Orlando VA Medical Center
PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
(2020-2021)

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS
VA Medical Center
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PSYCHOLOGY DOCTORAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
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Thank you for your interest in the Orlando VA Medical Center Clinical Psychology Internship training program. Our APA-Accredited program provides training for six full-time interns each year. The training year starts July 6, 2020 and offers an annual stipend of $24,014. 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.

Program Mission and Aims

Training Philosophy:
The mission of the Orlando VA Psychology Internship program is to develop ethical and competent psychologists capable of delivering quality care through evidence-based practice for the purpose of improving the quality of life and well-being for America’s Veterans.

The psychology internship at the Orlando VA Medical Center provides generalist training for professional psychologists. Within this generalist training, the internship promotes a scientific attitude and approach to clinical activities through an emphasis on evidence-based practice (scholar practitioner model). Interns are regularly provided with opportunities and experiences that promote their development as professional psychologists who integrate science into their clinical practice.

The internship year is viewed as a time for both clinical and professional growth. Although clinical work will be a consistent focus, Interns’ overall professional development is also emphasized. In service of this, Interns are an intergal component of the mental health care at OVAMC and are encouraged to participate in decisions affecting the training program, their interdisciplinary teams, the psychology section, and the mental health service as a whole. Intern input is considered whenever possible when making decisions that affect their training (e.g. changes in requirements, implementing new policies, rotation and supervision assignments). Interns are
encouraged to participate in departmental and facility social functions (both formal and informal), as well as community and professional activities. These and other activities reflect a shared interest in building a sense of community and in fostering professional relationships.

Central to our training approach is the value of consistent supervision throughout the training year. Supervision of Interns follows a junior colleague approach, beginning with apprentice-level expectations early on in each rotation, and culminating in the development of Interns as fully functioning, junior colleagues by the end of their training year. Supervision is built on the foundation of ethical, supportive, and competent mentorship. Staff seek to demonstrate and encourage the Interns' participation in all professional roles related to the functions of a psychologist. Interns are afforded varied clinical responsibilities that provide experience with diverse patient populations to enhance their expertise across a wide spectrum of psychopathology. Additionally, Interns are provided didactic training and opportunities for supervising others and/or administrative/management involvement. This model echoes the values and goals of our training program, and reflects our shared commitment to positive, productive, collaborative relations between training faculty and the Interns. The staff responsible for the training program are dedicated to preparing our Interns for the diverse and complex roles of clinical/counseling psychologists. As such, we invest significant efforts in meeting these goals, as well as tailoring training experiences to align with the Interns' individual needs.

The Orlando VAMC Psychology Internship Training Program strives to produce an atmosphere of mutual respect, ethical practice, and professionalism guided by the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principals of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA, 2016). While Interns are encouraged to communicate any problems or concerns to the faculty directly with individual supervisors, there are also formal mechanisms for Intern input into the program through participation on the training committee and subcommittees, and regular meetings with the training director.

**Expected Competencies and Requirements for Completion**

Throughout the program, psychology interns will meet established objectives and benchmarks in the following competencies:

1. Interns will demonstrate the substantially independent ability to critically evaluate and disseminate research or other scholarly activities (e.g., case conference, presentation, publications) at the local, regional, or national level.
2. Interns will respond professionally in increasingly complex situations with a greater degree of independence across levels of training including knowledge and in accordance with the APA Code and relevant laws, regulations, rules, policies, standards and guidelines.

3. Interns will demonstrate the ability to conduct all professional activities with sensitivity to human diversity, including the ability to deliver high quality services to an increasingly diverse population. They demonstrate knowledge, awareness, sensitivity, and skills when working with diverse individuals and communities who embody a variety of cultural and personal background and characteristics.

Cultural and individual differences and diversity is defined as including, but not limited to, age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, national origin, race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

4. Interns will demonstrate maturing professional identities and senses of themselves as Psychologists and awareness of and receptivity in areas needing further development.

5. Interns will develop effective communication skills and the ability to form and maintain successful professional relationships.

6. Interns will develop competence in evidence-based psychological assessment with a variety of diagnoses, problems, and needs.

7. Interns will demonstrate competence in evidence-based interventions consistent with a variety of diagnoses, problems, and needs and across a range of therapeutic orientations, techniques, and approaches.

8. Interns will demonstrate evidence based knowledge of supervision models and practices and apply this knowledge in direct or simulated practice. Supervision involves the mentoring and monitoring the development of competence and skill in professional practice and the effective evaluation of those skills. Supervisors act as role models and maintain responsibility for the activities they oversee.

9. Consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills will be reflected in the intentional collaboration of professionals in health service psychology with other individuals or groups to address a problem, seek or share knowledge, or promote effectiveness in professional activities. Trainees apply this knowledge in direct or
simulated consultation with individuals and their families, other health care professionals, interprofessional groups, or systems related to health and behavior.

Interns are formally evaluated twice each rotation and are expected to attain an advanced level of skill for each of the nine competencies, above. By the midpoint of each rotation, Interns are expected to be relatively independent on straight-forward cases and require direct supervision on challenging cases or new clinical areas. By the end of each rotation, the goal is to be independent on most cases, except for those that are complex and/or new skill areas for the Intern.

Program Structure:

The OVAMC Psychology Internship Training Program aims to produce competent, professional psychologists who are prepared to enter the workforce upon completion of the internship year. At the end of the internship year, interns will be particularly equipped for working with Veterans and prepared for entry into the current health care environment, with generalist training and experience in interdisciplinary approaches to patient management.

1. The internship year is divided into three major rotations of four months each. As a generalist program, Interns will be expected to participate in an array of rotations that emphasize core psychologist functions, including psychotherapy and assessment. Rotation selection is based on the individual Intern’s preference as well as their identified training needs. Each Intern will be required to complete one rotation in a General Outpatient Mental Health setting and two elective rotations.

2. Prior to the selection of rotations, Interns will develop individualized training goals. As internship is the last step in achieving their doctoral degree, Interns will be strongly encouraged to select training experiences that fill any gaps in their graduate education and experience. To ensure a well-rounded training experience, the training committee may require a specific rotation.

3. Major rotations are available in the following areas:

   Mental Health Clinic rotations (must choose at least one)
   - Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program
   - Substance Abuse Disorders Treatment Program
   - Trauma Recovery Specialty Team
Specialty Mental Health rotations (may choose one or two)
- Inpatient Mental Health
- Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (Domiciliary)
- Primary Care - Mental Health Integration
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation in Serious Mental Illness (SMI; Center for Recovery Education and Residential Rehabilitation for SMI)

Medical Psychology rotations (may choose one or two)
- Geriatric Assessment
- Geropsychology
- Neuropsychology
- Pain Management / Biofeedback

Major Rotation Descriptions:

Mental Health Clinic

Interns on the Mental Health Clinic rotations gain skills in biopsychosocial interviewing, assessment, case conceptualization, differential diagnosis, and treatment. Modalities include both individual and group psychotherapies, guiding clinical practice with applicable literature to provide optimal services to Veterans.

1. Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program (BHIP)
   - Supervisors: Tiffany Misra, PsyD or Stacey Polott, PsyD
   - Location: Crossroads Annex / Lake Baldwin CBOC
   - Major Focus: Interns have opportunity to work in a multidisciplinary team consisting of psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, counselors, psychiatric nurse practitioners, registered nurses, peer specialists, and administrative staff, treating Veterans from a variety of cultural backgrounds and a range of military cohorts. Interns provide outpatient treatment for a variety of mental health concerns, including depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, PTSD, interpersonal problems, psychosis, anger, etc. Interns serve as a coordinator of care to help connect Veterans to appropriate services/groups. Personality and cognitive assessments are conducted for diagnostic clarification, memory concerns, ADHD assessment and to guide treatment planning.
   - Common Assessment Instruments Used: MMPI-2 RF, MCMI-IV, SIMS, PAI ADHD and cognitive assessments: RBANS, MOCA, SLUMS, WAIS-IV, CAARS-SF (or BAARS-IV), Stroop Test, TOMM (malingering)
   - Common EBPs Used: CBT-D, IPT, CPT, ACT-D
2. **Substance Use Disorder (SUD)/Intensive Outpatient Treatment**

   Supervisor: Bernice Vazquez-Garay, PsyD
   Location: Lake Baldwin
   
   Major Focus: This rotation provides training in an outpatient SUD clinic 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. Interns will be engaged in both individual and group therapies on this rotation. Additionally, the rotation offers an opportunity for Interns to work as part 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.
   
