

## Program Aim and Training Goals

The aim of The HCCAC doctoral psychology internship program is to assist doctoral candidates in developing proficiency in the provision of a broad range of clinical and scholarly psychology functions, which span a variety of settings, in a manner consistent with APA Ethical Standards. Our ultimate goal is to assist interns in learning how to act competently, respectfully, ethically, and empathically in the delivery of mental health and psychological services while being ever cognizant of the cultural and individual diversity of the clients being served. This necessarily includes an understanding of multicultural and underserved population issues, as well as an awareness of professional issues, standards, and consumer protection ethics.

The HCCAC is a multidisciplinary institution with a mission to promote the complete healing of child victims of sexual abuse, as well as their families. Once sexual abuse has been disclosed, children needing therapeutic treatment or psychological testing are referred to The HCCAC's Therapy and Psychological (T&P) Services Department. The T&P team consists of three licensed psychologists, two doctoral psychology interns, master's level mental health clinicians, and interns with backgrounds in Social Work. In addition, psychiatric services for evaluation, consultation, and ongoing medication management are available when necessary. We also have two Licensed Sex Offender Treatment Providers who offer services to juveniles with sexually acting out behaviors through the BASE Program.

Common treatment modalities include Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), family systems, psychodynamic, and play therapy. Other approaches may incorporate experiential and expressive components, such as art, sand tray, and animal assisted therapies. Due to the diverse needs of our clientele, Spanish/English bilingual clinicians are available for psychological evaluation and all types of therapy. Supervision specifically related to each treatment modality and diverse population, including bilingual intervention and psychological evaluation, is provided. In order to meet current standards issued by the National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC), our program may request you to receive training using your personal time and resources in the evidence-based modalities approved by NCAC. Through the use of traditional and expressive therapies, clinicians are better able to provide services individually tailored to meet the needs of clients and their families within a culturally competent framework.

## Training Experiences

Interns conduct all services on-site and collaborate with a multidisciplinary team including Child Protective Services (CPS), the District Attorney's (DA) Office, law enforcement, forensic interviewers, physicians, and court-appointed volunteers. Interns provide psychotherapy to clients (child, adolescent, and adult) with a variety of disorders, particularly posttraumatic symptomatology due to child sexual abuse. In addition, interns complete an average of four trauma-informed psychological evaluations per year.

*Psychological evaluations* are conducted by both English- and Spanish-speaking clinicians in the client's dominant language. Evaluations of children and adolescents assess intellectual ability, social/emotional functioning, posttraumatic symptomatology, and achievement using both objective and projective measures (e.g., Trauma Symptom checklists, Rorschach, drawings, Wechsler scales,

etc.). In addition, for caregivers, personality and quality of parent-child relationship are also assessed. Interns are encouraged to enhance their knowledge and experience with the many instruments that are available to them and are expected to become proficient in diagnostic skills, writing evaluations, and generating pertinent recommendations. A licensed psychologist provides weekly supervision that is directly related to assessment.

### Structured Learning Opportunities

*Didactics:* At least two hours per week are devoted specifically to didactics or case presentations. Didactics cover a variety of domains relevant to child sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, and other related topics. Examples of didactic topics include human trafficking, court testimony, internet crimes against children, and multicultural competence. Case presentations give interns the opportunity to consult with other clinicians on challenging cases and to provide constructive feedback during peer-review.

*Mutual Case Staffing:* One hour per week is set aside for interns to collaborate with other T&P team members regarding shared cases.

*Journal Hour:* Interns participate in weekly journal hour meetings to present and discuss research relevant to child sexual abuse. Example topics include evidence-based treatment, human trafficking, court testimony, delayed disclosure, recantation, youth with problematic sexual behaviors, vicarious trauma, and compassion fatigue. In addition, during the last journal hour of each month, clinicians rotate bringing a culturally-inspired food item to share with team members while discussing an article relevant to issues on diversity and multiculturalism.

*Orientation:* The first few weeks of the internship involve orientation activities for the new interns, including at least one formal day of “New Employee Orientation” through Harris County. Interns spend a significant amount of time learning about the various HCCAC departments, visiting civil and criminal court hearings, observing forensic interviews, touring the medical clinic where sexual assault exams are conducted, and meeting with investigators and other agencies involved in crimes against children.

