration. Additional information regarding the match is available through the National Matching Services.

The VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Match Numbers are:

General Psychology – 221311

Health Psychology - 221312

Directions to the Health Care Center at Harlingen

The VA Health Care Center at Harlingen is located at 2601 Veterans Drive, approximately 5 miles from Valley International Airport (<http://www.flythevalley.com/>). The Health Care Center is flanked by the University of Texas Regional Academic Health Center and less than a mile from the South Texas VA Health Care Center.

Directions from Valley International Airport

- Go north on Airport Drive toward Marine Drive.
- Make a slight left onto Eucalyptus.
- Take the first right onto Oak.
- Turn left onto Loop 499/Ed Carey Drive and go 3.5 miles.
- Turn left onto Sunshine Strip/Business 77.
- Take a left on Treasure Hills.
- Veterans Drive will be on the right and leads directly to the parking garage for the Health Care Center at Harlingen.

The Psychology main offices are located on the second floor of the Health Care Center inside the Behavioral Health Suite.

- Enter the front of the building through the sliding glass door and the elevators will be directly in front of you just beyond the reception desk.
- Take the elevator up to the second floor.
- Upon exiting the elevator look to your right for the Behavioral Health Department. Enter the door to the suite and check in at the front desk.
- If you need additional directions, please call (956) 291-9129.