Orlando VA Medical Center
PSYCHOLOGY POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP
ONLINE BROCHURE

(2020-2021)
DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS
VA Medical Center
13800 Veterans Way
Orlando, FL 32827

PSYCHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM
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Thank you for your interest in the Orlando VA Medical Center (OVAMC) Clinical Psychology Post-Doctoral Fellowship training program. Our program provides training for two full-time clinical psychology fellows each year, one with a focus in trauma recovery and one in medical psychology. The training year starts August 3, 2020 and offers an annual stipend of $46,102. Please take your time looking through our brochure, and feel free to contact Dr. Mary Beth Shea (listed on the front page) for any questions regarding our program. A full program handbook is available upon request to Dr. Shea. The following information is provided to give you an overview of our fellowship programs.

Program Mission and Aims

The mission of the Orlando VA Psychology Training Programs is to develop ethical and highly competent psychologists capable of delivering the highest quality care through evidence-based practice for the purpose of improving the quality of life and well-being of America’s Veterans. Within the psychology programs, our Postdoctoral Fellowship focuses on advanced clinical practices that prepare Fellows to function effectively and autonomously in health service psychology programs, especially those focusing on medical psychology and trauma recovery.

The Fellowship program is an integrated part of the OVAMC multilevel training program (practicum, internship, and postdoctoral). The activities, mentorship, resources, and processes are individualized to maximize each Fellow’s success in meeting their professional goals by the time of completion. The program’s aim is to meet all clinical psychologist licensure requirements in the state of Florida.

Expected Competencies and Requirements for Completion

Throughout the program, psychology Fellows will meet established objectives and benchmarks in the following competencies: integration of research into practice; ethical and legal standards; individual and cultural diversity; advanced clinical skills; and supervision. Fellows are formally evaluated four times a year and are expected to attain an advanced level of skills for each of the five competencies. By midyear, Fellows are expected to be independent in most daily practice; requiring supervision/consultation in advanced or specialized areas only. By the end of the training year, Fellows are expected to demonstrate sound critical thinking and judgement in advanced or specialized areas; and are expected to need supervision/consultation only on very complicated cases.
All Fellows are expected to:
- Directly provide services to Veterans with a variety of mental illnesses
- Participate on interprofessional treatment teams; coordinate care of patients
- Conduct evidence-based assessments and deliver evidence-based treatments
- Provide clinical supervision to psychology interns
- Attend required formal educational seminars and trainings
- Lead professional presentations

Program Structure:

The Fellowship experience is individually tailored to the Fellow’s primary area of clinical interest—either in trauma recovery or medical psychology. All Fellows will spend 26 – 30 hours per week in the mental health setting serving their focus area. For those in the trauma recovery track, Fellows’ work will emphasize Veterans who are experiencing trauma-related difficulties. For those in the medical psychology track, Fellows’ work will emphasize Veterans who present with medical conditions that are complicated by psychological factors or co-occurring with mental illness. Fellows may also spend some portion of their week in the general mental health outpatient clinic, in order to increase their flexibility in the competitive job market following completion of the program. Approximately 8 hours per week are devoted to formal educational, supervisory, and professional development activities.

Each Fellow will select 2 major experiences or one major and 2 minor clinical experiences (rotations). The majors are for the full year; the minors are for 6 months each. For those in the medical psychology track, rotations are available in surgical consultation, consultation & liaison, cardiology/health psychology, chronic pain, and substance abuse. For those in the trauma track, rotations are available in trauma recovery, chronic pain, residential treatment, and substance abuse.

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<tr>
<th>MEDICAL PSYCHOLOGY CLINICAL EXPERIENCES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Choose one as major</td>
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TRAUMA RECOVERY CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

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<th>Major</th>
<th>Trauma Recovery Specialty Team</th>
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<tr>
<td>Choose one as second major, or two as minors</td>
<td>Chronic Pain Residential Recovery and Treatment Program (RRTP or Domiciliary) Substance Abuse Treatment Program</td>
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Rotation Descriptions:

**Cardiology/Health Psychology:** Lake Nona campus. This rotation emphasizes health behavior assessment, treatment, and consultation with medical populations. The primary patient population is from the Cardiology Clinic, although the rotation includes involvement with other clinics (e.g., Pulmonary, Oncology), as well as referrals for general health psychology services from other medical or mental health clinics. Fellows will complete brief assessments to evaluate health behaviors and cognitive abilities, as indicated, with all individual patients. Individual health behavior services include brief treatment that emphasizes motivational interviewing for health behaviors including smoking, non-adherence, eating and exercise habits, sleep, and adjusting to medical issues. The fellow will also co-facilitate groups aimed at improving adherence and adjustment to medical issues, including a shared medical appointment in Cardiology. Health Psychology groups on this rotation run within Cardiology, Pulmonary, Mental Health, and the Domiciliary.

Supervisor: Laurie Wolf, PhD

**Chronic Pain:** This is an interprofessional pain program at the Community Based Outpatient Clinic in downtown Orlando (Lake Baldwin campus). Fellows will work as part of the team, developing a program to combat co-occurring chronic pain and opioid over-use. Fellows work closely with anesthesiology, chiropractic, psychiatry, and neurology. Fellows provide direct patient care using evidence-based psychotherapies for chronic pain including Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and CBT. They may also work with the Complementary and Alternative Medicine clinic, offering Yoga, Mindfulness, Tai Chi, Qichong, Art Therapy, Progressive Muscle Relaxation, and Acupuncture.

Supervisor: Virginia Gründler, PsyD

**Consultation & Liaison:** Lake Nona campus. Fellows conduct cognitive and psychological assessments at bedside in the Medical/Surgical inpatient units. Fellows
attend interdisciplinary team meetings and communicate their assessment results to members of the inpatient team. They interact with caregivers, and deliver bedside, brief interventions related to managing chronic illness, death, and dying. They also evaluate medical decision making capacity, conduct evaluations for congestive heart failure readmissions, do psychiatric commitment reviews, and conduct risk assessments for harm to self or others.

Supervisor: Cristy Russo, PhD, MSCP

Pre & Post Surgical Consultation: This is an outpatient consultative service at the Lake Nona campus, in which Fellows learn about the complex relationship between mental health and physical health, and conduct psychological evaluations to help determine appropriate surgical candidates, assist with pre- and post-surgical behavioral modifications and compliance, and work with families to help with adjustment.