   **Common Assessment Instruments Used:** Brief Addiction Monitor, PHQ-9, PCL-5, GAD-7, MMPI-2, MMPI-RF, PAI
   
   **Common EBPs Used:** The rotation offers exposure to and training (if desired) in Motivational Interviewing, and training in several gold-standard evidence-based treatments for SUD (e.g., Cognitive Behavioral Coping Skills Training, Motivational Enhancement Therapy, 12-Step Facilitation, Contingency Management, Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention or Cognitive Behavioral Relapse Prevention Therapy).

3. **Trauma Recovery Specialty Team (TRuST)**

   Supervisors: Laura Meyers, PhD, ABPP, Bryan Batien, PhD, ABPP, Diana Mendez, PhD, Teri Carper, PhD
   Location: Lake Nona and/or Crossroads Annex
   
   Major Focus: This rotation specializes in the assessment and treatment of trauma related disorders, with an emphasis on new or chronic Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Interns 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.
   
   Interns will have the option of focusing on developing proficiency in either PE or CPT with an emphasis on assessment skills and differential diagnosis or PE or CPT with an emphasis on more complex presentation of trauma and integration of full-model DBT. The intern will have the opportunity for participation in the DBT team, including co-leading DBT skills group and individual DBT clients. Adjunct experiences in other evidenced based interventions would be available based on intern’s individual training goals (e.g., CBCT-PTSD, ACT-D, CBT-CP, CBT-SUD).
Common Assessment Instruments Used: The Clinician Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS), Life Events Checklist (LEC), PCL-5, PHQ-9, GAD-7, SCID-5, MMPI-2, MMPI-RF, RBANS, Weschler scales as indicated.
Common EBPs Used: Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) and Prolonged Exposure (PE) are emphasized and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, if interested.

Specialty Mental Health Programs

4. Inpatient Mental Health
Supervisor: Danielle Jahn, PhD
Location: Lake Nona
Major Focus: This rotation offers Interns the opportunity to work with Veterans in acute crisis and provide treatment aimed at stabilization. The primary modality is group psychotherapy, although there is opportunity for individual and family work. The Intern will gain skills in crisis intervention and risk assessment and mitigation, as well as help Veterans to establish a network of care and develop their full recovery plan, including social, occupational, physical, and spiritual supports.
Common Assessment Instruments Used: Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2), Symptom Checklist-90-Revised (SCL-90-R), Structured Inventory of Malingered Symptomatology (SIMS), Repeatable Battery for the Assessment of Neuropsychological Status-Update (RBANS), Brief self-report symptom measures
Common EBPs Used: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Illness Management and Recovery, Social Skills Training, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and Safety Planning

5. Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program MHRRTTP
Supervisors: Vicie Hurst, PhD and Manjot Leafgreen, PhD
Location: Lake Nona
Major Focus: The MHRRTTP (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.
The Dom focuses heavily on the treatment milieu as a therapeutic community. The treatment team consists of the Veteran, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, recreation therapists, vocational rehabilitation specialists, nursing, peer supports, other medical staff and administration. As a team, the professionals work with the
Veteran 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.

The Domiciliary Intern provides residential rehabilitation and recovery-oriented services for Veterans with various mental/emotional disorders, substance use disorders, and other psychosocial impairment. Interns conduct biopsychosocial assessments, complete discharge summaries, provide individual psychotherapy, case conceptualization and diagnostic assessment, document in the medical record, facilitate conflict resolution/mediation, participate in resident community meetings, and participate in multidisciplinary treatment team meetings. Interns gain experience conducting individual therapy with Veterans as well as co-facilitating evidence-based groups therapy for Veterans with a variety of diagnoses.

Common Assessment Instruments Used: MMPI-2-RF, PAI, MCMI, WAIS, WMS, RBANS, MoCA, MFAST, SIRS-2

Common EBPs Used: CPT, DBT skills groups

6. **Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI)**
   Supervisor(s): Chris Blagg, PhD
   Location: Lake Nona
   Major Focus: PCMHI describes mental and behavioral health care services that are provided to Veterans in collaboration with primary care providers. These services are fully integrated into the primary care setting (patient-aligned clinical teams, or PACT), and support PACT-based treatment of both mental health conditions and behavioral aspects of chronic medical conditions. PCMHI providers are members of the PACT interdisciplinary team, where they collaborate on assessment, support or provide primary care-based treatment and brief therapy, and conduct follow-up over time.

   Interns on this rotation work alongside primary care providers regarding the psychological needs of Veterans by providing brief functional assessments and brief treatment for Veterans. Interns receive consultation requests, complete initial intakes, provide feedback and consultation to other team members, and maintain an ongoing caseload of short-term outpatient psychotherapy/health psychology patients.

   Interns can expect to assess and treat Veterans with psychological issues (e.g., anxiety, depression, chronic pain, PTSD) and partner with patients who may need to work through barriers to transition to the Mental Health Clinic or Specialty Care. Interns may also work with Veterans who have psychological issues that exacerbate their medical conditions, as well as to help patients with the psychological sequelae of medical problems such as hypertension, hepatitis C, cancer, diabetes, coronary artery disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, etc. Educational
opportunities include assigned readings, training calls, and organizational meetings with in-service presentations.

Common Assessment Instruments Used: MoCA (Montreal Cognitive Assessment), PHQ-9, GAD-7, C-SSRS

Common EBPs Used: Brief models of therapy are learned. Exposure to Problem-Solving Training for Primary Care. Opportunity for time-limited groups such as smoking cessation and diabetes education may be available.

7. **Psychosocial Rehabilitation in Serious Mental Illness**
   Supervisor: Michael Lind, PhD
   Location: Lake Baldwin
   Major Focus: The Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC; also called Center for Recovery Education [CORE]) provides rehabilitation and recovery-oriented services for Veterans in intensive transitional treatment settings. Services are designed to provide care at a level higher than standard outpatient mental health treatment. Veterans in these populations typically present with serious psychiatric disorders (e.g., psychosis, schizoaffective disorder, major affective disorder, or severe PTSD), substance use disorders, and/or psychosocial deficits (e.g., homelessness).
   Interns participate on a multidisciplinary team to support Veteran recovery and community integration by providing mental health services in an outpatient transitional learning setting. CORE programming is curriculum-based and is specifically designed to teach the requisite skills necessary for defining and realizing Veteran’s self-chosen goals in all life domains. Specifically, Interns participate in CORE admission screenings, psychosocial assessments, group facilitation, wellness programming, community integration activities, and individual and family therapy sessions.
   Interns gain experience with the recovery model of treatment, provision of services to those in milieu treatment settings, and interdisciplinary team collaboration supporting each Veteran’s achievement of self-determined goals. Training activities afford Interns to learn through concrete experience, reflective observation, active experimentation, and establishment of collegial relationships with professional staff where training is viewed as relational, culturally-sensitive, and reciprocal.
   Common Assessment Instruments Used: PCL-5, PHQ-9, GAD-7, C-SSRS, MoCA
   Common EBPs Used: Social Skills Training (SST) for Schizophrenia

**Medical Psychology Programs**

8. **Geropsychology**
   Supervisors: Maria Vazquez, PhD and Charnette Munroe, PhD
Location: Lake Nona
Major Focus: The Community Living Center (CLC) at Lake Nona has a 15-bed short-stay unit, a 30-bed secured dementia unit, and two units for long-stay admissions, including hospice and spinal cord patients. Interns do initial evaluations, capacity evaluations, and brief treatment with short stay patients. They also can do individual psychotherapy, dementia care, groups, and staff training.
Common Assessment Instruments Used:
Common EBPs Used:

9. **Geriatric Assessment**
   Supervisor: Margarita Velez, PhD
   Location: Crossroads Annex
   Major Focus: Interns focus on the evaluation of common adjustment/developmental issues unique to late life. They use cognitive assessment techniques (bilingual English/Spanish, if applicable), to differentiate mild neurocognitive disorder, major neurocognitive disorder, dementia, and delirium.
   Common Assessment Instruments Used:
   Common EBPs Used:

10. **Neuropsychology**
    Supervisor(s): Janice Herron, PhD and Justin Koenitzer, PsyD
    Location: Crossroads Annex
    Major Focus: This rotation provides the Intern an opportunity to learn about brain-behavior relationships through consultation, assessment, treatment, webinars, and outside readings. The overall goal of the rotation is to assist the Intern in developing a broad-based understanding of brain-behavior relationships and their assessment, which will enhance their general clinical diagnostic and case conceptualization skills. The Neuropsychology service is a consultative outpatient service that receives referrals from various specialties within the medical center including neurology, psychiatry, primary care, and other specialty clinics. Typical cases may involve assessment of cognitive dysfunction associated with various medical conditions, illnesses, and injuries. Cases may include assessment of degenerative dementias (e.g., Lewy-body, Alzheimer’s, frontotemporal), multiple sclerosis, cerebrovascular disease, epilepsy, traumatic brain injury, normal aging, and cognitive complaints associated with psychiatric disorders. Although primarily diagnostic in nature with a focus on assessment and consultation skills, the rotation also offers Interns the opportunity to participate in either individual or group cognitive rehabilitation services. Throughout the rotation, Interns are expected to build skills in assessment, intervention, consultation, multicultural practice, and professional ethics.
Common Assessment Instruments Used: A flexible battery approach is employed with a wide range of tests available. Common EBPs Used: Standards of Care in Clinical Neuropsychology are followed.

