

Supplemental Information #2

CONNECTIONS DAY SCHOOL CLINICAL TRAINING PROGRAM GOALS, OBJECTIVES & SUPERVISION PHILOSOPHY

The Clinical Training Program at Connections Day School is extensive - offering three Post-Doctoral Fellowship positions, three Doctoral Internship (APA accredited) positions, and five Psychotherapeutic Externship/Practicum (ACEPT member) positions.

The Psychotherapeutic Externship program at CDS has been designed to help Externs acquire and refine their clinical skills in key areas of practice, all while functioning as a valued member of a multidisciplinary team. This team is comprised of: Psychologists, Professional Counselors, Social Worker, Art Therapist, Substance Abuse Specialist, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Pathologist, Psychiatrist, Marriage & Family Specialist, ASD Specialist, Special Education Teachers, Restorative Intervention Specialists, Program Assistants, etc.

There is an emphasis on training in fundamental and advanced clinical skills with a primary focus on Individual, Group, Family & Milieu Therapy, and Crisis Intervention. The training program is designed and organized in a way that provides Externs with a planned, programmed sequence of training experiences – one that assures breadth and quality of training.

Externs are provided with the opportunity to work with high-risk children, adolescents and their families – individuals struggling with mild to severe mood, anxiety, behavior, substance-related, psychotic, developmental and personality disorders, who are diverse in age, culture, ethnicity, race, religion, socioeconomic status, gender identity and sexual orientation. All of this is done under the supervision of the Clinical Director, and other members of our dynamic Clinical Training Staff.

The Clinical Supervisors and Consultants at CDS are strongly committed to training. We believe that active participation in the training of Clinical Psychologists and Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors benefits not only our Trainees (Externs, Interns & Post-Docs), but also their Supervisors and our profession of psychology as a whole. Our Clinical Staff supports a culture of inclusion and views professional growth as interrelated to personal growth, in that, it is a never-ending, ever-changing process. Therefore, Trainees are consistently challenged to examine themselves and their worldviews as they develop as Psychologists.

Supervisors at CDS take a Constructivist approach to the supervision process. Constructivism postulates that knowledge is created within a person, not communicated from the outside; and that problem solving is at the heart of learning, thinking and development. Therefore, the Supervisor's role is not so much to lecture at Trainees, but to act as an expert learner who guides Trainees in their adoption of cognitive strategies such as self-testing, articulating understanding, asking probing questions and reflection; and helps Trainees organize information in a way that encourages them to develop new insights and connect with their previous learning. Supervisors support Trainees through the process of reflecting on past and immediate experiences, so that

Trainees can solve problems and discover cause & effect relationships – they “construct” their own understanding. Learning is thus an active process that requires a change in the Trainee, because people only deeply understand what they, themselves, have constructed.

The Constructivist approach also recognizes that each Trainee comes to the program with unique clinical abilities to foster, along with areas of clinical skill to enhance. Therefore, Supervisors work with Trainees to identify their areas of strength and struggle, and the professional level at which they would like to be functioning by the end of their training year (all while maintaining expected clinical competency standards). Supervisors then work with each Trainee to create a unique supervision experience where these goals can be achieved throughout the course of the year. As such, no Trainee’s supervision is exactly the same, which allows for a unique learning experience for all.

Ultimately, our primary objective is to promote our Externs’ professional growth in such a way that, by the end of their training year, they feel confident in their ability to function as Clinicians who practice in accordance with the highest standards of care.