

RIT Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) Training Program

About RIT

Founded in 1829, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) is a diverse and collaborative community of engaged, socially conscious, and intellectually curious minds. Through creativity and innovation, and an intentional blending of technology, the arts and design, we provide exceptional individuals with a wide range of academic opportunities, including a leading research program and an internationally recognized education for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Beyond our main campus in Rochester, New York, RIT has international campuses in China, Croatia, Dubai, and Kosovo. And with over 20,000 students and more than 145,000 graduates from 50 states and over 100 nations, RIT is driving progress in industries and communities around the world.

About CaPS

RIT Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is the only designated mental health service center at RIT. Housed within the August Center, CaPS is part of the Health and Wellness offers a full range of clinical services, including both individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, psychiatry services, outreach programming, training and consultation services to the university community. As such, CaPS is focused on providing quality interdisciplinary care combining physical and mental health services, disability services, and health promotion to approach student wellness from a holistic perspective. CaPS also works collaboratively across campus with academic colleges and other Student Affairs service units providing increased quality of care that comes with multidisciplinary interaction.

We also have several counselors who are embedded part time (1-3 days/week) in various departments across campus to address the specific mental health needs of students and staff in those departmental communities. Thus far, we have counselors embedded in the following departments: Student Health Center, National Technical Institution for the Deaf, Multicultural Center for Academic Success, Women Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, College of Engineering, College of Science, College of Art Design, College of Engineering Technology, College of Computing and Informational Sciences, and Athletics.

Client Population

CaPS provides clinical mental health services to the undergraduate and graduate students at RIT. CaPS' client population is 52% male and about two-thirds of all clients are under the age of 21. Although the population at RIT is predominantly Caucasian (72.5%), the institution has students from several racial/ethnic backgrounds including, Asian/Pacific Islander (6%), African-American (7%), Hispanic (5%), Native-American (1%) and other (8.5%). Additionally, more than 12% of the population are international students. In general, racial and ethnic minorities are better

represented at CaPS as compared to the demographics of the overall institution. In addition to racial and ethnic minorities RIT also has students from differing sexual orientations, socioeconomic backgrounds, religious backgrounds, ages, genders, and abilities.

A distinguishing feature of RIT's is the large deaf and hard-of-hearing population studying within the National Technical Institution for the Deaf (NTID). As a result, RIT CaPS houses clinicians fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) to support the significant deaf and hard-of-hearing community on RIT's campus.

Clinical Presentations

The range of clinical concerns for which students seek help are broad and reflective of the fast-paced and rigorous nature of RIT's 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 relationships, and making the transition to higher education and adulthood. In addition, much like universities across the country, RIT has experienced an increase in the number of students presenting with severe and complex psychological concerns. These problems encompass personality disorders, eating disorders, thought disorders, trauma presentations and suicidality. There are several students at RIT who are on the autism spectrum and identify as genderqueer giving trainees an opportunity to work with these unique clinical issues.

Staff

CaPS has a multidisciplinary staff made up of psychologists, social workers, and mental health counselors. In addition, the staff at CaPS works very closely with the Health Center that houses our psychiatrist, physicians, nurse practitioners and nurses; as well as with Case Management. CaPS highly values the diverse contributions of these distinct disciplines.

Practicum Training Program

RIT CaPS has been an enriching training site for both doctoral and master's level students in the fields of psychology, social work and mental health counseling.

Training Philosophy

The primary goal of the practicum training program at RIT is to prepare students for work as well-rounded generalist providers in the field of psychology, social work and mental health counseling. There are three values central to the training program that are espoused by the staff and supervisors at CaPS: integration of science and practice, focus on diversity, and development of self-reflective practice. The training model is developmental in nature with staff recognizing that trainees enter the program at various levels of skill and experience. Provision of developmentally appropriate training experiences for optimal growth is at the heart of our training philosophy. Trainees' experiences are sequential, cumulative and graded in complexity, with increasing levels of independence throughout the training year. The supervisors at CaPS are

intent on providing mentorship, evidenced by a genuine commitment to intensive supervision to further the trainee's personal and professional goals.

Integration of Science and Practice

The staff at RIT CaPS recognize the importance of clinical practice that is rooted in scientific inquiry. To this end, our training program espouses a practitioner scholar training model where theoretical and research literature is integrated with the experiential components of training. There is a recognition of the applicability of scientific method in clinical thinking, including critical evaluation, awareness of biases, case conceptualization and hypothesis formation, and the process of hypothesis testing.

Focus on Diversity

RIT CaPS and our training program are deeply committed to anti-racist practices, and we acknowledge and respect the importance of sensitivity to and appreciation of all cultural and individual diversity. Our training program attends to diversity issues through multiple avenues including didactic training, supervision and clinical interactions with a diverse clientele. Furthermore, CaPS staff models authenticity, openness, and pride in their own identities. We also emphasize reflection on our own intersectionalities and the ways in which our identities may impact colleagues, supervisees and our clients. Greater multicultural awareness and sensitivity, and examining our experiences, assumptions, values, and (conscious or unconscious) biases is a key value that we continue to diligently work towards.