11. **Pain Management/Biofeedback**  
Supervisors: Louis Damis, PhD, ABPP and Nkaku Kisaalita, PhD  
Location: Lake Nona  
Major Focus: The Mental Health Pain Service is a consultative outpatient service under Medical Psychology that receives referrals from various specialties including primary care, anesthesiology, neurology, psychiatry, and other specialty clinics. Interns serve as highly valued members of a multidisciplinary team of pain specialists, including clinical pharmacists, anesthesiologists, and social workers. In addition to various chronic pain syndromes, patients in this service typically present with a variety of other complex medical, behavioral, and psychiatric issues. This rotation provides Interns the opportunity to learn about the management of chronic, non-malignant pain conditions (e.g., musculoskeletal and neuropathic conditions, gastrointestinal disorders, chronic headaches/migraines) through consultation, assessment, and treatment, including the use of biofeedback. Interns gain experience providing comprehensive biopsychosocial pain assessments and evidence-based behavioral treatments. Additional educational opportunities include assigned readings, observing other pain management disciplines, and increased knowledge of biomedical, rehabilitative, and complementary and alternative medicine referral resources at OVAMC.

Common Assessment Instruments Used: MMPI-2-RF, PAI, Chronic Pain Acceptance Questionnaire (CPAQ), Pain Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (PSEQ), Working Alliance Inventory - Short Form-Revised (WAI-SR), PHQ-9, PHQ-15 (Somatic Severity Symptom Scale), GAD-7, Migraine Disability Assessment Scale (MIDAS), Headache Impact Test (HIT-6), Revised Fibromyalgia Impact Questionnaire (RFIQ), Fatigue Severity Scale (FSS), IBS Symptom Questionnaire, Nijmegen Questionnaire, Stop-Bang Questionnaire (SBQ), Epworth Sleepiness Scale (ESS), Insomnia Severity Index (ISI), PCL-5, MoCA, SCL-90-R  
Common EBPs Used: CPT-CP, CBT-I, CBT, ACT for chronic pain, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, diaphragmatic breathing training, heart rate variability training, thermal biofeedback training, surface EMG training, relaxation training, autogenic training, clinical hypnosis.

**Minor Rotations** (optional)

Interns may elect to participate in additional training experiences with faculty who serve in non-traditional professional roles or provide nontraditional experiences. Some of the major rotations are also available as minor experiences for those who want a sampling
of the experience without doing the whole rotation. Minor rotations can be up to 4 hours per week and may span across rotations.

Minor rotations are available in Care Transitions and Mental Health Outreach, Couples and Family Therapy, Forensic Topics, Geriatric Assessment, Health Psychology, Pain School, Psychology Administration, and Whole Health and Complimentary/Alternative Medicine.

**Care Transitions and Mental Health Outreach**  
Supervisor: Danielle Jahn, PhD and Steve Shea, PhD  
Location: Lake Nona  
Major Focus: The Care Transitions minor clinical rotation focuses on working with Veterans who were recently discharged from acute psychiatric inpatient or residential settings. Interns will participate in the post-discharge group and engage in outreach to recently discharged Veterans and Veterans who have been lost to care.  
Time Commitment: Minimum of 3 hours per week for at least 4 months (one rotation).

**Couples and Family Therapy Program**  
Supervisor: Melissa Tran, LMFT and Michelle Savage, LMFT  
Location: Crossroads Annex or Lake Nona  
Major Focus: Outpatient work with Veterans, their significant others and/or family members providing couples and family therapy services addressing a variety of relational problems impacting the Veteran’s life. This minor rotation offers experience with couples and family therapy modalities and evidence-based treatment interventions utilized with couples and families. Completion of MFT consults and regular follow up sessions with use of CSI 16/4 measurement tool for relationship satisfaction. Possibility of delivering groups targeted to couples and families such as SAFE, PTSD education for families, the 5 Love Languages, and more.  
Time Commitment: 4 hours per week for 1 or more rotation

**Forensic Topics: Threat and Risk Assessment**  
Supervisor: April Ace, PhD  
Location: Lake Nona  
Major focus is on forensic topics involving threat and risk of violence assessments, clinical or other interventions within these areas, and administrative management of threats and disruptive behaviors.
Examples of tasks and projects may include: attendance at Disruptive Behavior Committee meetings; disruptive behavior case analysis and brief presentation at meetings; threat/risk assessment of Veterans displaying such behaviors using evidence-based structured clinical judgment tools; clinical interviews of Veterans regarding reports of disruptive behavior; occasional readings and discussion of relevant research or literature reviews on special forensic topics of interest to the trainee.

Note please: there is not any clinical work load credit available in this minor rotation. Although it involves clinical assessment and intervention experiences, work load encounters/procedure codes are not credited due to the nature of the work (non-billable).

Time Commitment: 2-3 hours weekly, Thursdays – exact time each week TBD by Supervisor and trainee (never to exceed 4 hours).

This minor rotation can last one, two, or more rotations corresponding to the Major rotations, TBD based on program needs and trainee schedule and interests.

**Geriatric Assessment**  
Supervisor: Margarita Velez, PhD  
Location: Crossroads Annex  
Major Focus: The intern becomes familiar with common adjustment/developmental issues unique to late life. S/he also becomes familiar with basic cognitive assessment (bilingual English/Spanish, if applicable), and differentiating mild neurocognitive disorder from major neurocognitive disorder.

Time Commitment: 2-4 hrs over one rotation, preferably Mondays, flexible to interns availability.

**Health Psychology**  
Supervisor: Laurie Wolf, PhD  
Location: Lake Nona  
Major Focus: Group psychotherapies focusing on specific medical illnesses.

- 1st Thursday of the month: *Coping with Medical Issues* at 1-2pm; group aimed at building coping skills and making health behavior changes in context of chronic medical issues.
- 2nd Wednesday of the month: *Heart Failure Self-Management* Group at 1-2:30pm; group aimed at building coping skills and strategies for adherence among patients with heart failure.
- 3rd Tuesday of the month: DOM *Coping with Medical Issues* Class 9-10am; class aimed at building coping skills and making health behavior changes in
context of chronic medical issues; more of a large class than the smaller coping group in MH
• 3rd Wednesday of the month: COPD Empowerment Group at 1-2pm; group aimed at building coping skills and strategies for adherence among patients with COPD
• Shared Medical Appointment in Cardiology: every other Friday 8:30-10:30am; group appointment for patients recently discharged from the hospital due to heart failure; consists of education about heart failure with psychologist and nurse case manager; patients then move on to individual exams with medical provider

Time Commitment: Individualized according to intern's interest and schedule above, from December through July.

Pain School
Supervisor: Virginia Grundler, PsyD
Location: Lake Baldwin
Major Focus: The intern on this minor rotation prepares and co-leads ACT & CBT groups for patients with chronic pain. CBT groups are offered on Monday and Wednesday, ACT is on Tuesday. Supervision is based on the group content, patient's response in the group, and the intern's perspective.
Time Commitment: 2-4 hours per week

Psychology Administration
Supervisor: Kara Boyer, PhD
Location: Lake Nona
Major Focus: The major focus of this minor rotation is to develop an understanding of general mental health service line management. Time is spent learning about mental health program requirements, such as the Uniform Mental Health Services Handbook, as well as data management. The intern attends scheduled management meetings as permitted.
Time Commitment: 4 hours per week

Whole Health and Complimentary/Alternative Medicine
Supervisor: Bernice Vazquez-Garay, PsyD
Location: Lake Baldwin
Major Focus: The experience is an introduction to the different CAMs available: Yoga, Mindfulness, Tai Chi, Qichong, Art Therapy, progressive muscle relaxation, and Acupuncture. The interns learn about available resources in OVAMC, and how to refer Veterans to one or more of these CAMs. A practice session is dedicated to show them and actual Yoga session offered to Veterans
and they may immerse in the experience by being part of the class not just as an observant.
Time Commitment: 2 hours/week for 4 weeks

**Supervision:**

All clinical activities of Interns are supervised by professional clinical staff. At a minimum, each Intern will participate in four hours of face-to-face supervision per week. Two hours are regularly-scheduled individual supervision with their primary clinical supervisor; one hour is group supervision focused on enhancing Interns’ competency in providing supervision to others; and one hour is general group supervision. In addition, Interns on certain rotations may receive focused consultation regarding specific assessment instruments or treatment interventions with a faculty member who may not be embedded within that particular clinical program.