## Collaborating Organizations and Their Roles

The HCCAC collaborates with professionals from 53 Partner Agencies, which include law enforcement, medical and mental health clinicians, and governmental investigative entities, all with the common goal of protecting children. Listed below are some of the agencies with which The HCCAC collaborates:

- Baylor College of Medicine/Texas Children’s Hospital – Provides specialized medical evaluations, medical treatment, and follow-up services.

- Child Advocates, Inc. /Court-Appointed Special Advocates – Provides court-appointed volunteers that regularly visit children in protective custody and advocate on their behalf in criminal and family court cases.
  - Communities in Schools, Houston, Inc. – Provides on-campus student assistance services for at-risk students to empower them to remain in school.
  - Crime Stoppers of Houston, Inc. – Provides a toll-free hotline where callers can report information leading to the arrest and conviction of child sexual abuse perpetrators.
  - Federal Bureau of Investigation – Performs investigative interviews with children relating to Internet Child Pornography and Child Sexual Exploitation cases. Evidence collected is used in the prosecution of both local and traveler pedophiles in state and federal cases.
  - Harris County Attorney's Office – Represents the State of Texas in all matters concerning the care, custody, and welfare of the children and provides legal consultation regarding the management of The HCCAC program.
  - Harris County District Attorney's Office – Evaluates cases for prosecution and provides legal consultation for law enforcement personnel.
  - Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences – Provides medical examination and forensic laboratory services. These include forensic pathology and investigations from which clinical, historical, and circumstantial information crucial to each case is gathered.
  - Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults – Provides investigating and ongoing substitute care caseworkers and refers clients to The HCCAC.
  - Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services – Provides information on both historical and current statistical trends in child fatalities occurring in Houston/Harris County.
  - Houston Area Women's Center/Children's Court Services – Provides professional accompaniment to children on criminal court cases and assists families with Crime Victims Compensation Fund applications.
  - Houston-Metro Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) – Provides assistance to state and local enforcement agencies to enhance their investigative response to offenders who use the internet, online communications systems, or other computer technology to sexually exploit children.
  - Memorial Hermann Healthcare System – Contributes to the program through ongoing consultation and support.
  - Texas Center for the Missing – Provides services to families with missing children.
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- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) – Exercises their statutory responsibilities of protecting children and investigating complaints of child abuse and neglect.
  - U.S. Attorney's Office – Provides assistance with cases involving internet crimes against children and human trafficking of children, as well as other violations against children which occur on federal property.

In some cases, extensive collaboration among agencies is warranted to clarify roles and facilitate the development of treatment goals for each agency involved. Interns can participate in this particular collaboration by attending the Child Sexual Abuse Review Team (CSART) meeting each month. This monthly meeting has proven to be exceptional in the socialization of interns with professionals in the community and in familiarizing them with the multidisciplinary process.

## Internship Competencies and Training Elements

The training curriculum emphasizes nine profession-wide competencies and one program-specific competency with specific objectives that are expected to be met by the end of the internship. Progress toward these goals is informally assessed throughout the year, and any concerns noted are discussed with the intern by his or her supervisor. Interns are formally assessed twice a year, using mid- and end-of-year evaluations. The primary supervisor, provided with feedback from other supervisors who work with the intern, evaluates the intern twice yearly on his or her progress in each of the following areas:

### 1. Individual and Cultural Diversity

- a. Demonstrates an understanding of how one's own personal/cultural history, attitudes, and biases, affect how one understands and interacts with others
- b. Demonstrates an understanding of how individual and cultural diversity affects psychological and personality development
- c. Demonstrates the ability to independently apply knowledge and approaches in working effectively with a range of diverse individuals and groups

### 2. Professional Values, Attitudes, and Behaviors

- a. Actively seeks and demonstrates openness and responsiveness to feedback
- b. Responds professionally in increasingly complex situations with a greater degree of independence as the internship progresses
- c. Behaves in ways that reflect the values and attitudes of psychology, including integrity, professionalism, accountability, and concern for the welfare of others

### 3. Ethical and Legal Standards

- a. Demonstrates knowledge of APA Ethics Code and values as they relate to the profession of psychology
- b. Applies ethical decision-making processes
- c. Seeks supervision and consultation in order to resolve ethical dilemmas
- d. Demonstrates professional conduct

- e. Demonstrates knowledge of and acts in accordance with relevant laws, regulations, rules, and policies governing health service psychology at the organizational, local, state, regional, and federal levels.

