



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

COLUMBIA CENTER FOR EATING DISORDERS



New York State
Psychiatric Institute

Columbia Center for Eating Disorders at the NY State Psychiatric Institute

Externship Program Overview

OVERVIEW

The [Columbia Center for Eating Disorders](#), directed by Evelyn Attia, MD, is a specialty research clinic at New York State Psychiatric Institute committed to furthering understanding of these complex disorders and their treatment. Our program provides comprehensive inpatient and outpatient clinical services to patients based on best practices. We are a multidisciplinary team, staffed with highly skilled, experienced clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and dietitians. Central to our mission is the training and dissemination of evidence-based treatments for eating disorders. The externship experience is overseen by Deborah Glasofer, PhD. Trainees work closely with multiple members of our interdisciplinary team. Our clinician researchers are committed to providing a collaborative, varied, and high-quality learning experience for trainees at all levels of experience, including post-doctoral fellows, externs, medical students, research assistants, and volunteers.

This 12-month externship focuses on the delivery of evidence-based individual and group psychotherapy for adolescents and adults with eating disorders including anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating disorder. Treatment approaches include Family-Based Treatment (FBT), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT). Externs will gain experience in diagnostic assessment, and treatment modalities including group, individual and family-based psychotherapy. Supervision will be provided by licensed clinical psychologists working in the clinical research program. Externs will participate in team meetings as well as have the opportunity to attend a range of didactics (within and beyond the eating disorders program) and case conferences, observe clinical research assessments and procedures, and, if desired, participate in ongoing academic and/or lay-public writing projects. Our program is unique in its ability to offer treatment at no cost in exchange for participation in research.

Please note: This is primarily an on-site training experience, though there may be flexibility to attend some seminars or meetings remotely.

ASSESSMENT TRAINING

In our program, patients are evaluated through a multi-stage process that utilizes both clinical and research tools. Externs will receive training in rigorous clinical evaluation of eating disorders, including related medical sequelae and common psychiatric comorbidities. Externs will have the opportunity to receive training in several empirically validated, semi-structured interviews used widely in research settings, including: Eating Disorder Assessment for DSM-5 (EDA-5), Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-5 Diagnoses (SCID-5), Kiddie Schedule of Affective Disorders and Schizophrenia (KSADS), and the Yale Brown Cornell Eating Disorders Scale (YBC-EDS).

If interested, externs will have the chance to observe research procedures for current studies. This may include, but is not limited to, laboratory meals, functional neuroimaging, transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), and computer-based tasks that assess neurocognitive processes such as reward, food-based decision-making, and self-perception.

CLINICAL TRAINING

Externs can expect to gain group treatment experience, co-leading 1-3 groups weekly. This might include CBT, ACT, and Teen Talk (i.e., IPT) groups with adult and/or adolescent inpatients. Externs will also participate in a Meal Process lunch group on our inpatient unit, where they will have the opportunity to eat with patients and facilitate a post-meal therapeutic discussion. Externs will be assigned to lead different groups, in rotation, over the course of their training year, based on their availability (i.e., days of the week on externship when groups are offered). Groups will be co-led by a senior trainee or clinician, with the expectation that the extern will assume a primary leadership role in directing the group over time.

Externs will also gain experience in evidence-based individual therapy, carrying a caseload of 1-3 outpatients. Externs can expect to be assigned CBT cases for adults with bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, atypical anorexia nervosa, and/or anorexia nervosa (for relapse prevention focused treatment). There may also be opportunities to provide FBT for families with teens with acute anorexia nervosa, and/or to provide CBT for adolescents with binge eating disorder and bulimia nervosa.

Finally, externs will have the opportunity to observe – and ultimately conduct – comprehensive clinical evaluations (i.e., intakes) for potential research participants/patients.