The rotation supervisor is primarily responsible for providing training in the clinical work of a particular rotation. Supervisors work with Interns to select cases that are graded in complexity and correspond with skill level. The supervisor is responsible for helping each Intern to move from relatively simple to more complex professional activities, and will provide the Intern with feedback throughout the rotation.

It is a goal of the training program to create a supportive and challenging learning environment that enriches each Intern’s professional development while respecting individual differences. We seek to help each Intern develop collegial, professional interpersonal relationships and to that end, supervisors work to help Interns become socialized into the profession and the OVAMC environment. This may include attendance/participation in a variety of service-level meetings, educational presentations/seminars, discussing the many roles of psychologists, discussing how the political environment impacts our practice, discussing policy and procedures memos, and working and training with interdisciplinary members of OVAMC staff.

Supervision is multi-modal in its approach. Interns should expect a variety of supervisory methods across rotations, including live supervision, co-facilitation of clinical activities (e.g., consultation, groups) and use of audio recording.

Supervision provides the opportunity to experience different theoretical perspectives, learn specific skills, gain insight into diverse/different patient groups, understand the varying roles of psychologists, develop confidence, and establish a sense of professional identity.
Didactic Instruction / Training Seminars / Presentations:

Didactic instruction is an essential component of the intern’s clinical training experience. These series are intended to supplement and enrich the development of specific clinical skills practiced in the rotations, and increase understanding of pertinent professional and clinical issues.

The Didactic Seminar and Journal Club are a combined activity composed of a weekly didactic training and a related journal article discussion. While designed primarily for the psychology Interns, psychiatric residents, psychology practicum students, psychology fellows, and other allied health trainees also participate regularly.

The Didactic Seminar focuses on relevant topics selected to address specific competencies and interests, as well as the multiple roles of the contemporary psychologist. Factors considered in developing the didactic curriculum include intern-identified training needs and interests, faculty areas of specialty, site-specific (VA, military) cultural competencies, and current political and/or clinical shifts in the larger professional climate (e.g., the recent increased focus on empirically-based treatments for Veterans). Special attention is given to issues related to diverse populations and multicultural factors, including those that may not be typically considered. Topics related to professional and ethical development are also emphasized. Various teaching methods are employed including didactic instruction, live demonstrations, videos, discussions, and recommended readings.

All participants in the Didactic Seminar complete an evaluation form for each didactic. Participant input is a valuable part of continuous quality improvement.

Journal Club supplements the Didactic Seminar, and is an opportunity for Interns to critically evaluate recent articles in the scientific literature related to the didactic topic. Interns rotate responsibility for selecting an article of interest related to the scheduled didactic. Interns work with the journal club presenter to select the article, and the Intern leads a critical discussion. The intern presenter should include evaluation of research design and analysis, reliability of findings, implications and limitations of the study, multicultural and ethnic issues related to both the methodology and clinical application of findings, ethical considerations, and considerations for treatment with the identified populations.

A faculty member participates as both an active discussant and to provide supervisory guidance on meeting didactic objectives and inclusion of appropriate journal articles.
Evaluations are completed by faculty for each Journal Club, and feedback is provided to the Intern who led the effort.

**Training in Clinical Supervision**

To facilitate the transition from supervisee to potential supervisor in his/her postdoctoral endeavors, Interns attend a weekly didactic seminar on supervision of supervision and, on selected rotations, have direct experience providing “supervision-like” clinical consultation to practicum students while receiving supervision on this “supervision” from a licensed psychologist who has responsibility for the case. The specific involvement of each Intern in consultation/supervision activities varies somewhat according to his/her rotation. The Intern 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 practice of supervision. The Intern 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 to them.

In this vertical model, consistent with the VA Psychology Training Council (VAPTC) recommendations, Interns also participate as “supervisees” of the postdoctoral fellows.

**Case Conceptualization Seminar and Case Presentations**

The *Case Conceptualization Seminar* is a weekly seminar that focuses on the formulation and application of case conceptualizations from a primarily cognitive-behavioral perspective. The seminar consists of didactics as well as experiential case presentations.

*Case Presentations* are completed at mid-year and end-of-year. Interns present a complete psychological assessment, case conceptualization, and treatment plan/progress to members of the training committee. The cases used for the presentation come from the Intern’s current rotation and include rotation-specific assessments and intervention strategies. As such, the nature of the referral question and depth and focus of information gathered varies across rotations. Observers (faculty and colleagues) provide verbal and written feedback on each Intern’s presentation. This feedback is incorporated into each end-of-rotation evaluation.
Professional Presentations

Didactic Seminar, Mental Health Grand Rounds, and regional professional meetings give each intern the opportunity to present an area of expertise to their mental health peers. Each intern is expected to present at least one professional presentation throughout the course of the year.

Program Improvement

Interns are expected to identify one area for possible improvement of each rotation, or the program as a whole, and to design a strategy to address it. This gives the Intern experience with program administration/management, as well as an opportunity to review and evaluate best practices of other programs and consider a program evaluation/performance improvement protocol. As part of the Trainee Evaluation of Supervisor and Rotation completed by Interns, there is a section on how the rotation could be improved, including development of a hypothesis, a proposed method of assessment, and method(s) for determining the outcome of the proposed improvement. The purpose of this exercise is to encourage Interns to think empirically about real-world problems and to design interventions informed by data.

Enriching Activities: Mentorship, Grand Rounds, and EBP Trainings

The training program encourages and values mentorship and pursuit of training opportunities beyond those offered within the clinical rotations. To that end, interns are allowed protected time to meet with a designated mentor throughout the year. Interns may choose a mentor toward the beginning of the training year who will serve as a non-evaluative staff mentor. (The mentor should therefore not be one of the intern’s rotation supervisors.) The mentor’s primary role is to be a resource to assist the intern’s professional development, both within the internship program and planning their path toward becoming an early-career psychologist.

Interns are strongly encouraged to attend 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.

VA Local and Regional Evidence-Based Psychotherapy Trainings are elective training experiences that each involve one 2- or 3-day workshop, followed by six months of weekly post-training consultation or supervision. Workshops may be offered in Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD, Prolonged Exposure Therapy for PTSD, Dialectical
Behavior Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Depression, and/or Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Depression, as available. Attendance on consultation calls typically begin within two weeks following the workshop training. All participants in the training are expected to attend a minimum of 80% of the consultation calls and complete a specified minimum number of cases to fulfill the completion requirement. The identified facility consultant may require participation in more than six months of post-training consultation or supervision, depending on individual training needs.

**Training Resources**

The Orlando VA Medical Center, one of the Top 100 Companies for Working Families, was officially established as a new VA facility in October of 2006.

The Orlando VA includes the nation’s newest VA Medical Center in Lake Nona with 134 inpatient beds (opening in stages), a 120-bed Community Living Center in Lake Nona, a two-site 110-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 Interns are at both the Lake Nona and the Lake Baldwin sites. Typically, Interns 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 smorgasbord 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, Interns 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 Interns. 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 Interns.

**Internship General Information**

The Internship is a one-year, full-time appointment (constituting 2080 hours) to be completed during the July 6, 2020 to July 2, 2021 calendar year.
Typical duty hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for interns but may vary slightly by rotation and setting.

The current stipend for full-time VA interns is $24,014 paid biweekly throughout the annual appointment period. This stipend is subject to Federal Income Tax withholding but Florida does not have a state income tax. Interns are eligible for health insurance and life insurance benefits. Interns are not eligible for participation in VA retirement programs.