#### 4. Intervention

- a. Considers cultural issues in case conceptualization, diagnosis, and treatment modality
- b. Evaluates intervention effectiveness, and adapts intervention goals and methods consistent with ongoing evaluation
- c. Develops evidence-based intervention plans specific to the service delivery goals
- d. Demonstrates self-awareness and impact of self on therapeutic relationship
- e. Demonstrates skill in multiple treatment modalities, e.g., individual, group, family
- f. Demonstrates capacity to manage high-risk clinical situations effectively and ethically

#### 5. Assessment

- a. Considers cultural issues in selection of assessment tools and diagnostic decisions
- b. Accurately administers and scores assessment instruments
- c. Synthesizes and interprets test data from multiple sources
- d. Appropriately communicates assessment results
- e. Demonstrates a thorough working knowledge of DSM-5 diagnoses

#### 6. Consultation and Inter professional/Interdisciplinary Collaboration

- a. Demonstrates knowledge and respect for the roles and perspectives of other professionals
- b. Demonstrates an understanding of using a team approach to provide clinical services
- c. Collaborates with supervisors and staff across disciplines

#### 7. Communication and Interpersonal Skills

- a. Develops and maintains effective relationships with a wide range of individuals, including coworkers and professionals from partner agencies
- b. Demonstrates the ability to manage difficult situations
- c. Uses clear and effective written communication
- d. Demonstrates clear and effective oral communication

#### 8. Supervision

- a. Seeks supervision to address challenges and barriers in clinical work
- b. Demonstrates willingness and ability to integrate feedback to improve clinical skills and to further professional development
- c. Works with supervisor to set goals
- d. Demonstrates openness and non-defensiveness when tracking progress toward goals
- e. Applies knowledge of supervision models and practices in direct or simulated practice

## 9. Research

- a. Participates in weekly journal hour through competently discussing relevant research
- b. Demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate research or other scholarly activities
- c. Uses scholarly literature and other resources to inform practice

## Clinical Supervision for Interns

Supervision is a major emphasis of the internship program at The HCCAC, as it is a primary form of training and evaluation for the development of intern competencies. Supervision is intended to provide both depth and breadth in clinical application, research, assessment, and cultural competence. A minimum of two hours of individual supervision is provided each week by a licensed psychologist. In addition, interns receive two hours of group supervision each week: One hour per week specifically related to psychological assessment (i.e., administration, scoring, interpretation, and report writing) and an hour of supervision that focuses on multiculturalism and working with diverse client populations is supervised by licensed psychologists.

## Supervisor and Program Evaluation

Interns are given the opportunity to evaluate their supervisor at mid-year and at the conclusion of their internship. In addition, interns are asked to evaluate the program at the same evaluation points and to provide feedback regarding the program's strengths and areas in need of improvement.

## Training Committee Members

Two full-time licensed psychologists provide primary supervision for interns and are the primary participants in the internship program's planning, implementation, and evaluation:

**Anita Ali Jaffer, Psy.D.** (Manager of Psychological Services & Internship Training Director) received her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology, Spanish, and Biology at University of Denver and completed her doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology in 2013. Dr. Jaffer is a Licensed Psychologist in the state of Texas and provides psychological assessments to English-speaking and Spanish-speaking children and adults at The HCCAC. She also supervises interns in the area of psychological assessments and multiculturalism. She conducts regular Clinical Training Committee meetings with primary supervisors to evaluate progress and support the growth of doctoral interns in the training program. Dr. Jaffer has previously provided individual, family, and group therapy to victims of trauma and their families in English and Spanish. She has also completed training in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Her area of expertise is in the provision of bilingual psychological assessment and therapy and training mental health professionals in assessing and treating Muslim clients. Dr. Jaffer serves as a consultant and liaison in the larger Muslim community and provides psychoeducation on a variety of mental health topics. Dr. Jaffer has served as an expert and fact witness in civil and criminal cases related to child sexual abuse.