Supervisor: Daniel Baughn, PhD

Residential Recovery and Treatment Program (MHRRTP): Lake nona campus. The MHRRTP (also known as the Domiciliary, or Dom) serves Veterans with various mental health diagnoses, including anxiety and depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (related to combat, childhood, and/or sexual trauma), bipolar disorders, personality disorders, severe mental illnesses, substance use disorders, and other psychosocial issues such as homelessness and unemployment. Many Veterans have co-occurring health related problems and/or physical disabilities. Fellows in the trauma recovery focus area will be a part of the treatment team, along with the Veteran, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, recreation therapists, vocational rehabilitation specialists, nursing, peer supports, other medical staff and administration. Fellows work with Veterans who have complex and co-occurring PTSD to establish an individualized recovery plan for improved coping skills, improved mental and physical health, sober living, improved well-being, housing, job training, and the development of community support. Fellows will also lead or co-lead CPT and DBT skills groups.

Supervisors: Manjoy Leafgreen, PhD and Vicie Hurst, PhD

Substance Abuse Treatment Program: Lake Nona and Lake Baldwin campuses. The Substance Use Disorders Clinic is an outpatient treatment setting for Veterans with mild to severe substance use disorders. Training opportunities on this rotation include comprehensive assessments of and treatment for substance use and co-occurring disorders. Fellows provide both individual and group therapies. Additionally, they serve as members of an interprofessional treatment team to conceptualize and present cases and to have input to clinical decision making. The interdisciplinary team includes clinical psychologists, a licensed clinical social worker, counselors, a peer support specialist, a clinical pharmacist, a physician, and a psychiatrist. Fellows will use Motivational
Interviewing, and will have opportunity to learn evidence-based treatments for SUD, including Cognitive Behavioral Coping Skills Training, Motivational Enhancement Therapy, 12-Step Facilitation, Contingency Management, Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention, and Cognitive Behavioral Relapse Prevention Therapy.
Supervisor: Pamela Brown, PhD

Trauma Recovery Specialty Team (TRuST): Lake Nona and Lake Baldwin campuses. This rotation specializes in the assessment and treatment of trauma related disorders, with an emphasis on new or chronic Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Fellows on the TruST rotation learn advanced diagnostic evaluations to differentiate PTSD from other trauma-related disorders (e.g., depression, anxiety, panic, personality disorders, malingering, cognitive disorders), and provide individual and group psychotherapy aimed at helping Veterans recover from trauma-related conditions. Fellows develop proficiency in both Prolonged Exposure and Cognitive Processing Therapy with an emphasis on more complex presentation of trauma and integration of full-model Dialectical Behavior Therapy. Fellows participate as members of the DBT team, including co-leading DBT skills group and working with individual DBT patients.
Supervisors: Laura Meyers, PhD and Diana Mendez, PhD

Clinical Activities:

The training program is committed to providing Fellows with rich clinical experiences that prepare them for entry-level psychologist positions. Though case loads will vary by rotation, Fellows should average no fewer than 12 clinical face-to-face contact hours per week over the course of the training year. This ensures that the Fellow not only meets the minimal contact requirements for satisfactory progress, but also that he/she has a demographically diverse training experience within the Veteran patient population. At the beginning of the training year, Fellows and supervisors will meet to discuss specific training needs and interests, to tailor the experience as much as possible within the parameters of the clinic. Consistent with our focus on graded complexity, clinical responsibilities will increase in volume and complexity as the training year progresses.

Clinical cases will be selected and assigned by the primary supervisor. The emphasis will be on the broad population served in outpatient mental health, but with a special focus on either trauma or medical psychology.

Formal Educational, Supervisory, and Professional Development Activities

1. Advanced Topics for Discussion
Advanced Topics for Discussion is an essential component of the Fellow's clinical training experience. This series is intended to supplement and enrich the development of specific clinical skills practiced in the clinical setting, and increase understanding of pertinent professional and clinical issues.

The series focuses on indepth review and discussion of topics relevant to the fellows’ professional development. Fellows and facilitators review the recent literature on specific topics and discuss the implications for their clinical practice.

Depending on the availability of resources and scheduling flexibility, Fellows, Interns, and Psychiatry Residents may participate jointly in didactic activities. Fellows may present areas of their expertise or focus to the Intern Didactic seminar.

2. Training in Clinical Supervision

The Vertical Supervision program promotes the Fellow’s development of emerging skills in clinical supervision, including knowledge of and sensitivity to ethical, legal and multicultural issues in providing supervision, formal educational and experiential training throughout the year.

To facilitate the transition from supervisee to potential supervisor in his/her professional endeavors, Fellows attend didactic seminar on supervision of supervision every other week and, on selected rotations, have direct experience providing “supervision-like” clinical consultation to Interns while receiving supervision on this “supervision” from the licensed psychologist who has responsibility for the case. The specific involvement of each Fellow in consultation/supervision activities varies somewhat according to his/her current clinical experiences. The Fellow is expected to demonstrate understanding of basic supervision concepts and principles, and the developmental process of clinical supervision, and to begin to develop a philosophy or model for their own practice of supervision. The Fellow is expected to also demonstrate understanding of the complexity of the supervisor role including ethical, legal, and contextual issues, and to demonstrate an awareness of the current needs of supervised trainees, including how to provide developmentally appropriate feedback.

3. Advanced Diagnostics and Case Conceptualization Seminar

Advanced Diagnostics and Case Conceptualization Seminar is a semi-weekly seminar focusing on the less common psychological assessment instruments and using them in the formulation and application of case conceptualizations. The seminar consists of didactics as well as experiential case presentations. The experiential component will be
broken into two distinct elements: 1) case examples where the Fellows present current assessment and psychotherapy cases to refine their diagnostic and conceptualization skills, and 2) periodic (at least twice a year) formal case presentations where the Fellows present a complete psychological assessment and case conceptualization to their peers, the psychology Interns, and members of the training committee.

Participants provide verbal and written feedback on each Fellow’s presentation. This feedback will be incorporated into the mid-year and final evaluations.

4. Grand Rounds

Fellows are strongly encouraged to attend and present to Mental Health Grand Rounds, Interdisciplinary Grand Rounds, Medical Center Grand Rounds, and other educational offerings as able. Topics vary throughout the year and are informed by relevant, peer reviewed research and cultural/patient population considerations.

5. VA Local and Regional Evidence-Based Psychotherapy (EBP) Trainings

EBP training experiences each involve one 2- or 3-day workshop, and may be followed by weekly post-training consultation calls. Trauma-focused Fellows are expected to participate in EBP trainings, such as Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD and Prolonged Exposure Therapy for PTSD. Medical Psychology Fellows are expected to participate in EBP trainings, such as Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for Insomnia and CBT for Chronic Pain. Fellows may also attend Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Depression and/or CBT for Depression trainings, if available.

6. Professional Development

The training program encourages and values mentorship and pursuit of training opportunities beyond those offered within the clinical experiences. Fellows are provided with a list of available mentors and their areas of interest/expertise, and are encouraged to meet as many of the staff as possible early in their training year to determine if they would like to work with one of them as a Mentor. Mentors serve as non-evaluative staff, and therefore cannot not be one of the Fellow’s clinical supervisors. The Mentor’s primary role is to be a resource to assist the Fellow’s professional development, both within the program and planning their path toward early-career psychologist.

