

# RIT Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) Training Program

RIT CaPS has been an educationally-rich training site for both doctoral and master's level students for many years.

## Our Philosophy

The primary goal of the RIT CaPS Training Program is to prepare students for work as generalist clinical providers in the practice of psychology, social work, and/or mental health counseling. One of the values inherent in the training process and espoused by the training staff is the belief that science and scholarship inform competent practice; thus, training program staff seek to integrate this into the work of CaPS and its training program. Our training program and our center as a whole are committed to anti-racist practices, and we acknowledge the importance of sensitivity to and appreciation of all cultural and individual diversity. Thus, we offer specific training to assist students in effectively working with diverse populations. The training program is structured to support engagement in self-reflective practice in every aspect of the training experience. Staff at CaPS believe that clinicians who perform the clinical work without attention given to thoughts, feelings, and reactions that inevitably arise in the context of the work are missing a critical piece of what contributes to effective practice. As such, the practice of conducting ongoing self-assessment is valued and supported by the training program.

The training model adhered to is developmental in nature, with staff recognizing that trainees enter the program at various levels of skill and experience. Our staff is committed to helping trainees become more skilled and autonomous in their professional functioning by consistently assessing the level of their experience, affording them opportunities for learning that are consonant with that level, and by assisting them through supervision, apprenticeship, teaching, and mentoring.

## Goals of Training

Graduate students in the practicum phase of training who participate in the RIT CaPS Training Program will become further prepared for the role of clinician in the disciplines of Psychology, Social Work, or Mental Health Counseling. The overall goals for trainees include both to develop mastery of the basic skills of counseling and/or psychotherapy as well as to become familiar with and/or experience aspects of professional clinical work in a real work setting, which involve working as part of a treatment team, collaborating with individuals and organizations outside of CaPS, among other aspects.

## Core Components of the Training Program

### 1. Clinical Experience

Trainees, as appropriate depending on developmental level, will gain clinical experience through the provision of individual and/or group counseling and psychotherapy.

Adhering to a developmental training model, trainees usually begin their experience with shadowing and observing their supervisors and other staff, and they gradually take on independent responsibilities as deemed appropriate given the trainee's level of training and their needs for professional development. These responsibilities primarily include conducting intake evaluations, individual counseling and/or psychotherapy, group psychotherapy, crisis intervention (when appropriate to developmental level), case management, and record-keeping. Depending upon the individual interests of trainees, there are opportunities to gain exposure participating in outreach programs, including providing psycho-educational programs within and external to RIT CaPS. Trainees are encouraged to talk to their supervisors about their individual professional interests and how these might be addressed in their training experience.

## **2. Assessment, Diagnostic, and Conceptualization Skill Development**

Trainees will receive didactic as well as clinical training in assessment, diagnostic, and conceptualization skills, as appropriate depending on developmental level.

## **3. Clinical Supervision**

Trainees will receive at least one hour of individual supervision weekly with an appointed licensed clinical supervisor (number of supervisors and hours spent in supervision depends on the established caseload of trainees as well as on developmental need). Trainees will also participate in group supervision seminars, one focused on individual therapy work and one focused on group therapy experiences. Trainees will have the opportunity to consult with CaPS staff as needed and will also be expected to attend CaPS team meetings to foster the ability to work in collaboration with other clinicians as part of a treatment team.

Trainees have access to staff with varied areas of expertise and theoretical orientations via supervision, treatment team meetings, and through direct observation of clinical work. Individual supervision is provided by staff members who are licensed or certified in their professional disciplines. RIT CaPS is an interactive environment in which doors are usually open when staff are not in session, and staff frequently consult with each other about clinical issues as they occur. Trainees are welcome to utilize this opportunity for on-demand consultation as a resource outside of formal meetings.

Supervisors adhere to a developmental model and focus the work on the supervisee's training needs. Supervisors strive for an open and safe supervision environment, and welcome honest feedback from supervisees. Supervision incorporates viewing recordings of the trainee's sessions with clients, which allows supervisors to develop a richer understanding of the trainee's work to be able to provide more direct and useful feedback.

## **4. Didactic Training**

Trainees will participate in a weekly didactic seminar, which will provide an overview of both theory and applications of a range of evidence-based practices in the fields of psychology, social work, and mental health counseling.

## **5. Consultation and Outreach**

Trainees will engage in outreach programming in areas that promote mental health and wellbeing on a college campus.

## **Evaluation and Feedback**

Ongoing evaluation of trainees occurs through the use of data obtained through supervisor review of tapes and written work, feedback from clients, self-evaluations, and direct service data. Formal written evaluations are completed at mid-training and at the end of the training experience. Copies of evaluations are provided to and kept by both the trainee and the supervisor. Supervisors will review these evaluations formally with trainees. In addition, the trainee's supervisor and/or the training coordinator communicate with academic departments, as appropriate, regarding the work of trainees. Trainees complete evaluations of supervisors as well, both within and at the end of the training experience.

## **Prerequisites for Incoming Trainees**

- Trainees must have successfully completed all major coursework for the appropriate Master's Degree prior to entering the training program. Appropriate documentation of this (i.e., transcripts, references) will be required during the interview process.
- Trainees must have completed at least one practicum experience prior to entering the training program. Trainees new to clinical work are not appropriate for this setting. References from prior clinical sites and samples of clinical work must be provided during the interview process.

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- Trainees must demonstrate the capacity to receive, benefit from, and participate in training and supervision. Successful trainees are those who are self-motivated, can remain open and responsive to feedback, and have a positive work ethic.
- Trainees must be committed to anti-racism and to developing multicultural competence and supporting an inclusive environment that acknowledges and values all forms of diversity. Trainees who are successful in the training program are those who share in our aim to make all members of the RIT community, regardless of race, color, creed, age, marital status, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, veteran status, or disability, feel included, respected, and valued.

