

# Counseling and Psychological Services Training Program

## About the Training Program

The training program incorporates supervised clinical practice and didactic training as core components, adhering to the belief that these are both necessary elements to establish competence in clinical practice. Trainees are given opportunities to provide a broad range of clinical services and are supported in doing so with individual supervision, group supervision (including the opportunity for case conferencing), treatment team involvement, and didactic training.

## The Setting

About the **Rochester Institute of Technology**

## Typical Work Week

Trainees in the Counseling and Psychological Services training program are asked to commit to a full-year, 20 hour/week training experience. A typical work week involves two full clinical days as well as a half day spent attending seminars (Didactic Seminar and Group Supervision Seminar) and a clinical staff meeting.

## Students in the Program

The RIT Counseling and Psychological Services Training Program has been fortunate to consistently be able to invite 3-4 interns a year into the training program from area graduate programs for the past couple of years. Graduates have moved on to work in community mental health settings, successfully match at APA-accredited internship programs, and complete doctoral degrees.

## Our Staff Trainers

Training is an integral part of the Counseling and Psychological Services mission. As a result, all staff are involved in the training program in some capacity. Counseling and Psychological Services staff serve as supervisors, instructors, mentors, and consultants to trainees. They bring years of clinical, teaching, and supervision experience to their work as training faculty, as well as perspectives from varied disciplines (mental health counseling, social work, and psychology) and theoretical orientations.

## Qualifications of Candidates

Successful candidates will 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) is required during the interview process.

Successful candidates must also have completed at least one practicum experience prior to entering the training program. Students 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.

Finally, successful candidates must demonstrate the capacity to receive, benefit from, and participate in training and supervision. Successful candidates are those who are self-motivated, can remain open and responsive to feedback, and have a positive work ethic.

## Stipends and Benefits

RIT's Counseling and Psychological Services Training Program offers unpaid training opportunities to masters-level and doctoral-level students in graduate programs for varied mental health disciplines. No stipends/benefits are offered.

## 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). Most trainees receive 2 hours of individual supervision per week (with 2 distinct clinical supervisors). 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 to discuss. Supervision of group counseling or psychotherapy is also provided. Trainees will have the opportunity to consult with Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) staff as needed and will also be expected to attend clinical staff meetings to foster the ability to work in collaboration with other clinicians as part of a treatment team.

A strength of the RIT's CPS training program is its staff. 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. Counseling and Psychological Services 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.

Supervisors adhere to a developmental model and focus the supervision work on the supervisee's training needs. Supervisors strive for an open and safe supervision environment and welcome honest feedback from supervisees. Supervision incorporates watching or listening to 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.

## When your Therapist is a Trainee

During the course of your treatment at RIT Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS), you may be assigned to work with a therapist who is completing training to earn a master's or doctoral degree in social work, mental health counseling, or psychology. Working with a trainee can be a unique and valued opportunity to receive a comprehensive team approach to treatment, because therapists in training receive a high level of supervision from highly competent, licensed clinicians at the counseling center who review and influence every aspect of your treatment experience. Supervision can involve direct observation of treatment sessions, review of taped recordings of treatment sessions, and frequent case consultation. As is the case with all clients of Counseling and Psychological Services, you will benefit from your therapist having the opportunity to consult, both individually and in group settings, with other CPS staff or appropriate Student Health Center professionals on how to provide the best possible care to you. Trainees are also often informed of the latest therapy approaches, and they are often energetic, motivated, and they often have fewer clients, and thus, more time to devote to providing individualized care.

Of course, it is normal to have fears about working with a trainee – some considerations include the recognition that trainees are only here for a limited time. Each trainee stays at CPS for one academic year, and then they move on to complete their degree and work elsewhere. They will not be around if you return to CPS in future years, though trainees are supported in providing all the information you will need for, and in helping facilitate, a successful transfer of care. It is important for clients of Counseling and Psychological Services to be aware that the office is committed to a short-term model of therapy, so even though trainees are at Counseling and Psychological Services for a limited time, this is not often problematic – the vast majority of clients find that a few sessions (on average, 5) is more than enough to work on the goals they present to Counseling and Psychological Services with. Also, many clients do benefit from working with a therapist for a defined period of time – this can be motivating and can speed up the process of working toward valued goals. Some clients also worry that their trainee therapist may not have all the knowledge or training they need to provide good care. Trainees receive a high level of supervision and didactic training to ensure they have the skills necessary to provide adequate care. Also, great care is taken to only assign cases to trainees that they are adequately prepared for. However, if you

believe you are not receiving good care, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Training Coordinator, the trainee's supervisor (you will be provided with names or contact information of supervisors at your first meeting), or anybody whom you feel comfortable talking to at Counseling and Psychological Services about your concerns. These concerns are always taken seriously.