Interns accrue 4 hours of paid sick leave and 4 hours of paid annual leave (vacation) every 2-week pay period. This equates to approximately 13 days of sick leave and 13 days of annual leave over the course of the internship year. In addition, there are 10 federal holidays. With the approval of the current rotation supervisor and the training director, each intern may be additionally allocated up to five days of authorized absence (AA) for professional development activities (e.g. conferences, presentations, interviews, meetings w/academic program advisor/ faculty, etc.).

**Non-Discrimination:**

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age and disability. The OVAMC Psychology Internship Program extends this definition to mean that no information about the applicant which is not relevant to the applicant’s potential to succeed in the training program is utilized in the selection process.

During the internship year, should there be an instance of discrimination experienced or observed by trainees or staff, there is an obligation to address the problem so as to minimize psychological harm. Interns are encouraged to consult with their clinical supervisor, mentor, training director, or Chief of Psychology for assistance in such matters.

Where this level of resolution is not effective or the instances are systemic, interns have access to formal procedures, as per Medical Center Policy. The local EEO program manager is available for consultation to assist in any employee’s exercise of their rights.

**Diversity**

The Department of Veterans Affairs serves the Veteran population, which is our charge from Congress and thus from the American people. The Veteran population seeking
healthcare from VA reflects a diverse society. The OVAMC psychology internship program seeks to have a diverse staff and trainee population along many dimensions, since the need to bring care that represents the dignity and uniqueness of all VA patients is an organizational mandate that reflects VA values.

The program seeks to teach interns to identify multiple aspects of human diversity (i.e. individual differences) and to bring a heightened awareness of these elements into their conceptualizations and actions. Program staff emphasize the importance of human diversity and individual differences in all aspects of clinical practice. Interns are encouraged to question and explore elements of diversity as they affect human behavior.

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

**Program Tables Updated 9-5-19**

The psychology internship at the Orlando VA Medical Center provides generalist training for professional psychologists. Within the generalist training, the internship promotes a scientific attitude and approach to clinical activities through an emphasis on evidence-based practice. This approach follows the scholar practitioner model, which provides interns with opportunities and experiences that promote their development as professional psychologists who integrate science into clinical practice.

Training experiences are available in general mental health outpatient settings (mental health clinic, community based clinics, and telemental health), specialty mental health outpatient settings (psychosocial rehabilitation, residential treatment, substance use treatment, and neuropsychology/traumatic brain injury), and areas of special interest (primary care – mental health integration, pain management and biofeedback, and geropsychology).

We welcome all qualified applicants. Well-prepared applicants will be U.S. citizens from APA-accredited graduate programs and will have a solid foundation in both psychotherapy skills (300 intervention hours) and psychological assessment (200 assessment hours). Additionally, comprehensive exams should be complete and the dissertation proposal approved. All application files are reviewed by at least three 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. Interns 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.

### Internship Program Admissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Direct Contact INTERVENTION Hours</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
<td>300 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Direct Contact ASSESSMENT Hours</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
<td>200 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed 3 years of graduate work in APA, CPA, or PCSAS accredited doctoral program</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Citizen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successfully defended the dissertation proposal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicants born after 12/31/59 who were male at age 18 have registered for Selective Service</td>
<td>Yes, if selected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug screening, as per Human Resources requirements</td>
<td>Yes, if selected</td>
<td></td>
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### Financial and Other Benefit Support for Upcoming Training Year

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<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Stipend/Salary for Full-time Interns</td>
<td>$24,014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program provides access to medical insurance for intern?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If access to medical insurance is provided, Trainee contribution to cost required?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage of family member(s) available?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage of legally married partner available?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage of domestic partner available?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Annual Paid Personal Time Off</td>
<td>13 days vacation + 10 holidays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Annual Paid Sick Leave</td>
<td>13 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the event of medical conditions and/or family needs that require extended leave, does the program allow reasonable unpaid leave to interns/residents in excess of personal time off and sick leave?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Benefits</td>
<td>Successful interns are eligible for direct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The majority of our graduates have gone on to formal postdoctoral fellowships, most in clinical, non-research settings. Of our 39 total graduates (2012-19), 21 are full-time VA psychologists now and 4 are VA postdoctoral fellows. For our last 3 cohorts (see Table below), 13 have gone on to formal postdoctoral fellowships, and 8 have gone straight to full-time employment. Of those 21, 18 had their initial post-internship positions with VA. Given our mission of training psychologists to serve America’s Veterans, we are delighted that over half of our graduates have elected to stay with VA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Post-Internship Positions (past 3 years)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total # interns 2016 – 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total # interns who did not seek employment because they returned to their doctoral program/are completing doctoral degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA Medical Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic university/department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent practice setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other medical center or hospital</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Application Process and Selection Procedures**

Applicants for Internship must have advanced standing in a clinical or counseling psychology doctoral program approved by the American Psychological Association or Canadian Psychological Association. All applicants must receive the written endorsement of their program Training Director as having completed all departmental
requirements for Internship eligibility, including all coursework and qualifying examinations and progress toward the dissertation/research project.

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.

Doctoral students who are interested in applying for an internship position in our program should follow the online Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) application instructions.

Intern applicants must:

1. Have completed at least three years of graduate course work in an APA- or CPA-accredited clinical or counseling psychology training program in good standing. Applicants from programs on probation will not be considered.

2. Have successfully defended the dissertation proposal.

3. Have completed a minimum of 500 hours assessment/intervention supervised clinical practica, with preference given to 300+ hours intervention and 200+ assessment hours. Applicants with fewer than 500 clinical hours at the time of application should indicate a plan to accrue the necessary hours prior to starting internship.

4. Be a citizen of the United States.

The AAPI (APPIC Application for Psychology Internships) online application portal should be used by all interested students to apply to the Orlando VA Medical Center Psychology Internship Program. All applications must be submitted online. News and information about the APPIC Online Application process, along with instructions about how to access the service, can be found at www.appic.org, click on "AAPI ONLINE." There is a training video describing the basic functionality for the Applicant (Student) portal under "TRAINING RESOURCES."

When you enter the general APPI site, click on Directory Online, and then Search for Internship Programs. Orlando VAMC is listed under Florida. Orlando VA Medical Center Program number is 2221. Most of the information about our internship can be found on our APPIC page. However, if you find that you have more specific questions, you are encouraged to email the internship program training director directly for clarification.
Your graduate program training director should be a useful resource in helping you navigating the AAPI applicant portal. When you enter the general site, scroll down and click on "The Applicant Portal of the 2020-21 AAPI Online is now available."

Your online AAPI application package should also include: a Verification of Internship Eligibility and Readiness, completed by University Director of Training, current official graduate transcript(s), three letters of reference from faculty members or practicum supervisors who know you and your work well, cover letter and curriculum vitae.

Complete application packets must be received by us by 11:59 PM Eastern Time Zone November 17, 2019 for consideration for internship appointment beginning the following July. Individual interviews will be conducted by invitation only, following initial evaluation of application materials. Applicants invited for interviews will be notified by December 18, and an interview date scheduled during early January. Interviews may also be conducted via video teleconference or by phone.

Policies and procedures regarding internship offers and acceptance recommended by the APPIC and the Council of Directors of Clinical Training Programs will be followed for the appointment of interns. The 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 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 interns 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. The Training Director submits the final list to APPIC for matching.

14. After the final match list is posted, successfully matched candidates are contacted 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

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](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](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 Dr. Steve Herman, Chief of Psychology, and is part of the Mental Health Service, led by Dr. Gustavo Rivera-Cruz, Associate Chief of Staff for Mental Health (ACOS) and Dr. Kara Boyer, Deputy ACOS for Mental Health. Staff
Psychologists are assigned to a variety of clinics, to include the Behavioral Health Integrated Program (BHIP), Medical Psychology, Primary Care Mental Health, the Substance Use Disorder Treatment Program, the Psychological Treatments for Stress-Related Disorders (PTSD) Team, 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), and the Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). Our staff are diverse not only with regards 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 internship training program. Psychology staff who contribute to our training program 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 Bay Pines VAMC in St. Petersburg, FL and has been with VA throughout her career. She has worked at WJB Dorn VAMC in Columbia, SC as a medical and geriatric psychologist, Columbia SC Vet Center as the MST Coordinator, and Orlando VA as the Local Recovery Coordinator in psychosocial rehabilitation. She now serves as the Training Director for the psychology programs. Until coming to Orlando, 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 the past-president of the Florida Chapter of the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association. She recently completed training as an APA site reviewer for psychology internships. Her clinical and research interests are primarily in the area of sexual coercion, sexual assault, and PTSD. Dr. Shea received the 2019 Outstanding Director of Training Award from the VA Section of APA Division 18.