**Nneka Nnadozie Psy.D.** (Staff Psychologist) received her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at The California School of Professional Psychology-Sacramento in 2015, where she obtained specialized training in forensic psychology. She became passionate about working with sex trafficking victims and survivors while conducting her dissertation research on adult prostituted women. She continues her work with sex trafficking victims by providing individual and group psychotherapy to youth survivors and their caregivers. She also developed and implemented a versatile and interactive curriculum for preventing child sexual exploitation. The curriculum, Standing for and Achieving Youth Empowerment (S.A.Y.E.), is a fundamental prevention program for youth who are at-risk for being trafficked that can be taught to qualified mental health professionals in diverse settings. Her other responsibilities at The Children's Assessment Center include providing community trainings and presentations, participating in case consultations, providing crisis intervention, and conducting psychotherapy and psychological evaluations to child sexual abuse survivors.

**Whitney Crowson, Psy.D.** (Staff Psychologist) received her Master's in Counseling and Guidance from Louisiana Tech University. She earned a second Master's and a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (with an emphasis in Child/Adolescent Psychology) from the Florida School of Professional Psychology, Tampa. Dr. Crowson is a Licensed Psychologist in the state of Texas and is experienced in working with victims of childhood sexual trauma and human trafficking. She has certifications in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). As a Staff Psychologist at The HCCAC, Dr. Crowson provides therapy and psychological assessment to both children and their families and

consults with partner agencies. In addition, Dr. Crowson has served as an expert and a fact witness in both civil and criminal court proceedings.

***Additional Staff:***

Claudia Mustafa, LCSW-S, RPT-S – Director of Therapy and Psychological Services

Claudia Gonzalez, MA, LPC-S – Manager of Therapy Services

### Life as an HCCAC Intern

The Children's Assessment Center is located near Rice University in Houston's Rice Village District. There are over 100 restaurants and retailers within walking distance from The HCCAC, which provides a convenient opportunity for both staff and interns to take brief breaks throughout the workday. Given the sensitive nature of our clinical work, self-care is encouraged and emphasized as an integral part of our program. Likewise, interns are urged to take advantage of their accrued flex hours, vacation time, and yearly floating holiday to promote well-being and reduce the effects of vicarious trauma.



Doctoral interns gain a breadth of experiences that assist in further developing their clinical knowledge and skills. In addition, interns are part of a multidisciplinary team that is comprised of clinicians from diverse educational backgrounds and are afforded opportunities to staff and consult on cases with many different agencies, including Child Protective Services, law enforcement, forensic services, physicians, and statewide district attorneys. Interns gain multifaceted experiences by sharing office space with other interns from multiple disciplines. All interns have access to their own desktop computer and phone extension to complete their daily tasks. Interns work 40 hours per week on average. When hours exceed this amount, doctoral interns are compensated with additional time off.

Houston is the fourth most populous city in the United States and is consistently ranked as the nation's most diverse city. Such diversity offers interns opportunities to be exposed to different cultures, languages, and (especially) foods. In fact, *The Washington Post* named Houston one of "America's Best Food Cities." In addition, the Museum District, Theater District, large city parks, and Downtown area contribute to Houston's vibrant culture by hosting events that showcase the art and music scene. Houston's signature event, the Livestock Show and Rodeo, features some of the world's biggest recording artists and hosts a championship Bar-B-Que contest. Finally, if you're a sports fan, Houston is home to the Texans football team, Rockets basketball team, Astros baseball team, and Dynamo soccer team.

## Stipend and Benefits

Compensation for the one-year, full-time internship (beginning September 1<sup>st</sup>) is \$31,200 plus benefits. As Harris County employees, interns and their dependents are eligible to receive health insurance after 75 days of continuous employment. A basic level health insurance plan is provided at no-cost to the intern at this time. All county employees, including interns, participate in contributing to a retirement plan and have the option to enroll in additional retirement plans. Interns accrue three hours of vacation time and four hours of sick time during each two-week pay period and are provided nine holidays and one floating holiday (to be used at the intern's discretion throughout the year). Any hours worked beyond 40 hours per week are converted to compensatory time and can be used in the future.