### **Important Information to Know about Working with a Trainee:**

- All trainees are required to record sessions to allow for adequate supervision of their clinical work. Any client of CPS working with a trainee must agree to having sessions recorded and must sign an A/V consent form (see below for the link to this form). All recordings are used only for supervisory purposes and are destroyed immediately after viewing. If a client does not feel comfortable with this, they can decline working with a trainee.
- Trainees are with CPS for the fall and spring semesters within one academic year.
- Trainees are closely supervised. When you are working with a trainee, many eyes will oversee your therapy work to ensure that you are provided the best possible care. All of these individuals are aware of and will respect your rights to and the limits of confidentiality.

## **Philosophy and Goals**

The training model adhered to by RIT Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) is developmental in nature, with staff recognizing that trainees enter the program at various levels of skill and experience. The 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 assisting them through supervision, teaching, and mentoring. The training model also recognizes the importance of each distinct mental health discipline; thus, special attention is given to providing supervision in line with a student's specific discipline, in addition to providing exposure to perspectives and practices of other disciplines as a means of encouraging the development of skills in working within a diverse group of professionals with a common goal. Collaboration with others in the Center for Student Health, Counseling, and Wellness and across campus is viewed as paramount. One of the values inherent in the training process and espoused by the training staff includes the belief that science and scholarship inform competent practice; thus, training program staff seek to integrate this value into all elements of the training program and into their own clinical work at CPS. The training program also acknowledges the importance of fostering cultural competence in developing clinicians and supporting awareness, appreciation, and knowledge of, and sensitivity to, cultural and individual diversity; thus, specific training is given and supervision is performed in line with this value.

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 Counseling and Psychological Services, among other aspects.

## **Trainee Evaluation**

RIT's Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) provides clinical training to several groups of professionals in training from a number of local graduate programs, so the trainee evaluation process will look different depending upon the graduate program that a trainee attends. Each program, as well as the CPS training program, has core competencies that it seeks to promote growth in and evaluate throughout the training year.

Trainee evaluation is conducted in three major ways:

- On an informal daily/weekly basis by individual supervisors as part of the supervisory experience.
- On a weekly/biweekly basis in Supervisor Supervision Seminar, where supervisors share feedback, as needed.
- On a mid-year, end-of-year (the time frame depends on the duration of the training period, but for trainees attending the training program for the full academic year, evaluations will be completed in December and at the

end of the training year, in May) basis by primary supervisors completing the formal evaluation form specific to their graduate program.

## Components of Training

RIT's Counseling and Psychological Services Training Program has several core components, which are viewed as essential in providing a comprehensive, supportive, and successful training experiencing for incoming trainees.

- 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. Trainees usually begin their experience with shadowing and observing their supervisors and other Counseling and Psychological Services 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 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., career counseling/testing, bio-feedback). 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 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). Most trainees receive 2 hours of individual supervision per week (with 2 distinct clinical supervisors). 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 to discuss. Supervision of group counseling/psychotherapy is also provided. Trainees will have the opportunity to consult with Counseling and Psychological Services staff as needed and will also be expected to attend clinical staff meetings to foster the ability to work in collaboration with other clinicians as part of a treatment team.
- 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. Optional: Opportunities for Consultation and Outreach** – These opportunities are available if trainees demonstrate interest and are adequately skilled to manage these experiences.

## Applying and Requesting Information

Applicants to the program should be prepared to commit to a 20-hour-per-week, full academic year (fall and spring semesters, from August through May) traineeship. Application review typically begins in early February, and interviews are often scheduled in March or April.

### To Apply:

Speak to your graduate program's coordinator of training to determine your eligibility for the RIT Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) training program (see Qualifications of Candidates).

If you meet all qualifications, email/mail the following documents to Raquel Bateman, Ph.D. (contact information above):

- A cover letter, in which you explain why the CPS training program is a good fit given your qualifications, interests, and goals
- A resume or CV

If you are asked to attend an interview after the above materials are reviewed, you will then be asked to provide the following prior to interviewing:

- Graduate transcript(s)
- A list of references
- A clinical sample
- Applicants are encouraged to contact the Training Coordinator with any questions

### **RIT Does Not Discriminate**

RIT promotes and values diversity within its workforce and provides equal opportunity to all qualified individuals regardless of race, color, creed, age, marital status, sex, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, veteran status, or disability.