SEMINARS

Externs are strongly encouraged to attend several didactic seminars, offered as hybrid meetings. On Mondays, there are “work rounds” for members of the eating disorders research team, during which we provide ongoing training in eating disorders, review the clinical status of individuals hospitalized on our inpatient unit, and plan for upcoming research procedures. On Fridays, a clinic-wide seminar led by our senior staff includes invited speakers from within the institution and elsewhere to speak on topics related to eating disorders treatment and research. There are also weekly seminars for a larger group of psychology externs at NYSPI, covering a broad range of treatment approaches and related topics (e.g., dialectical behavioral therapy, trauma-informed care, cultural considerations in therapy, teletherapy) and care for a variety of diagnoses (e.g., OCD, Autism Spectrum Disorder). Additionally, externs at the Columbia Center for Eating Disorders can participate (via videoconference) in trainee didactic seminars and case conferences by Dr. Attia at our sister eating disorders program, The Outlook at NY Presbyterian Hospital in White Plains. The teaching calendar is reviewed and updated every year, incorporating feedback from trainees from the previous year.

INDEPENDENT READING

All trainees are expected to add to their familiarity with research findings and key articles in evidenced-based interventions and ethics, as well as seminal articles from the field of eating disorders. In conjunction with didactic seminars, externs are provided associated articles and reference readings. In conjunction with supervision, externs are provided with relevant treatment manuals and related clinical materials to improve their understanding of and ability to provide evidence-based care.

SUPERVISION

Supervision is a central focus of this externship. Externs meet with Dr. Glasofer regularly for individual supervision of the overall externship experience and their assigned groups on the

inpatient unit. Externs participate weekly in small supervision groups by topics – CBT for anorexia nervosa, CBT for bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder, evidence-based treatment for adolescents with eating disorders – led by experts in the topic. Assessment supervision occurs weekly for externs and junior trainees. Clinical evaluations (i.e., intakes for potential research participants/patients) will be supervised closely every step of the way. Ad hoc supervision is available for any specialized needs that arise. In addition, there is a peer supervision group for NYSPI externs that provides a connection and collaboration of trainees across clinics.

OPTIONAL PROJECTS MENTORING

Trainees are encouraged to participate in research-related scholarly projects, if desired. Trainees may be given opportunities to co-author manuscripts or academic presentations and will receive mentorship around any projects taken on. Trainees are also encouraged to join our group's efforts to write for the lay public, if desired; externs can choose to write for our blog on topics of interest and will receive editorial supervision for this work. We have ongoing educational initiatives for the local and NY State healthcare community as well – externs are welcome to help with preparations and observe these presentations.

EXTERN PRESENTATIONS

Externs may be asked to present at group seminars occasionally throughout the year. This could include a presentation of a journal article in the field of eating disorders for journal club discussion, a case discussion from one of their active cases, or a topic consistent with their own research and interests. Externs are provided mentoring and feedback on assigned presentations.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on our program and current studies, please see our [website](#) and [blog](#).

APPLICATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

The Columbia Center for Eating Disorders externship complies with the Psychology Internship Directors of New York State and the New York New Jersey Association of Directors of Training guidelines regarding externship applications, timelines, notifications, and general procedures. For a full description of the application guidelines and procedures including the timeline for application submissions and interview scheduling, see PSYDNYS-NYNJADOT Externship Guidelines (<https://nynjadot.apa.org/>), revised and distributed annually by the organizations.

Interested applicants should submit a cover letter, CV, 2 letters of recommendation, and 1 sample clinical case summary. All applications are reviewed by Dr. Glasofer, and select applications are reviewed further with Dr. Attia and clinical psychologists on faculty. A small subset of applicants is invited for individual meetings with at least two clinical psychologists and a psychology trainee (e.g. postdoctoral fellow, current extern). From this applicant pool, candidates will be invited via email by Dr. Glasofer on the appropriate notification date. For the upcoming training year, we currently anticipate taking 1-2 externs.

Please note: Interviews will be scheduled via teleconference.

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