Built into each Fellows’ schedule is professional development time, which Fellows may spend with their mentor, preparing professional presentations, manuscripts or conducting clinical research, preparing for the licensure exam, job seeking, etc. It is our
aim that each Fellow will complete the training year fully prepared for licensure and with employment secured.

**Clinical Evaluation**

Both supervisors and Fellows complete evaluation forms at the mid-point and end of the training year. Fellows are involved in all phases of evaluation, from the initial development of training goals through the final evaluation. Within the first few weeks, required and optional activities, supervisor expectations, and Fellow’s goals/objectives should be formally discussed, clearly defined and mutually agreed upon. Ongoing feedback during supervisory sessions is presumed and Fellows should request clarification from supervisors if they are uncertain about their progress. In the event that a Fellow is struggling to attain the required competencies at the expected level, a remediation plan will be implemented in a timely fashion to assist him/her in meeting the standards. The use of a training plan, frequent communication, and assessment of progress toward goals is intended to reduce the likelihood of a need for remediation. The program has formal Due Process and Grievance procedures outlined in the Postdoctoral Fellowship Handbook, in the unlikely event that these may be necessary.

**Training Resources**

OVAMC, one of the Top 100 Companies for working families, was officially established as a new VA facility in October of 2006.

OVAMC includes the nation’s newest VA Medical Center in Lake Nona with 134 inpatient beds, a 120-bed Community Living Center in Lake Nona, a two-site 116-bed Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program at Lake Nona and Lake Baldwin, three very large, comprehensive outpatient clinics in Lake Baldwin (Orlando), Daytona Beach, and Viera (Cocoa Beach area), and four Community-Based Outpatient Clinics in Clermont, Kissimmee, Deltona, and Tavares.

Training opportunities for postdoctoral fellows are at both the Lake Nona and the Lake Baldwin sites. Typically, Fellows will spend some part of their training year at each of these campuses, which are located approximately 20 miles from each other.

The OVAMC Lake Nona Campus is co-located with the University of Central Florida College of Medicine, the University of Florida Academic and Research Center, the National Simulation, Learning, Education and Research Network (SimLEARN) Center, and Nemours Children’s Hospital in the area known as the "Medical City." Orlando is rapidly becoming a prime destination for healthcare professionals and patients seeking
state-of-the-art care. It is also a community that truly celebrates diversity. According to 2018 data from Statistical Atlas, the population of the greater Orlando area is 49.6% non-Hispanic white, 27% Hispanic, 16.3% black, 4.2% Asian, 2.1% mixed race, and 0.7% other. The Hispanic population is growing faster than any other, and Osceola county is now 48% Hispanic. The Latino culture, particularly Puerto Rican, is readily apparent throughout central Florida, with numerous food stores, festivals, restaurants, and marketing celebrating the growing Hispanic presence. The African-American culture is also strong, with Eatonville, the first community in the US ruled by African-Americans, now enveloped by Orlando. Parramore, a historical neighborhood for residents of African descent, now houses the Amway sports arena, Orlando City stadium, and the city’s performing arts center. Bethune-Cookman University, a historic black university, is within our catchment area in Daytona Beach. The LGBTQ community is welcomed in central Florida, with multiple cultural centers, including one of the oldest LGBT+ centers (The Center) in the nation. There is also the Fringe Festival, Gay Days at Disney, Come Out with Pride activities, and much more. Another feature of Orlando not to be missed is “Little Vietnam,” which features dozens of Vietnamese, Chinese, Thai, and Korean markets and restaurants. This area was populated by Vietnamese war refugees in the 1970’s. It is one of the oldest Vietnamese communities in the United States and is a rare example of a predominantly Asian-American community in Florida. Orlando is truly a smorgasboard of cultures, flavors, activities, and languages.

Orlando VAMC serves a more diverse patient population than many VA’s with over 110,000 Veterans. The Mental Health Clinic population includes 73% Non-Hispanic Caucasian, 12% African-American, 7% Hispanic/Latino, and 2% Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Ninety-one percent of the Veterans seen in the mental health clinic are men.

The Orlando VAMC Mental Health Staff includes over 250 psychologists, physicians, psychiatrists, pharmacists, nurses, social workers, licensed professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, vocational rehabilitation specialists, and trainees. Fellows are encouraged and expected to work cooperatively with staff from multiple professions, and to learn from their varying perspectives on health care. We emphasize the importance of diversity in all forms through our training program: we offer psychotherapy, assessment, and supervision in Spanish, trips to outreach and cultural events in the area, participation with facility-wide committees and activities, and formal and informal educational opportunities throughout the training year.

The Psychology Training program includes trainees at the practicum, intern, and postdoctoral levels. Because of this vertical training, Fellows will have the opportunity to
learn and practice clinical supervision, and will also be able to present on their areas of expertise to the other trainees.

The Medical Library collection consists of hundreds of journal (print and electronic) subscriptions and thousands of books and audiovisual titles. Books and audiovisuals are available for checkout by all staff, including Fellows. There is also access to many of the leading medical, nursing, and psychiatric databases.

Automated administration and scoring of numerous self-report inventories and questionnaires is available to Psychologists and trainees via the Mental Health Assistant package in the electronic medical record (known as CPRS). Additional psychological test kits and protocols may be checked out for use by Fellows.

**Admissions, Support, and Initial Placement Data**

**Program Tables Updated 7-19-2019**

**Fellowship Program Admissions**

The Orlando VAMC Psychology Postdoctoral Training Program focuses on advanced clinical practices that prepare Fellows to function effectively and autonomously in **health service psychology** programs, especially those focusing on **medical psychology** and **trauma recovery**.

Training takes place primarily in the general mental health outpatient settings (mental health clinic, community based clinics, and telemental health), but fellows will spend a significant part of their clinical time focusing on their particular area of interest (medical psychology or trauma recovery). As this is a small program, we are able to tailor the exact experience to the individual fellow’s needs and preferences. Trauma recovery may include some work within the trauma recovery program, psychosocial rehabilitation, residential treatment, chronic pain program, and substance use disorders treatment, while medical psychology may include experience with cardiology and health psychology, chronic pain management, pre-/post-surgical evaluation, consultation / liaison, and substance use disorders treatment.

We welcome all qualified applicants. Well-prepared applicants will be U.S. citizens from APA-, CPA-, or PCSAS-accredited graduate programs and APA- or CPA-accredited internships. All requirements for the Ph.D. or Psy.D. must be completed prior to the start of the postdoctoral fellowship.
All application files are reviewed by at least two members of the training committee. Based on this review, qualified applicants will be invited to interview by phone or in person with us. All interviews include a performance-based component. In-person visits are encouraged to help applicants in their selection process, but will not be weighted differently by the selection committee.