## Applicant Selection and Interview Process

Qualified applicants must currently be enrolled in a doctoral program in psychology and have completed all doctoral coursework. Preference is given to those who have completed their dissertation/clinical research project or are near completion by the start of the internship year. Additionally, prior practicum placements involving therapy, assessment (e.g., objective and projective measures), and integrative report writing with children and adolescents is preferred. Experience with child sexual abuse or other trauma populations may be helpful, but is not required. Due to the sensitive nature of child sexual abuse and human trafficking, it is not uncommon for novice and seasoned clinicians to experience vicarious trauma when working with this population. As such, it is especially

important for potential applicants to be aware of any personal history that could impede their ability to maintain professional and personal boundaries with clients.

For applicants who determine that The HCCAC is an appropriate match given their interests, experiences, and skills, please submit your application materials by November 15<sup>th</sup>. You are encouraged to submit materials as early as possible; however, applications will not be reviewed until after the deadline. Applicants will not be notified that his or her application has been received. It is incumbent upon each applicant to ensure the receipt of their complete application by the deadline by contacting APPIC directly. Applicants will be notified by mid-December whether or not they have been selected for an interview. If selected, day-long interviews are conducted in person on two separate dates in mid- to late January. Applicants are interviewed by all members of the Training Committee and other members of T&P's Management Team. In addition, applicants will have the opportunity to eat lunch with the current doctoral interns and inquire about life as an intern at the HCCAC in a more informal setting.

To address the COVID restrictions that may have affected the training and ability of prospective applicants to acquire the prerequisite experience, the program asks that you include the effects of COVID on your training in your cover letter for consideration. For only the year of 2020, we have also extended our application deadline to November 30, 2020. Applicants will be notified by mid-December whether or not they have been selected for an interview. If selected, day-long interviews are conducted virtually on two separate dates in mid- to late January. In lieu of eating lunch with the current doctoral interns, applicants will have the opportunity to meet with them virtually in a more informal setting.

This internship site agrees to abide by the APPIC policy that no person at this training facility will solicit, accept, or use any ranking-related information from any intern applicant. All doctoral interns will be determined through the APPIC match. Additionally, The HCCAC is an equal opportunity employer and encourages minorities and persons of diverse backgrounds of all types to apply to the psychology internship program. Harris County does not discriminate against employees with disabilities and provides appropriate reasonable accommodation(s) when requested. All HCCAC facilities and procedures are compliant with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Applicants who require accommodations for the application process, interview, or training year are encouraged to contact the Training Director in order to discuss our process for making special arrangements. The HCCAC is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals who request them.

Interns who successfully match to the program will be subject to a criminal background check through the Department of Family and Protective Services. Harris County does not employ individuals who have had a felony within the past ten years or a misdemeanor within the past five years. In addition, Harris County is committed to providing a workplace free of drugs and alcohol. Therefore, interns must also pass a drug and alcohol screening prior to their employment with Harris County.

Checklist of Required Application and Supporting Materials for  
Match Site #1103

- \_\_\_ Complete APPIC application (AAPI) available at: <http://www.appic.org>
- \_\_\_ Cover Letter (part of the online AAPI)
- \_\_\_ Curriculum Vitae with current telephone number (part of the online AAPI)
- \_\_\_ Three Standardized Reference Forms (part of the online AAPI)
- \_\_\_ Official graduate transcript (part of the online AAPI)
- \_\_\_ Two complete redacted psychological assessment reports with interpretations (submitted through the online AAPI)
- \_\_\_ Receipt of application by November 30

The application and supplemental materials should be submitted through AAPI online. Documentation that is mailed directly to this department will not be accepted.

Contact Dr. Anita Jaffer with questions via email ([Anita.Jaffer@cac.hctx.net](mailto:Anita.Jaffer@cac.hctx.net)) or by phone at 713-986-3380.

## Policies and Procedures

The policies and procedures for Harris County employees are applicable to The HCCAC interns. Please see <http://www.co.harris.tx.us/hrm/> for additional information. Interns are provided with a detailed intern manual at orientation that provides policies and procedures specific to the internship program. This includes, but is not limited to, information regarding intern grievances, due process, intern evaluations, and maternity and paternity leave policies. Internship policies and procedures also are available upon request with an email to the Training Director.