**Supervisory Staff**

**April Ace, JD, Ph.D., Forensic Issues, Lake Nona.** Dr. Ace graduated from the University of Florida College of Law in 1992, worked for five years as an attorney, then
earned her doctorate in Clinical and Community Psychology from the University of South Carolina in 2004. She completed her doctoral internship at the Tampa VA in 2004 and a forensic psychology postdoctoral residency at the University of Washington and Washington State Hospital in 2005. She has worked in juvenile and adult correctional facilities, a private medical practice, and has been with the Orlando VA since January 2008. With the VA she has worked as a Primary Care - Mental Health Integration (PCMHI) psychologist, the sole psychologist at a Community-Based outpatient Clinic (CBOC), a Psychology Supervisor, and now as the Orlando VA Workplace Violence Prevention Program Manager since 2016. She is a member of the international Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP), an organization of legal, mental health, law enforcement, and other experts who specialize in conducting structured threat and risk assessments for businesses, agencies, and medical facilities around the world. Her clinical and professional interests are primarily in forensic psychology and PTSD.

**Bryan Batien, Ph.D., ABPP** Trauma Recovery Specialty Team (TRuST – PTSD treatment team), Crossroads received his Ph.D. from the University of South Dakota and completed his internship at the Cincinnati VA Medical Center. He has been involved in several roles at OVAMC including the Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL) program coordinator and the acting Therapeutic and Supportive Employment Service program manager. 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 several 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.,** Presurgical/Consultation and Liaison, 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.

Christopher Blagg, Ph.D., *Primary Care Mental Health Integration, Lake Nona.* Dr. Blagg earned his doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Florida State University in 2012, where his research focused on measuring motivation to change, the relationship between smoking and anxiety, and the effectiveness of placebos in alcohol experiments. He completed his doctoral internship at the Federal Correctional Institution in Tallahassee, FL and his postdoctoral training at Southwestern State Hospital in Thomasville, Georgia. Dr. Blagg currently works at the Orlando VAMC in Primary Care-Mental Health Integration, as part of a multi-disciplinary primary care team providing collaborative care. This includes conducting initial brief functional assessments, providing time-limited therapy, completing cognitive screenings, and facilitating shared medical appointments.

Kara Boyer, Ph.D., *Deputy ACOS Mental Health.* Dr. Boyer 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 came to the OVAMC as the Program Manager of the Domiciliary Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program at the Lake Nona and Lake Baldwin Campuses, serving both facilities well; she was promoted to Deputy ACOS for Mental Health in 2018. 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.

Pamela C. Brown, Ph.D., *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 (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.

**Teri Carper, Ph.D., Outpatient Mental Health/Telehealth.** Dr. Carper is a Staff Psychologist at the Orlando VAMC, delivering 100% of her clinical services via VA Video Connect. 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 VA Boston, 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 currently serves as the VISN 8 Telemental Health Lead and is the co-chair of the OVAMC Virtual Care Committee. 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.

**Louis Damis, Ph.D., ABPP, Pain/Biofeedback, Lake Nona.** Dr. Damis is a Clinical Health Psychologist presently providing Biofeedback, Neurofeedback, and Pain Management services at the Orlando VAMC. He obtained his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Washington State University with a subspecialty in medical psychology. He completed his internship at the Salt Lake City VAMC and a postdoctoral residency in clinical and forensic psychology at Utah State Prison. Dr. Damis is a Diplomate with the American Board of Professional Psychology, a Fellow of both the American Academy of Clinical Health Psychology & the Biofeedback Certification International Alliance, an Associate Professor at the University of Florida College of Medicine, and holds ASCH Certification in Clinical Hypnosis with Consultant Status. Dr. Damis teaches regularly for the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis, is the President of the Florida Society of Clinical Hypnosis, a board member for the Biofeedback Society of Florida, and was the National Subject Matter Expert for the VA National Pain Mini-Residency Program. He has conducted research and written on the topics of trauma, persistent pain, neuropsychological functioning in medically ill individuals, aging, and psychotherapy process. Current professional interests include the influence of trauma on persistent pain/health and integrative psychological interventions. Personal interests include music, meditation, nutrition, and exercise.
Halina Dour, Ph.D., BHIP, Lake Baldwin.

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.

Janice Herron, Ph.D., Neuropsychology, Crossroads Annex. Dr. Herron is a Clinical Neuropsychologist at the Orlando VAMC. She earned her Ph.D. in the APA-accredited Human Services Psychology Program at the University of Maryland Baltimore County in 1999, completing both Clinical Psychology and Behavioral Medicine tracks. Doctoral psychology internship training was completed in the Neuropsychology track of the Medical University of South Carolina/Charleston VA Consortium, followed by completion of a National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Research Fellowship at MUSC. She has earned VA certification in Prolonged Exposure therapy for PTSD and maintains interest in clinical care of Veterans with mild TBI and PTSD. Prior to joining the Orlando VAMC in 2012, Dr. Herron worked as a Clinical Neuropsychologist at the Martinsburg VAMC, in private practice, and has been involved in teaching undergraduate and graduate interns. Dr. Herron is actively involved with the Psychology Internship training committee with a focus on assessment activities. Other professional interests involve neuropsychological variables impacting coping and recovery following neurological events.

Vicie Hurst, Ph.D., MHRRTP, Lake Nona, is a licensed psychologist who earned her doctorate from Florida State University in Combined Counseling Psychology and Human Services Psychology. She completed her doctoral internship at the Charlie Norwood VA/Augusta University Consortium in the Psychology of Women track. Dr.
Hurst completed her postdoctoral fellowship in the Trauma Recovery Clinic at the Charlie Norwood VA with an emphasis in Military Sexual Trauma. She has a wide variety of professional experiences, with her most recent experiences including the UCF RESTORES clinic (completing virtual-reality based exposure therapy with active-duty military, veterans, and first responders) and the Orlando VAMC. Dr. Hurst has a passion for working with individuals recovering from trauma and anxiety-related concerns and in understanding the multiple factors (e.g., systems, cultural expectations) that impact individuals who have experienced trauma. She is trained in evidence-based psychotherapies of CPT, PE, and DBT. In addition, she enjoys working with the veterans with complex (including significant psychosocial factors) clinical cases inherent in the DRRTP.

Danielle Jahn, Ph.D., *Inpatient Mental Health and Transitions of Care, Lake Nona*. Dr. Jahn received her doctoral degree in clinical psychology from Texas Tech University in 2014. She completed her doctoral internship at the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System in Denver, Colorado. Her postdoctoral fellowship focused on serious mental illness at the VA VISN 5 Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center. Prior to joining the Orlando VA Medical Center psychology team, Dr. Jahn held various positions, including Clinical Research Psychologist at the VISN 5 MIRECC, Assistant Professor in the Division of Psychiatric Services Research at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, Psychologist at Primary Care Institute (Gainesville, FL), and Health Psychologist at SIMEDHealth (Gainesville, FL). She is now a psychologist at the Mental Health Center for Acute Recovery Empowerment, an acute psychiatric inpatient setting. Dr. Jahn is an appointed Research Program Member of the Military Suicide Research Consortium and Older Adult Advisor for the QPR Institute. She has published over 40 peer-reviewed articles and authored over 50 research presentations at national and international conferences. She has served on a national task force addressing gaps in clinical training in suicide risk assessment and management through the American Association of Suicidology, acted as the program chair for the 47th Annual American Association of Suicidology Conference, and was a member of the older adult workgroup for the Maryland Governor’s Commission on Suicide Prevention. Dr. Jahn’s clinical and research interests focus on suicide prevention, serious mental illness, older adults, and transitions of care.

Nkaku Kisaalita, Ph.D., *Medical Psychology, Lake Nona*. Dr. Kisaalita 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.

Justin C. Koenitzer, Psy.D., Neuropsychology, Crossroads Annex. Dr. Koenitzer earned his undergraduate degree in Psychology from Rutgers University. He earned both his Master’s and Doctoral (2008) degrees in Clinical Psychology from Florida Institute of Technology, within the specialty track of Behavioral Medicine and Neuropsychology. He completed his Fellowship at Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk VA, followed by his Postdoctoral Residency in Neuropsychology through the private practice of Dr. Patrick Gorman in Winter Park, Florida. He has been licensed in the State of Florida since 2012. Dr. Koenitzer has taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels and supervised graduate students, doctoral Fellows, and Postdoctoral Fellows. Broadly, his primary clinical and research areas of interest are in Health Psychology and neurocognitive disorders to include TBI and dementia. He has been involved in research related to various aspects of human olfaction and the relationship between olfaction and neurocognitive disorders. In addition to his clinical experience in neuropsychological assessment, Dr. Koenitzer focuses on cognitive remediation interventions for individuals with neurocognitive disorders, addressing the management of a broad array of medical conditions with and without psychopathological overlay. When he is not working, he enjoys distance running, playing the piano, and making “drip castles” and playing with his eight-year-old and nineteen-month-old daughters.