If selected, the federal government requires that male applicants to VA positions who were born after 12/31/59 sign a pre-appointment certification statement for Selective Service Registration before they are employed. The VA conducts drug screening exams on randomly-selected personnel as well as new employees. Fellows are not required to be tested prior to beginning work, but once on staff, they are subject to random testing as are all clinical staff.

### Financial and Other Benefit Support for Upcoming Training Year

- **Annual Stipend/Salary for Full-time Fellows**: $46,102
- Program provides access to medical insurance for fellow? Yes
- If access to medical insurance is provided, Trainee contribution to cost required? Yes
- Coverage of family member(s) available? Yes
- Coverage of legally married partner available? Yes
- Coverage of domestic partner available? No
- Hours of Annual Paid Personal Time Off: 13 days vacation + 10 holidays
- Hours of Annual Paid Sick Leave: 13 days
- In the event of medical conditions and/or family needs that require extended leave, does the program allow reasonable unpaid leave to fellows in excess of personal time off and sick leave? Yes
- **Other Benefits**: Successful fellows are eligible for direct appointment (noncompetitive hiring) for federal jobs. Florida has no state income tax.

### Initial Post-Training Placement

The majority of our graduates have gone on to full-time employment in clinical, non-research settings. Of our 10 total graduates (2016-19), 7 are full-time VA psychologists now and two work in our community. Given our mission of training psychologists to serve America’s Veterans, we are delighted that the majority of our graduates have elected to stay with VA.

### Initial Post-Fellowship Positions
Total # fellows 2015 – 2019 | 10

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VA Medical Center</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic university/department</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent practice setting</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other medical center or hospital</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did not complete program</td>
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Application Process and Selection Procedures

Applicants for Fellowship must have completed all degree requirements for the Ph.D. or Psy.D. in Clinical or Counseling Psychology from an APA-, CPA-, or PCSAS-accredited program. They must have completed an APA- or CPA-accredited internship.

Applications are encouraged from all geographical areas. The Orlando VA Medical Center is an Equal Opportunity Employer; we are committed to ensuring a range of diversity among our training classes, and we select candidates representing different kinds of programs and theoretical orientations, geographic areas, ages, racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, disabilities, and life experiences. All things being equal, consideration is given to applicants who identify themselves as military Veterans.

Current interns who are interested in applying for a fellowship position in our program should submit all materials thru APPA CAS to https://appicpostdoc.liaisoncas.com. Complete application packets must be received by us by 11:59 PM Eastern Time Zone January 5, 2020 for consideration for fellowship appointment beginning the following August. Interviews will be conducted by invitation only, following initial evaluation of application materials. Applicants invited for interviews will be notified by late January for an interview date scheduled during the month of February. Interviews may also be conducted via video tele-conference or by phone without negatively impacting the applicant.

Policies and procedures regarding postdoctoral fellowship offers and acceptance recommended by the APPIC and the Council of Directors of Clinical Training Programs will be followed. The 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 prior to Uniform Notification Day.

Selection Process
1. Applications are reviewed for completeness by the Training Director.
2. Completed applications are reviewed by two members of the Training Committee and the Training Director.

3. Each file is rated by the Committee members and the Training Director and an initial rank is generated to make recommendations to invite applicants for interviews.

4. A Training Committee meeting is convened by the Training Director to discuss the resulting recommendations and to discuss any candidate that has been flagged for further discussion.

5. The Training Director finalizes the list of applicants invited for interviews.

6. Letters and/or email are sent to all applicants notifying them of interview selection decisions.

7. Interviews are scheduled by the OVAMC Psychology Section.

8. Each candidate selected for interview is interviewed individually by at least three members of the training committee, in person, or by phone or video-teleconference.

9. Applicants will have the opportunity to meet with, or speak to, the current postdocs upon request.

10. Once interviews are completed, scores are calculated for each candidate and an overall applicant score is generated for each applicant. This score takes into account the number of reviewers and weights the applicant’s file (i.e., APPIC application) heavier than the interview.

11. Based on the applicants' total weighted score, a rank is generated.

12. The Training Committee meets to review ratings and rank applicants.

13. On the Uniform Notification Date (2/24/20), offers will be made by telephone by the Training Director.

The following information is standard across all VA psychology training sites, and can be found at https://www.psychologytraining.va.gov/eligibility.asp. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) adheres to all Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action policies. As a Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Health Professions Trainee, you will receive a Federal appointment, and the following requirements will apply prior to that appointment.

2. U.S. Social Security Number. All VA appointees must have a U.S. social security number (SSN) prior to beginning the pre-employment, on-boarding process at the VA.

3. Selective Service Registration. Male applicants born after 12/31/1959 must have registered for the Selective Service by age 26 to be eligible for U.S. government employment, including selection as a VA trainee. For additional information about the Selective Service System, and to register or to check your registration status visit https://www.sss.gov/. Anyone who was required to register but did not register before the age of 26 will need to apply for a Status Information Letter (SIL) and request a waiver. Waivers are rare and requests will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the VA Office of Human Resources Management. This process can take up to six months for a verdict.

4. Fingerprint Screening and Background Investigation. All trainees will be fingerprinted and undergo screenings and background investigations. Additional details about the required background checks can be found at the following website: http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/10450.html.

5. Drug Testing. Per Executive Order 12564, the VA strives to be a Drug-Free Workplace. Trainees are not drug-tested prior to appointment, however are subject to random drug testing throughout the entire VA appointment period. Use of any illegal substances is grounds for disciplinary action, including termination. This includes marijuana and CBD, even with a prescription for such substances, as cannabis remains illegal by federal law. You will be asked to sign an acknowledgement form stating you are aware of this practice. See item 8 below.

6. Affiliation Agreement. To ensure shared responsibility between an academic program and the VA there must be a current and fully executed Academic Affiliation Agreement on file with the VHA Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA). The affiliation agreement delineates the duties of VA and the affiliated institution. Most APA-accredited doctoral programs have an agreement on file. More information about this document can be found at https://www.va.gov/oaa/agreements.asp (see section on psychology internships). Post-degree programs typically will not have an affiliation agreement, as the
trainee is no longer enrolled in an academic program and the program is VA sponsored.