Self-Reflective Practice

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.

Goals of Training

Graduate students in the advanced 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.

Components

The RIT Counseling Center Training Program has several core components, which are viewed as essential in providing a comprehensive, supportive, and successful training experience for incoming trainees.

- 1) ***Clinical Experience*** – Trainees, as appropriate depending on developmental level, will gain clinical experience through the provision of individual and group counseling and psychotherapy.

Adhering to a developmental training model, trainees usually begin their experience with shadowing and observing their supervisors and other counseling center staff, and they gradually take on independent responsibilities as deemed appropriate given the trainee's skill level and their needs for professional development. Clinical experiences primarily include conducting needs assessment, intake evaluations, individual counseling and/or psychotherapy, group counseling and/or psychotherapy, crisis intervention, case management, and record-keeping. Depending upon the individual interests of trainees, there may be other clinical opportunities (e.g., athletics, integrated behavioral health). 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 and experience in assessment, diagnostic, and conceptualization skills, as appropriate depending on developmental level.

- 3) ***Clinical Supervision*** – Trainees will receive one hour of individual supervision weekly with an appointed licensed clinical supervisor. Trainees will also participate in group supervision with fellow trainees and facilitated by a staff clinician – trainees are expected to bring cases and session recordings for discussion. Supervision of group counseling/psychotherapy is also provided. Trainees will have the opportunity to consult with Counseling Center staff as needed and may be expected to attend clinical staff 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, staff meetings, clinical consultation meetings, and through direct observation of clinical work. Individual supervision is provided by staff members who are licensed or certified in their professional disciplines. CaPS is an interactive environment in which doors are usually open when clinicians are not in session, and clinicians 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.

- 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 social work, mental health counseling, and psychology.
- 5) **Consultation and Outreach:** Trainees are expected to co-lead (with other trainees and/or staff) a minimum of 2 workshops or outreach presentations per semester during their placement. Outreach opportunities are offered during the day as well as on weekends and evenings.

Following are the descriptions and approximate time allocations for training activities. These are subject to change, based on your specific program. After you are accepted into the program, please talk with your practicum coordinator about opportunities for a more individualized program.

Type of Work	Hours per Week
Clinical Services	
Individual Counseling	6-8
Needs Assessments	2
Group Counseling	2
Paperwork & Case Management	2-3
Outreach Activities	
Workshop presentations	2+ (per semester)
Supervision and Didactics	
Individual Supervision	1
Group Supervision	1.5
Didactic Seminar	1.5
	Total: 16-20

Evaluation and Feedback

Ongoing evaluation of trainees occurs through the use of data obtained through supervisor review of tapes and written work, feedback from staff and clients, self-evaluations, and direct service data. Formal written evaluations are completed at the end of the Fall semester (training mid-point) and at the end of the Spring semester upon completion of the training experience. These evaluations are formally reviewed with trainees. In addition, the trainee’s supervisor and/or the Associate Director of Training communicate with academic departments, as appropriate, regarding the work of trainees. Trainees complete evaluations of supervisors as well, both at the mid-point and the end of the training experience.

Prerequisites for Incoming Trainees

- Applicants interested in RIT CaPS' training program must be enrolled in a doctoral program in Clinical, Counseling or School Psychology; or a master's program in Social Work or Clinical Mental Health Counseling.
- They will have completed at least one practicum experience *prior* to entering the training program. This site is an advanced setting and trainees new to clinical work are not appropriate for it.
- They will have completed coursework in Clinical Interviewing and Abnormal Psychology/Diagnostic Psychopathology prior to beginning the program.
- Preference will be given to candidates who have completed relevant clinical coursework such as Diversity, Group Therapy, and Theoretical Foundations in Counseling.
- Applicants must be available to attend orientation a week prior to the beginning of classes in the Fall
- Trainees must be available to attend practicum on Fridays (didactics and group supervision will be held on Fridays)

Application Process

Interested applicants should submit the following materials by **March 3rd, 2024**, to initiate the application process for the RIT CaPS Training Program:

- Cover letter that specifically addresses your reasons for wanting to attend CaPS' training program, your training goals for this experience, and how your own background and training will have prepared you for this experience.
- Curriculum Vita
- Transcript (unofficial will be accepted)
- Names and contact information of two professional references at least one of whom has been a clinical supervisor

Applicants should expect to participate in a half-day in-person interview on **Monday, March 11th, 2024** during which they will learn more about the training program and meet with several training program staff.

The materials, and any queries about RIT CaPS' Training Program should be emailed to:

Tanisha Joshi, Ph.D. (she/her)
Associate Director of Training
RIT Counseling and Psychological Services
tkjycc@rit.edu
585-475-6586