Briget Lanktree, Psy.D, Domiciliary, Lake Nona. Dr. Lanktree earned her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Xavier University in 2005. She completed her doctoral internship at the Colorado Mental Health Institute at Fort Logan. Until 2015, Dr. Lanktree worked for the Illinois Department of Corrections in various capacities, focusing on treating individuals with substance use disorders and serious mental illness. Most recently, she served as the Psychologist Administrator for one of the most infamous maximum-security prisons in the country. She is also a Certified PREA Auditor for the US Department of Justice. During graduate school, Dr. Lanktree completed a year of practicum at the Cincinnati VA. She returned to work with Veterans at the Orlando VA in 2015, serving as the SUD Specialist/ Psychologist at the DRRTP (DOM) at Lake Nona. She truly enjoys working in residential and inpatient settings and
providing a variety of services to her Veterans. Dr. Lanktree grew up in Northern New Jersey, resulting in her love of New York sports teams like the Rangers, Giants, and Yankees. She is also a faithful supporter of the basketball teams of her alma maters, Dayton and Xavier. Her favorite teams, however, are those on which her children play, and she has embraced her role as “soccer mom.”

**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.

**Michael Lind, Ph.D., Center for Recovery Education (CORE), Lake Baldwin.** Dr. Lind earned his doctorate in Counseling Psychology from the University of Kansas in 2000. He was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship, which he fulfilled at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. He completed his doctoral internship at the Salt Lake City VAMC and has been licensed in Utah since 2001. Over the past 25 years, he has worked with Veterans, teens, adults, and the geriatric population providing assessment, individual psychotherapy, and group therapy. He has been involved in VA program development and implementation in a variety of settings, including the Domiciliary, Compensation & Pension, and Primary Care Mental Health Integration. He is currently a staff psychologist in the Orlando VA Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC) working with Veterans who have been diagnosed with serious mental illness. He grew up in South Jersey, right across the Delaware River from Philadelphia, and is a rabid fan of all Philadelphia sports teams. Additionally, he is a life-long distance runner and enjoys rock-n’-roll music and travel.

**Diana M. Mendez, Ph.D., Trauma Recovery Specialty Team (TRuST – PTSD treatment team), Lake Nona.** Dr. Mendez 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 her 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, interns, 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 has 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, and is trained in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Prolonged Exposure (PE) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). Dr. Mendez has been actively involved in the training committee for the last 5 years, at all levels of training (i.e., externs, interns, fellows), and currently supervises trainees through TRuST in both English and Spanish. She is also the Orlando VA Evidence Treatment Coordinator, and is devoted to increase access to evidence base care to veterans across sites of care throughout the Orlando VA system. She is licensed in the state of Florida. She loves spending time with family and friends, her two golden retrievers, basketball, and music.

Laura Meyers, PhD, ABPP, Program Manager of the Trauma Recovery Specialty Team (TRuST – PTSD treatment team)/ Psychology Supervisor, Lake Nona. Dr. Meyers 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).
Tiffany Misra, Ph.D., BHIP, Crossroads Annex, earned her doctorate degree in Clinical Counseling Psychology from the University of South Alabama in 2013. She completed her doctoral internship at West Virginia University at the Carruth Center and completed her post-doctoral training at Oberlin College, in Oberlin, Ohio. Since that time, Dr. Misra has worked in a variety of settings, including college counseling (most recently University of Central Florida), long-term care and short-term rehab facilities, private practice, and currently has been with the Orlando VA since 2018. Dr. Misra has publications in the areas of Intimate Partner Violence and Narcissism; her research has additionally focused on Non-suicidal Self-Injury and Suicide. Throughout her experiences, Dr. Misra has specialized in Supervision, Training, and Administration. She is currently VA trained in CBT for Depression and Interpersonal Therapy for Depression, but has experience in other therapy approaches including Prolonged Exposure and Cognitive Processing Therapy. Current VA related activities include assessment (ADHD, memory/cognitive concerns, and psychodiagnostic), providing therapy, and serving on the Template and Training committees.

Cristy Russo, Ph.D., MSCP, Consultation & Liaison, Lake Nona, 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.

Michelle Savage, MS, LMFT, Couples and Family Therapy, Lake Nona, earned her Bachelors in Psychology in 2003 from the University of Florida and her Masters in Science in Couple and Family Therapy from Capella University in 2008. She has been working in the mental health arena since 2004 and served on the board of the Central Florida Association of Marriage and Family Therapist (CFAMFT) since 2008, including past president (2015-2016). She joined OVAMC outpatient Mental Health Service under the Marriage and Family Therapy program as the second MFT in the program’s inception. She offers individual, group and family counseling in English and Spanish in the following areas: Coping with PTSD, Grief and Loss, Life Transitions; Military Sexual Trauma; and the impact of Intimate Partner Violence in the couple/family system. She is a Gottman Seven Principles Program Educator for couples as well as certified in two VA Couple/Family Therapy EBP’S: Integrative Behavioral Couple's Therapy (IBCT) and
Cognitive Behavioral Conjoint therapy for PTSD (CBCT) and one individual EBP: Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT). Michelle recently became appointed as one of the Intimate Partner Violence Champions for the Lake Nona Campus.

**Steven Shea, Ph.D., Local Recovery Coordinator, OVAMC.** Dr. Shea served as the Chief of Psychology here at the Orlando VAMC for several years and is an Assistant Professor of Medical Education, University of Central Florida School of Medicine. 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.

**Melissa Tran, LMFT, Couples and Family Therapy, Crossroads Annex.**

**Maria Monserate Vazquez, Ph.D., RxP** Dr. Vazquez obtained her doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Rhode Island, and the Master of Science in Psychopharmacology at the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology. She completed her internship at the Center for Multicultural Training in Psychology Boston University/Boston Medical Center. She started her health career as a licensed practical nurse working primarily in nursing homes. Once achieving her doctorate, she practiced as a psychologist in community Mental Health settings working primarily with Hispanic communities, child abuse prevention programs, worked with the chronically mentally ill, and in nursing homes doing psychopharmacological consultations. She works in the OVAMC CLC and is licensed in MA. Her clinical interests are in Medical/Psychiatric, Geriatric, and Multicultural Psychology.

**Bernice Vazquez-Garay, Psy.D. Substance Use Disorder Treatment Program, Lake Baldwin.** Dr. Vazquez-Garay was born and raised in Puerto Rico. She earned a Master’s degree in Industrial Organizational Psychology from the University of Puerto Rico in Rio Piedras before relocating in 2004 to the states with her husband, who 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 Professional Psychology Program of the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences at George
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 2015. She currently holds licenses to practice psychology in Puerto Rico, Kentucky, and Florida. In 2016, Dr. Vazquez-Garay joined the IOP/SUD Program at the OVAMC at Lake Baldwin. Dr. Vazquez-Garay’s personal interests include practicing yoga, in which she holds an instructor certification by the Yoga Alliance, playing the piano, and spending time with her husband and two children.

Margarita Velez, Ph.D. Geropsychology. Dr. Velez earned her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Fordham University in New York in 2006. She completed her doctoral internship at the Mount Sinai Hospital, specializing in brain and spinal cord injury. She completed postdoctoral training in multicultural neuropsychology research at Columbia University, Cognitive Neuroscience Division. She also worked at Columbia University and the New York State Psychiatric Institute for over ten years in various clinical research positions studying mild neurocognitive disorder and investigating precursors for Alzheimer’s disease during her undergraduate and graduate studies. Her dissertation was on treatment of depression and mild cognitive impairment in the elderly. Following completion of her doctorate and postdoctoral work she accepted a position at Jamaica Hospital in the acute traumatic brain injury unit. She has also worked at numerous sub-acute rehabilitation centers in the New York metropolitan area as a consultant. She joined the Orlando VA Medical Psychology Division in 2013. Her current duties include assessment and treatment of a variety of neurocognitive disorders, with a specialty in geriatrics.