7. TQCVL. To streamline on-boarding of trainees, VHA Office of Academic Affiliations requires completion of a Trainee Qualifications and Credentials Verification Letter (TQCVL). An Educational Official at the Affiliate must complete and sign this letter. For post-graduate programs where an affiliate is not the program sponsor, this process must be completed by the VA Training Director. Your VA appointment cannot happen until the TQCVL is submitted and signed by senior leadership from the VA facility. For more information about this document, please visit https://www.va.gov/OAA/TQCVL.asp

a. Health Requirements. Among other things, the TQCVL confirms that you, the trainee, are fit to perform the essential functions (physical and mental) of the training program and immunized following current Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and VHA policy. This protects you, other employees and patients while working in a healthcare facility. Required are annual tuberculosis screening, Hepatitis B vaccine as well as annual influenza vaccine. Declinations are EXTREMELY rare. If you decline the flu vaccine you will be required to wear a mask while in patient care areas of the VA.

b. Primary source verification of all prior education and training is certified via the TQCVL. Training and Program Directors will be contacting the appropriate institutions to ensure you have the appropriate qualifications and credentials as required by the admission criteria of the training program in which you are enrolled.

8. Additional On-boarding Forms. Additional pre-employment forms include the Application for Health Professions Trainees (VA 10-2850D) and the Declaration for Federal Employment (OF 306). These documents and others are available online for review at https://www.va.gov/oaa/app-forms.asp. Falsifying any answer on these required Federal documents will result in the inability to appoint or immediate dismissal from the training program.

9. Proof of Identity per VA. VA on-boarding requires presentation of two source documents (IDs). Documents must be unexpired and names on both documents must match. For more information visit: https://www.oit.va.gov/programs/piv/_media/docs/IDMatrix.pdf

Additional information regarding eligibility requirements:

• Selective Service website where the requirements, benefits and penalties of registering vs. not registering are outlined: [https://www.sss.gov/Registration/Why-Register/Benefits-and-Penalties](https://www.sss.gov/Registration/Why-Register/Benefits-and-Penalties)

Additional information specific suitability information from Title 5 (referenced in VHA Handbook 5005):

(b) **Specific factors.** In determining whether a person is suitable for Federal employment, only the following factors will be considered a basis for finding a person unsuitable and taking a suitability action:

1. Misconduct or negligence in employment;
2. Criminal or dishonest conduct;
3. Material, intentional false statement, or deception or fraud in examination or appointment;
4. Refusal to furnish testimony as required by § 5.4 of this chapter;
5. Alcohol abuse, without evidence of substantial rehabilitation, of a nature and duration that suggests that the applicant or appointee would be prevented from performing the duties of the position in question, or would constitute a direct threat to the property or safety of the applicant or appointee or others;
6. Illegal use of narcotics, drugs, or other controlled substances without evidence of substantial rehabilitation;
7. Knowing and willful engagement in acts or activities designed to overthrow the U.S. Government by force; and
8. Any statutory or regulatory bar which prevents the lawful employment of the person involved in the position in question.

(c) **Additional considerations.** OPM and agencies must consider any of the following additional considerations to the extent OPM or the relevant agency, in its sole discretion, deems any of them pertinent to the individual case:

1. The nature of the position for which the person is applying or in which the person is employed;
2. The nature and seriousness of the conduct;
3. The circumstances surrounding the conduct;
4. The recency of the conduct;
5. The age of the person involved at the time of the conduct;
(6) Contributing societal conditions; and
(7) The absence or presence of rehabilitation or efforts toward rehabilitation.

TRAINING STAFF

The Orlando VAMC Psychology Staff includes over 100 doctoral level clinical and counseling psychologists, plus licensed professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, vocational rehabilitation specialists, practicum students, doctoral interns, and Postdoctoral Fellows. Our mission is to develop ethical and competent psychologists capable of delivering the highest quality care through evidence-based practice for the purpose of improving the quality of life and well-being for America’s Veterans.

The Psychology Section is led by Steven Herman, PhD, Chief of Psychology, and is a part of the Mental Health Service, led by Gustavo Rivera-Cruz, MD, Associate Chief of Staff for Mental Health and Kara Boyer, PhD, the Deputy Associate Chief of Staff for Mental Health. Staff Psychologists are assigned to a variety of clinics, including the Behavioral Health Integrated Program (BHIP), medical psychology, primary care mental health, the substance use disorder treatment program, Intensive Case Management in Mental Health Recovery (ICMHR), the inpatient psychiatry (MH CARE) unit, the Center for Recovery Education (CORE), the Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs (RRTP), the Trauma Recovery Specialty Team (TRuST), and the Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). Our staff are diverse not only with regard to areas of clinical expertise, but in terms of theoretical orientations, training experiences, research interests, and cultural backgrounds. Staff psychologists participate in a number of profession-specific and system-wide committees that address issues relating to quality of patient care, efficient delivery of services, and development of new programs. In addition, the staff is highly committed to the training of new professionals and is actively involved in the fellowship training program. Psychology staff who contribute to our training programs are listed below along with brief biographies.

Training Director

Mary Beth Shea, Ph.D., earned her doctorate in Clinical and Community Psychology from the University of South Carolina in 1990. She completed her doctoral internship at the Bay Pines VAMC in St. Petersburg, FL and has been with VA throughout her career. She has worked at the WJB Dorn VAMC in Columbia, SC as a medical and geriatric psychologist, the Columbia SC Vet Center as the MST Coordinator, and is now at the Orlando VA where she served as the Local Recovery Coordinator (2007-2018), and now Training Director for the psychology programs. Until her current VA position, Dr. Shea also maintained a private practice in adolescent, adult, and geriatric psychology.
She is a Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) trainer and Prolonged Exposure (PE) therapy Supervisor and served as chair of the Orlando VA IRB for 7 years. She is a member of the National Emergency Medical Response Team and the American Red Cross Disaster Mental Health team. She is the immediate past-president of the Association of VA Psychology Leaders and a past-president of the Florida Chapter of the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association. Her clinical and research interests are primarily in the area of sexual coercion, sexual assault, and PTSD. She was awarded the 2019 Outstanding Director of Training by APA Division 18, VA Section.

**Supervisory Staff**

**Bryan Batien, Ph.D., ABPP** received his Ph.D. from the University of South Dakota and completed his internship at the Cincinnati VA Medical Center. Dr. Batien’s primary role is as a psychologist on the PTSD treatment (TRuST) team. He is also a member of the Emergency Response team at the Orlando VAMC. He is board certified in Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology. His professional interests include readjustment challenges of OEF/OIF Veterans, PTSD, and anxiety disorders. He routinely provides presentations on Veterans’ mental health challenges and readjustment to a number of organizations including NASA, local universities and colleges, and law enforcement agencies. Dr. Batien is a Veteran of the U.S. Army, which included a 14-month deployment to Iraq in 2003-2004.

