

Clinical Psychology - Adult Assessment Practicum Training
South County Psychiatry
Intensive Outpatient, Outpatient, and Weight Management Programs
2024-2025
Practicum Point of Contact: drmeth@scp-ri.com

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in a practicum placement with South County Psychiatry (SCP)! Our site offers assessment practicum training at the pre-internship level for psychology doctoral students. This placement is designed to provide early- to mid-level doctoral students (2nd year or above) who are seeking additional experience in diagnosis and psychiatric assessment.

Practicum Supervisors:

Mark Zimmerman, MD
Molly Meth, PhD
Theresa Morgan, PhD
Kristin Davidoff, PhD

Start Date and Duration: July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025*

*flexible start/end times available, please contact us with questions/concerns

Time/Day Commitment: 2-3 days per week. Assessments take place during the hours of 8:30AM-12:30PM; reports are due the following morning by 8AM; writing and additional hours are flexible so long as deadlines are met.
Approximately 15-20 hours per week total.

Compensation: None currently though please check back with us soon

The Diagnosis and Assessment Program at South County Psychiatry

The Assessment Program at SCP was originally founded over 25 years ago in coordination with Brown University as the MIDAS Project (Methods to Improve Diagnostic Assessment and Services), which seeks to integrate research methodology into routine clinical practice. This project recently migrated to a private practice setting at SCP. It now represents the largest existing clinical epidemiological study using standardized measures that has been conducted in routine clinical practice. Centered around rigorous clinical training, the project has amassed over 9,000 individual participants across 3 data sets of psychiatric outpatients, partial hospital patients, and pre-surgical assessments of bariatric surgery candidates. We are currently in the process of establishing a fourth, largely unstudied sample of patients referred for treatment at the intensive outpatient level, a largely unstudied but increasingly accessed level of care in US healthcare settings.

Trainees have been an integral part of the MIDAS project since its inception. Our goals are to provide superior training in psychiatric diagnosis, assessment, and clinical interpretation to doctoral students seeking additional training in clinical assessment methods as integrated into clinical practice. Trainees will complete rigorous training in the administration of the following measures/assessment procedures:

- Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV & 5 (SCID)
- Schedule for Affective Disorders and Schizophrenia (SADS)
- Treatment Response to Antidepressant History (TRAQ)
- Structured Interview for DSM-IV Borderline Personality (SIDP)
- Family History – Research Diagnostic Criteria Interview (FH-RDC)
- Rhode Island Bariatric Surgery Interview (RIBSI)
- Extracted Hamilton Depression Rating Scale
- Psychosocial and Occupational Functioning Assessment

Training for the MIDAS project is exacting and includes supervised observation/administration of 25 interviews before becoming independent on your assessment procedures. Assessments are conducted via telehealth, and typically last 1-3 hours, depending on patient needs. During training your assessments will be supervised by a combination of trained SCID administrators at a variety of levels, and always supervised by a psychologist at the doctoral level. Patients present with a range of symptoms and diagnoses, and externs can expect to get experience well beyond that typically available at the graduate level. Students can also expect to accrue a large amount of assessment hours over the course of this externship.

Externs with interests in research will also have access to the larger MIDAS database, and may elect to participate in or themselves initiate analyses of these data. We take seriously our commitment to integrated clinical and research work, and actively support analysis and publication of our existing data.

Population Served

South County Psychiatry serves a diverse population of outpatients, weight-management & pre-bariatric surgery patients, and patients enrolling in our cutting edge intensive outpatient program (IOP). Externs at this site will conduct assessments with adults (18+), and will be fully trained to provide a full, semi-structured assessment with all 3 population groups. Demographics are generally reflective of the broader Rhode Island community. Diagnoses served are vast and varied. Most common presenting concerns include mood disorders, anxiety disorders, suicidality, personality pathology (e.g., BPD), post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, disordered eating, and mild co-occurring substance and/or alcohol use disorders.

Once training is complete, externs with specific interests may elect to focus on assessments in any one of these populations, or with specific patient presentations (e.g., young adults, diverse backgrounds, particular diagnoses, suicidality, etc). Although we do not always know the presenting concerns prior to the assessment, we will do our best to funnel interesting cases your way!

Responsibilities:

1. Conduct semi-structured diagnostic clinical-research interviews (2-3/week)
2. Consult with other members of the treatment team (e.g., psychiatrists) on issues of assessment and diagnosis
3. With support from supervisors and the diagnostic team, complete expedient and comprehensive drafts of diagnostic intake interviews

4. Participate in weekly morning journal club to review articles of relevance to current clinical diagnostic issues

Additional Opportunities Available:

South County Psychiatry is a rapidly growing psychiatric practice serving the larger east coast community. We currently have active programs in Intensive Outpatient Treatment (IOP), Family and Couple Therapy, Outpatient Treatment, Neuropsychological Assessment, and Weight Management. SCP is active in developing additional programs as provider interest and community needs change.

As supervisors at SCP, we are motivated to provide a positive and comprehensive training experience introducing externs to opportunities in private practice settings, particularly given the paucity of such sites in doctoral training. We also expect that your interests will grow and expand over the process of your time with us. In fact, we support and anticipate this! Therefore, externs who are performing well and who express interests beyond assessment may request to learn more about research or treatment in any of these areas (or others) outside of their regular practicum hours. In these cases, we will do our best to facilitate opportunities in the larger SCP practice in whatever capacity is appropriate and aligns with training needs.

This training experience will be a good fit for you if you are... fascinated and/or annoyed by the interplay of our imperfect diagnostic system; want to be able to rattle off DSM diagnostic criteria from memory; interested in what clinical research in private practice might look like; like semi-structured interviews; want to accrue assessment hours and experience quickly; and/or wanting to learn more about a wide range of presentations (you will pretty much see and hear everything in these assessments!).

***A Note on Virtual Treatment/Provision of Telehealth Services:**

Our intention is to provide high quality, personalized, and superior training in assessment in an increasingly preferred and common telehealth format. We offer patients clinical assessment using a virtual format. As such, your training experience will also be fully remote. Trainees who do not have access to a private setting with a stable internet connection may request office space in our Cranston location. Please let your supervisors know your needs and we will accommodate to the best of our ability.

Consistent with our commitment to integrative research and clinical care, our group was one of the first researchers to publish data comparing in person and virtual care, and our findings suggest that remote treatment: increases access to people who may not otherwise have presented to treatment; increases patient attendance and retention in treatment; and results in comparable outcomes to in-person treatment (Zimmerman et al., 2021). However, we have been unable to find comparable studies on the experience of supervision and training in a virtual format, and recognize this may present challenges to trainees seeking a different experience.

To Apply:

Please direct any questions to our Director of Extern Training at drmeth@scp-ri.com

If interested, please email the following materials to Dr. Meth at the email address above. Put “Assessment Practicum Application” in the subject line, and ensure all files are clearly labeled with your name in the file name. For example, “CV_JSmith”

- Curriculum Vita
- Letter of interest
- Letters of recommendation (2)
- Transcripts (unofficial)

Deadline: Applications will be accepted until 1 January, and reviewed on a rolling basis as long as the position is available.

Interviews will be conducted annually in January.