## Major Responsibilities of Trainees

1. Trainees will provide counseling and/or psychotherapy that is short-term and goal-focused for students with a wide range of clinical presentations. The developmental level of incoming trainees will be assessed to determine the appropriate level of supervision necessary (ranging from observation of clinical work to supervised independent practice) as well as the appropriate case load and clinical presentations to be managed. Students will be responsible for demonstrating to supervisors their readiness to work independently (through active participation in supervision, including discussion as well as provision of work samples).
2. Trainees will participate actively in weekly individual and group supervision. Active participation entails preparation for supervision meetings, which includes preparation of cases and questions/concerns to discuss, provision of work samples (i.e., recordings of sessions with clients to present for discussion), and participation in discussions during meetings.
3. Trainees will initially participate in needs assessments and intake evaluations by observing clinical staff. As part of this process, trainees will become familiar with the administration, scoring and interpretation of the CCAPS (Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms), and they will learn how to utilize this assessment both as a one-time, stand-alone measure of functioning as well as a repeated measure that allows for tracking of client progress. Trainees at the appropriate developmental level will be allowed to perform their own intake evaluations, with supervision.
4. Trainees will, with supervision, coordinate the psychological services of clients, including facilitating consultations with the psychiatrist, making referrals to appropriate community resources, and making appropriate case dispositions.
5. Trainees will serve as “process observers” of psychotherapy groups or process groups. If developmentally appropriate, they will serve as co-leaders of such groups.
6. Trainees will maintain appropriate documentation of all clinical records, according to CaPS protocols.
7. Trainees will participate in a weekly didactic seminar, which trainees will receive a syllabus for in the beginning of the training period. This training seminar is intended to provide didactics on theory and applications of a range of evidence-based practices in the fields of psychology, social work, and mental health counseling.
8. Trainees may, as appropriate and according to expressed interests, have the opportunity to:
  - Participate in outreach efforts (e.g., offer psycho-educational programs to students in residence halls).
  - Participate in in-service training or other professional development experiences.

## Setting

### RIT Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS)

#### Overview

RIT CaPS is the only designated mental health service on campus at RIT. It offers a full range of clinical services, including both individual as well as group therapy, crisis intervention, psychiatry services, outreach programming, training, and consultation services to the university community. RIT CaPS is part of RIT Wellness, which combines physical and mental health services, disability services, and health promotion, seeking to integrate services and encourage multidisciplinary collaboration, valuing viewing students from a holistic perspective. Thus, RIT CaPS works closely with academic colleges and other Student Affairs service units, valuing collaborative relationships and the increased quality of care that comes with multidisciplinary interaction.

#### Services Offered

During a typical academic year, staff at CaPS provide individual and group counseling and psychotherapy to well over 2,000 students, and these numbers grow every year. RIT CaPS also provides crisis intervention services (including on-site, same-day appointments and an after-hours crisis line accessible to RIT students), psychiatry services (providing psychiatric evaluation and psychopharmacology to students), seminars/workshops (including stress-management and substance use workshops), outreach programs, and consultation about emotional and behavioral health issues for students, faculty, staff, and parents.

#### Client Population

CaPS serves a diverse client population. Housed within CaPS are clinicians fluent in America Sign Language to serve RIT's large deaf and hard-of-hearing population and all students who are registered at NTID, the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, on the RIT campus.

CaPS' client population is 52% male. About two-thirds of clients are under the age of 21. 83% of clients are hearing, 10% are deaf, and 7% are hard of hearing. With respect to racial/ethnic backgrounds, CaPS' client population is approximately 6% Asian/Pacific Islander, 7% African-American, 5% Hispanic, 1% Native American, 72.5% Caucasian, and 8.5% other. More than five percent of clients are international students.

#### Clinical Presentations

The range of problems for which students seek help is broad and also reflects both the fast-paced and rigorous nature of RIT's academic curricula as well as the diversity of the student body. Problems can include developmental issues, such as questioning identity, establishing a career path, forming and maintaining intimate relationships, and making the transition to higher education and adulthood. In addition, much like other universities across the country, RIT has experienced a rise in the number of students demonstrating severe and complex psychological concerns over the past decade. These problems include personality disorders, anxiety disorders, mood disorders, like major depressive disorder and bipolar disorders, substance use disorders, eating disorders, thought disorders, and suicidality. RIT also has a large number of students on the autism spectrum, who identify as genderqueer.

#### Staff

CaPS has a multidisciplinary staff consisting of psychologists, social workers, and mental health counselors. RIT highly values the diverse contributions of these distinct disciplines.

## Interview Process

Interested applicants should send the following materials to initiate the application process for the RIT CaPS Training Program:

- CV or Resume
- Cover Letter
- Transcripts (unofficial will be accepted)
- List of References (including at least one reference that can speak to quality of clinical work)
- Clinical Writing Sample (e.g., deidentified progress note, intake evaluation, assessment report)

Applicants should expect to participate in a half-day interview sometime in mid-March, during which they will learn more about the training program and participate in interviews with several training program staff.

## Inquiries and Correspondence

All correspondence regarding the RIT Counseling and Psychological Services Training Program should be addressed to:

Clarissa Wood, Ph.D.  
Associate Director of Training  
Counseling and Psychological Services at RIT

*114 Lomb Memorial Drive  
Rochester, New York 14623  
Phone: 585-475-2261  
Email: clwycc@rit.edu*