**Daniel Baughn, Ph.D. Surgical Consultation, Lake Nona.** Dr. Baughn is a Clinical Health Psychologist in the Surgical Consultation and Rehabilitation service within the Medical Psychology Program at Orlando VA Medical Center. He obtained his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology and Behavioral Medicine from Virginia Commonwealth University (2012). He completed his internship at VA Palo Alto/Stanford University in the Behavioral Medicine track (2011) and completed his fellowship at San Francisco VA/UCSF in Primary Care Psychology (2013). Dr. Baughn is a Florida native and completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Florida; Go Gators! Prior to his current role, Dr. Baughn worked in Primary Care-Mental Health Integration at the James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital in Tampa, FL and spearheaded the development of a fellowship program with an emphasis in Clinical Health Psychology. He is licensed in Florida. Current professional interests include LGBT issues, Health Psychology, physician-patient communication, organ donation/transplantation, bariatric surgery/weight loss interventions, spinal cord stimulators, plastic surgery, gender confirmation surgery, and professional training in psychology. On a personal note, Dr. Baughn is a single father to a wonderful toddler, spends an obscene amount of time reading children’s books (Rosie Revere anyone?), loves to kayak, and spends his remaining time as an advocate for LGBT families.
Pamela C. Brown, PhD  *Substance Use Disorder Treatment Program*, Lake Baldwin. Dr. Brown earned her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Central Florida in 2010. She completed her doctoral internship at the VA Connecticut Healthcare System, West Haven campus and a 2-year NIDA T32 fellowship in Addictions at the Center for Addictions Research, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. She is licensed in Arkansas. She is the Program Manager for Substance Use Disorders Treatment at all sites of care for OVAMC. She received the Outstanding Clinician award from APA Division 18, VA Section in 2017. Her primary clinical interests are treatment of substance use disorders, co-occurring disorders, PTSD, and the recovery approach. Dr. Brown provides and supervises diagnostic assessment and empirically-supported interventions for Veterans with Substance Use Disorders and various other mental health issues (i.e., Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder, Bipolar Disorder, etc.). Her research interests include treatment outcome research and the use of technology for the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders.

Virginia Gründler, Psy.D.  *Pain Management, Lake Baldwin*. Dr. Gründler completed her bachelor’s degrees in Business Administration from the Inter-American University from Puerto Rico and in Psychology from the Florida International University (FIU). She received her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from The Chicago School, formerly known as The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Dr. Gründler completed her residency at Nova Southeastern University and her Post-Doctoral Training at Maryville Academy- City of Youth, Chicago IL. Her population expertise includes children, adolescents, and adults of varying ages and settings. Her clinical and consulting experience are varied and include medical settings (with an emergency room specialty); residential treatment facilities for children and adolescents; government/ federal programs including VA, Head Start, the Department of Corrections, women’s psychiatric prison facilities; and community mental health centers in both Puerto Rico and Chicago, IL. Her treatment approach is interdisciplinary and includes evidence-based practices, Ericksonian Self Hypnosis, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Family Systems and Psychodynamic approaches. Dr Gründler was a collaborating partner in the success of four CARF accreditations with the Caribbean Health Care System. She is also fully bilingual (English and Spanish) and bi-cultural, and enjoys outdoor activities, and values friendships and commitments.

Manjot Dhooper Leafgreen, Ph.D.,  *Domiciliary, Lake Nona*. Dr. Leafgreen completed her doctoral training at the University of South Dakota and internship at Park Center, Inc., a Community Mental Health Center in Ft. Wayne, IN. She has worked as a Clinical Psychologist & Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) Coordinator at the VA Daytona Beach Outpatient Clinic, a Senior Mental Health Clinician at Florida State Prison, Senior Psychologist at Union Correctional Institution (FL State Prison), Clinical Psychologist at
SD Human Services Center/ George S. Mickelson Center for the Neurosciences (State Psychiatric Hospital), Vertical Clinical Team Instructor at University of South Dakota and Psychology Associate at SD State Penitentiary. She currently works as a Staff Psychologist, Lake Nona Domiciliary. She is licensed in South Dakota & Florida. Dr. Leafgreen’s areas of interest include severe and persistent mental illness, personality disorders, substance use disorders, forensics, animal–assisted therapy, inpatient and residential levels of care.

**Diana M. Mendez, Ph.D.** is a Clinical Psychologist in the *Trauma Recovery Specialty Team (TRuST) at Lake Nona*. She earned her doctorate in Clinical Psychology in 2012 from the University of Detroit Mercy. She then completed a Postdoctoral Fellowship in Clinical Health Psychology through the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. Upon completion of such training, Dr. Mendez worked as an Attending Psychologist at University of Miami Miller School of Medicine/Jackson Memorial Medical Center, providing clinical care and supervising Postdoctoral fellows, Fellows, and practicum students. Most of Dr. Mendez’ clinical experiences have been with diverse inner city populations, with individuals exposed to various types of traumas. In addition, she also served as an investigator on studies looking at cultural factors that impact clinical presentation, manifestation of psychopathology (e.g., depression, PTSD), and delivery of effective treatments to ethnic minority populations. Her primary clinical and research interests focus on trauma, resiliency, minority mental health, and health psychology. She joined the Orlando VAMC in 2014, were she provides outpatient evidence based treatments to veterans presenting with various combat and non-combat related conditions. She is licensed in the state of Florida. Personal interests include traveling, basketball, and spending time with family and friends.

**Laura Meyers, PhD, ABPP**, is the Program Manager of the *Trauma Recovery Specialty Team (TRuST – PTSD treatment team)* and a Psychology Supervisor at Lake Nona. She earned her PhD in Clinical-Community Psychology at the University of South Carolina in 2006, completed internship at the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System, completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Health Psychology and Serious Mental Illness at the Minneapolis VA Healthcare System, and completed her ABPP certification in Clinical Psychology. She worked on the new Primary Care Mental Health Integration Team at the Minneapolis VA for 5 years, co-directed the DBT program, and was the Evidence-based Psychotherapy Coordinator. She then worked as the Program Coordinator for the PTSD treatment team at the Minneapolis VA for 5 years and developed and ran the Journeys Program, a national 12-week intensive outpatient program that provided DBT and PE. She then moved to the Orlando VA in 2017 to help develop the PTSD program and because Minneapolis is chilly. She is certified in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) and Prolonged Exposure (PE) and is a national
trainer and consultant for PE. She is also nationally certified in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) by the DBT-Linehan Board of Certification. She loves to supervise all levels of trainees in evidence-based approaches for trauma and/or Borderline Personality Disorder, specifically PE, CPT, DBT, ACT, and IBCT. She supervises trainees through TRuST, as well as in PE and DBT. Personally, she is a recovering perfectionist and is working on taking life less seriously. She loves spending time with her family and fostering dogs, who are the perfect examples of inconsistently applied behavioral principles (both her kids and the dogs).

**Cristy Russo, Ph.D., MSCP,** earned her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. She completed her predoctoral internship at the Arkansas State Hospital in Little Rock, AR. Dr. Russo completed a postdoctoral fellowship specializing in Neuropsychology at Children’s Hospital of New Orleans. She completed a postdoctoral Master’s of Science in Clinical Psychopharmacology from Alliant University. She has worked in outpatient and inpatient settings throughout her career. She is currently the Consultation and Liaison Medical Psychologist at the Orlando VA where she provides inpatient medical psychology consultation to Veterans who are hospitalized on the medical units. Dr. Russo is also in private practice in the local area and is currently affiliated faculty at UCF College of Medicine.

**Laurie Wolf, Ph.D.** is a Clinical Health Psychologist within the *Medical Psychology Program* and works embedded within the *Cardiology service*. Her work in Cardiology includes a rehabilitation psychology focus that aims to improve functioning and quality of life among Veterans with heart disease. She conducts cognitive assessments and provides brief interventions including motivational interviewing and cognitive-behavioral therapy aimed at improving coping, adherence, and management of heart disease. She completed her undergraduate work at the University of South Florida and obtained her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at Arizona State University in 2016. She completed predoctoral internship training in Behavioral Medicine, PTSD, and substance use at VA Boston Healthcare System. She continued at VA Boston to complete fellowship training in Behavioral Medicine. Professional interests include Health Psychology, comorbid chronic pain and trauma, and program development aimed at improving physical functioning and well-being among patients with chronic illness.

**Didactic Instructors, Available Mentors, and other Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Staff**

**Margaret Arnott, Ph.D.** earned her degree in Psychology in 2000 from The Ohio State University while it was ranked one of the top Counseling Psychology programs in the nation. She is currently the Primary Care Mental Health Integration Program Manager and Psychology Supervisor (for staff in this program) at the Orlando VAMC. She
completed her internship at the Dayton VAMC and was hired as part of the newly formed PTSD Clinical Team. While in Dayton she was the co-director of training and supervised Fellows on the PTSD rotation. She transferred to the Columbus VA, where she led the PTSD team and was selected as the PTSD Clinical Team. While in Dayton she was the co-director of training and supervised Fellows on the PTSD rotation. She transferred to the Columbus VA, where she led the PTSD team and was selected as the Evidence-Based Psychotherapy Coordinator and the Practicum Fellow Training Coordinator. She also served as the VISN 10 PTSD Co-Mentor and was selected as the Psychology Supervisor. She is certified through the VA EBP rollouts in both Prolonged Exposure (PE), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), and is certified in EMDR I. She has spoken at a numerous conferences and presented a poster and presentation on an educational program she co-developed, PTSD University, at the VA MH Conference on Best Practices in Portland 2006. Her clinical and outcome research interests include PTSD treatment, hope instillation for treatment engagement and self-efficacy.

**Kara Boyer, Ph.D.** earned her doctorate at The University of South Dakota and completed her internship at Gulfcoast Veterans Health Care System. Dr. Boyer has served as the Team Leader of the PTSD Intensive Outpatient Program in the past. She has also worked as the Assistant Clinical Coordinator and Program Manager of the Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program at the Gulfcoast VHCS. While at Gulfcoast VHCS, she served as the Assistant Director of Training of the Psychology Postdoctoral Program. She is the Deputy Associate Chief of Staff for Mental Health at Orlando VAMC. She holds a Mississippi license. Dr. Boyer’s interests include working to maximize patient flow within the larger VA system. She is also interested in program development.

**Teri Carper, Ph.D.** is a Staff Psychologist at the Orlando VAMC specializing in EBT for PTSD via Telehealth. She completed her undergraduate work at Boston University and earned her Ph.D. in 2010 from the University of Central Florida (UCF). Dr. Carper completed her doctoral internship at Boston Consortium for Clinical Psychology and her postdoctoral fellowship at the National Center for PTSD at Boston VA, where she also held the positions of Clinical Fellow in Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and Teaching Fellow in Psychiatry at Boston University School of Medicine. Dr. Carper’s clinical and research interests center around trauma trajectories and resiliency factors, and she is currently a PI on a MUSC grant examining adjunctive intervention to augment exposure therapy in PTSD. Dr. Carper’s personal interests include animal rescue, distance running, skiing, crafting, and most importantly, spending time with her husband and twin daughter and son.

**Joyce Fricker**, Program Specialist. Joyce Fricker started her government service in Alaska, working for the Department of Interior. She met and married her husband in Alaska and in September of 2001 found herself in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba working in Human Resources with the Department of the Navy. In 2005, she and her husband
transferred to the Northport VA on Long Island, NY, where she worked in Radiation Oncology and Telehealth. After her husband retired, he said he would follow her career, so they returned to Central Florida where she was born and raised. Joyce has been with Mental Health at Orlando since 2012, where she started as the MH Secretary and then MH ADPAC. Both her husband and son are Army Veterans and are patients in the VA system. She is proud to play a role in the training of the next generation of providers for the Veterans’ Mental Health care needs.

Valerie Masten Hoese, Ph.D. received her degree in Human Services Psychology from the University of Maryland Baltimore County in 1990, having completed tracks in Behavioral Medicine and Clinical Psychology. She completed her internship at the Springfield Hospital Center in Sykesville, MD. She is a Clinical Neuropsychologist and has worked in a variety of settings, including a Level I trauma center, neurology practice, nursing homes, psychiatric hospital, jail, community medical centers, and continues in independent practice providing medicolegal assessment. She has published and presented in neurotoxic exposure, cognitive rehabilitation, professional practice issues, and cultural and diversity variables in neuropsychological assessment. She is an Associate Professor at the University of Florida College of Medicine, and teaches a section on Neuropsychological Assessment. She teaches at the University of Central Florida as an Associate Professor in the Neurosciences doctoral program. She is licensed in Florida (active) and Maryland (inactive). She serves on several committees for APA and the National Academy of Neuropsychology. She is the former training director of the Orlando VA and current Medical Psychology supervisor. Her clinical interests are in the areas of assessment of performance validity, cross cultural neuropsychological assessment, and professional ethics.

Dr. John Merladet, Ph.D., ABPP holds a doctorate in Counseling Psychology from the University of Minnesota, Department of Educational Psychology: Counseling, Student, and Personnel Psychology Program. This doctoral program is accredited by the American Psychology Association (APA). He also completed a clinical internship that was also APA approved at Mt. Sinai Elmhurst Hospital Center, in Queens, New York, rotating through inpatient psychiatry, outpatient psychiatry, child psychiatry, inpatient forensics, and substance abuse clinics. He has a one year of supervised postdoctoral training in the neuropsychological assessment of Alzheimer’s and Dementia from New York’s Mt. Sinai’s Clinical Neuroscience Program. He is a licensed psychologist in the States of Minnesota, Florida, and New York. Dr. Merladet is a board certified specialist and aspires to the Pikes Peak Model of geropsychology practice. He presently works in the Homebased Primary Care program, VA’s primary care premier service for home bound Veterans many of which are frail elderly with multiple medical, cognitive, and MH conditions. He has been working for the VA for a total of seven years. Before that, he
has worked in rehabilitation psychology, as a psychologist for a jail's medical unit, as a nursing home psychologist, as a grief counselor for visiting nurses, on an elderly suicide crisis line, for a NORC (naturally occurring retirement community) as a therapist, and a community based senior church-based outreach program. Dr. Merladet has also been a trainer and adjunct professor. He has taught at Argosy University, St. Mary’s University of Minnesota, and in New York City, Queens College. He has facilitated and created many workshops and presentations. His present interests are in assessment and testing of cognitive disorders, Hispanic elderly and caregivers, human-animal bond in caring for impaired elderly, cognitive enhancement groups for elderly, demystifying capacity evaluations, caregiver burden in the Latino community, and interplay between medical disorders and cognitive status. Dr. Merladet has been trained in CPT, ACT, MI, DBT, CBT-Sleep, CBT-Smoking, Pain Management, Biofeedback (Certified), Problem Solving, and EMDR. Dr. Merladet is bilingual and can do assessment, testing, and therapy in both English and Spanish along with understanding/appreciating the research and clinical implications in working across languages and cultures. His theoretical orientation is cognitive-behavioral/multimodal.

**Nkaku Kisaalita, Ph.D.** is a Psychologist at the Orlando VAMC with a background in Clinical Health Psychology and pain management. He completed his undergraduate work at UNC at Chapel Hill and earned his doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Florida Department of Clinical & Health Psychology in 2014. He completed his doctoral internship in Medical Psychology at the Medical College of Georgia/Charlie Norwood VAMC Psychology Consortium in Augusta GA. He then completed a Pain Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship at the James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital in Tampa FL. Dr. Kisaalita joined the Orlando VAMC Medical Psychology staff as an outpatient Pain Psychologist in 2015. In addition to his clinical interests in behavioral pain management, Dr. Kisaalita has published several peer-reviewed empirical studies on chronic pain and placebo analgesia, and has presented his research at national and international scientific meetings. Other professional interests include cultural diversity, positive psychology, and strength-based approaches. Personal interests include fitness/health, soccer, traveling, and cooking. Additionally, Dr. Kisaalita is self-described obsessive UNC basketball fan.

**Frederick Petty, MD, Ph.D.** Dr. Petty obtained the Ph.D. in physical chemistry from the Georgia Institute of Technology, and was a postdoctoral fellow at Rice University and at the University of Tennessee Brain Research Institute. He then obtained the MD from University of Tennessee, and was a resident in psychiatry at Washington University in St. Louis and the University of Iowa. Dr. Petty has been a staff psychiatrist in the VA since completing residency training, and has also been on the faculty of the University of Iowa, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, and Creighton University,
and is now Professor of Psychiatry at University of Central Florida. Dr. Petty has published over 200 peer reviewed articles in both basic science (behavioral psychopharmacology) and clinical research (PTSD, depression, alcoholism). He has received grant funding from the VA Medical Research Service, the National Institute of Mental Health, and the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Addiction, as well as several pharmaceutical companies. Dr. Petty has always maintained a clinical practice in the VA, and is presently Supervisory Psychiatrist for the Community Based Outpatient Clinics of OVAMC. Dr. Petty has also been active in teaching trainees in psychiatry and psychology, and has received the Golden Apple Award.

William E. Riebsame, Ph.D., ABPP earned his doctorate in Counseling Psychology from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1987. He then completed his internship at the University of South Florida. He was initially employed at the University of Maryland-College Park but returned to Florida in 1989 and was then licensed to practice as a psychologist. Dr. Riebsame maintained an independent practice treating adult, adolescents, and families for over 20 years. His practice evolved and became more forensic in nature leading to his board certification in Forensic Psychology in 2006. Dr. Riebsame became employed with the VA in 2013 and now carries out disability evaluations and sees veterans in individual and group psychotherapy at the Outpatient Clinic in Viera, FL. This work is full circle for Dr. Riebsame who was born in Ft. Bragg, NC and comes from a military family. His son is now an officer in the USMC. Dr. Riebsame enjoys all the aspects of the Florida lifestyle and is happy to introduce others to the “local scene!”

Steven Shea, Ph.D. is the Local Recovery Coordinator at the Orlando VAMC and an Assistant Professor of Medical Education, University of Central Florida School of Medicine. He served as the Chief of Psychology at OVAMC from 2008-2018. He received his Doctorate in Clinical and Community Psychology from the University of South Carolina and did his undergraduate education at Rutgers University. Dr. Shea has been working in the behavioral health field since 1979. Areas of professional interest include psychosocial rehabilitation of persons with serious mental illnesses, education of trainees in all mental health professions, mental health administration, criminal forensic psychology and educating the legal system about mental health issues. He is married to an OVAMC psychologist and the Shea’s have a daughter and 2 granddaughters (photos available upon request). Outside interests include outdoor activities (hiking, travel, boating, & fishing), motorcycles (photos available upon request), old cars and photography.

Bernice Vazquez-Garay, Psy.D. was born and raised in Puerto Rico. She earned a Master Degree in Industrial Organizational Psychology from the University of Puerto Rico in Rio Piedras before relocating in 2004 to the states with her husband, whom was
a JAG Officer for the ARMY at the time. As a military spouse, Dr. Vazquez-Garay had the opportunity to travel around the country, spend time with many military families, and immerse herself into the military culture. In 2007, she was accepted by the prestigious Professional Psychology Program from the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences at George Washington University in Washington, DC. Dr. Vazquez-Garay earned her Doctor of Psychology degree in 2010 and completed her doctoral internship at the Jefferson County Internship Consortium in Louisville, KY; part of the umbrella of the Seven Counties Services where she was hired in 2011 as a Staff Psychologist. Dr. Vazquez-Garay worked in this position for four years attending the mental health needs of the underserved Hispanic population in Kentucky before relocating to Orlando, FL in the Summer of 2015. She currently holds licenses to practice psychology in Puerto Rico, Kentucky, and Florida. In the Fall of 2016, Dr. Vazquez-Garay was appointed to serve as a Licensed Clinical Psychologist for the IOP/SUD Program at OVMC at Lake Baldwin. Dr. Vazquez-Garay’s personal interests includes practicing Yoga, area in which she holds an instructor certification of 200 hrs. RYT by Yoga Alliance, playing the piano, and spending time with her husband and two children.
ACCREDITATION STATUS

The Orlando VA Postdoctoral Psychology Fellowship Program is a member of APPIC. The Program abides by the APPIC postdoctoral selection and notification guidelines.

This new program is applying for initial accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association (APA). We have recently completed our self-study and APA site visit and anticipate accreditation in 2020. The program is *not currently accredited* by APA.

Again, we thank you for your interest in our program. We look forward to reviewing your application to join us.