Laurie Wolf, Ph.D., Whole Health, Lake Nona, 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 Internship Training Staff**

**Margaret Arnott, Ph.D.**, earned her degree in Psychology in 2000 from The Ohio State University. 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 interns on the PTSD rotation. She transferred to the Columbus VA, were she led the PTSD team and was selected as the Evidence-Based Psychotherapy Coordinator and the Practicum Intern 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 Prolonged Exposure (PE) and Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), and is certified in EMDR I. Her clinical and outcome research interests include PTSD treatment, hope instillation for treatment engagement and self-efficacy.

**Leonard Briscoe, Psy.D., Neuropsychology, Crossroads Annex:** Dr. Briscoe is a licensed Clinical Psychologist with specialization in Clinical Neuropsychology and Rehab Psychology. He earned his undergraduate degree in Psychology from Bucknell University. He completed a Master’s Degree in Rehab from the University of Cincinnati and a doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Wright State University. He completed his doctoral Psychology Residency and postdoctoral Fellowship in Neuropsychology at the University of Virginia Medical School. He currently works as a Clinical Neuropsychologist within the Polytrauma TBI Program.

**Paul Deci, MD** is the Orlando VA Medical Center psychiatry residency site director. He is the University of Central Florida (UCF)/HCA psychiatry residency Orlando VAMC site director as well as the program director for the Nova Southeastern University Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (NSU KCOM) psychiatry residency program. He is a professor of psychiatry at the UCF College of Medicine and a clinical professor of psychiatry at NSU KCOM. Dr. Deci was the first chief of mental health and then associate chief of staff for mental health at the new Orlando VAMC from February 2009 until November 2017 before returning to graduate medical education. He graduated from Florida State University with a degree in biological sciences in 1983 and from the University of Florida College of Medicine in 1986. He completed his psychiatry residency in 1990 at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC.) He completed fellowships in community psychiatry in 1991 at MUSC and in mental health services research in 1993 with the National Association of State Mental Health Program
Directors Research Institute. He is board certified in psychiatry. He has been with the VA for 25 years between the Charleston, Tuscaloosa, and Orlando VA medical centers.

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.

Janet Gates, LISW-CP is the Coordinator for the Suicide Prevention Team for Orlando VA Medical Center. Originally from South Carolina, Ms. Gates earned a master’s degree in Social Work from the University of South Carolina. She maintained a private practice in adolescent and adult psychotherapy prior to joining WJB Dorn VAMC in Columbia, SC as an outpatient mental health therapist in 2011. Ms. Gates is an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) trainer, is trained in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Prolonged Exposure (PE), Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR), and Motivational Interviewing (MI). She is also a national trainer for “First Responders understanding our Veterans: Mental Health and Suicide Prevention,” training VA clinicians, VA Police Officers, and community First Responders in the needs of Veterans in crisis, understanding post deployment issues, and suicide prevention. Ms. Gates is currently serving as the Suicide Prevention Coordinator at Orlando VAMC, overseeing a team of 10 staff who provide serves an average of 190 veterans per month, responds to approximately 180 calls to the Veterans Crisis Line monthly, and provides monthly outreach events to each of the six counties in the Orlando VAMC catchment area. Ms. Gates is dedicated to raising the level of awareness of the risk of suicide and the available resources for those in need.

Keri Griffin, LCSW, CAP has been working as a clinical social worker since 1996. Keri’s first job was working in detox at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, OH. She graduated from the University of Dayton with a major in Psychology and minors in Social Work and Sociology in 1997. She completed her MSW at the University of Maryland, School of Social Work with a Clinical Concentration and Substance Abuse Specialization in 1999. After graduating, she joined the staff at Johns Hopkins University Cornerstone Program and the University of Maryland Medical System Comprehensive Recovery Program. In 2000, she achieved the Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a
Certified Addictions Professional in the state of Florida. Ms. Griffin has worked with Lakeside Alternatives at the Orange Regional Juvenile Detention Center, the Center for Drug-Free Living, Mental Health Network, and for the past 14 years at the Orlando VA Medical Center. For the past 9 years, she has served as the Orlando VA’s LGBT Special Emphasis Program Manager and Veteran Care Coordinator providing individual, couples, family, and group therapy for LGBT Veterans. She works tirelessly to get the word out to LGBT individuals in the community on how to apply for jobs at the VA as well as meet with VA LGBT employee and patient Veterans to work on how to improve services and coordinate care for LGBT Veterans at the VA. Due to her hard work with the LGBT Veteran population at the VA Keri received national I CARE awards in 2015 and in 2018, the VA Social Worker of the year award for 2016, and a national Special Contribution Award in 2016 for her contribution after the Pulse tragedy.

**Valerie Masten Hoese, Ph.D., Program Manager, Medical Psychology Team.** Dr. Hoese 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.

**Alysa Ivey, Ph.D., MHRTP, Lake Nona,** completed her doctorate in Clinical Psychology with a concentration in Organizational Consulting at Pacific University’s School of Graduate Psychology in Oregon. For her dissertation, Dr. Ivey conducted qualitative research on the effects of workplace discrimination and microaggressions on minority Veterans’ overall job satisfaction with their military career. Dr. Ivey completed the APA-accredited Psychology Internship training program at the Orlando VA Medical Center and now serves as Psychology Resident at the Lake Nona Domiciliary. Although trained as a Generalist, Dr. Ivey has sought specialty experience in evidence-based treatments for insomnia, chronic pain, depression, anxiety, OCD and related disorders,
trauma- and stressor-related disorders. Following training by Dr. Frost and Lee Shuer in March 2017, Dr. Ivey established Buried in Treasures group therapy for Hoarding Disorder at Kaiser Permanente Northwest Region’s Skyline Medical Office—the first of its kind in Salem, Oregon and surrounding mid-valley. Her organizational consulting work has centered on assessment, program evaluation, leadership development, team building, organizational culture and diversity. Dr. Ivey earned her certification as a Facet5 practitioner in July 2015 through the Perrault Consulting Group in Portland, Oregon. Personal interests include creative writing, attending live concerts and theatre, frequenting Universal and Disney parks, exploring Orlando foodie culture, and spending time with her beloved 16-year-old dachshund (Nemo).

Cornelia Iucha, Ph.D., Substance Use Disorders Treatment program, Lake Baldwin

Deborah Kessel-Tallungan, Ph.D., Primary Care Mental Health Integration, Lake Baldwin. Dr. Tallungan is a licensed Clinical Psychologist with specialization in Health Psychology. She completed her undergraduate work at St. Olaf College and earned her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Fuller Graduate School of Psychology. She completed her pre-doctoral internship and post-doctoral fellowship at the Loma Linda VA Medical Center. Dr. Tallungan joined the Orlando VAMC as the Health Behavior Coordinator in 2011 and worked in this role until 2015. She currently works as a Psychologist in Primary Care Mental Health. She continues to facilitate local trainings in Motivational Interviewing. Personal interests include reading (Harry Potter series at least once a year!), biking with her husband and two daughters, serving at the Coalition for the Homeless, and playing the piano & hand bells.

Larisa Lasko, Psy.D. Psychologist, Women’s Mental Health Clinic. Dr. Lasko completed her doctorate at the American School of Professional Psychology at Argosy University, Washington, D.C., and internship at Battle Creek VA Medical Center. Prior to joining the Orlando VAMC, Dr. Lasko completed her postdoctoral fellowship in primary care mental health integration at the Miami VA Healthcare System. She is currently a psychologist in the Orlando VAMC’s Primary Care-Mental Health Integration program. She holds a Florida license. Her clinical and research interests are in disordered eating, treatment of obesity, diabetes, tobacco use disorders, pain management, adjustment to medical illnesses, and stress management.

Judith F. Legault, Ph.D., Ed.D., Practicum Supervisor and Licensed Psychologist at the Clermont Community Based Outpatient Clinic. Dr. Legault earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at Fielding Graduate University and completed her doctoral internship at the WJB Dorn VA in Columbia, SC. She also holds an Educational Doctoral Degree with an Emphasis on the Integration of Technology in Education and
Training from Nova Southeastern University. Her areas of interest are positive psychology and integrative wellness. Currently, Dr. Legault facilitates a Behavioral Activation Group for Depression and Anxiety, Mindfulness for Stress Reduction group, Seeking Safety Group, and a Women’s group. Frequently used modalities of therapy include CPT for PTSD, values based behavioral activation, cognitive behavioral interventions for depression, chronic pain, insomnia and anxiety, and mindfulness practices. Personal interests include tennis, reading, and traveling.

Lisa Martel, LCSW is the Women Veteran Program Manager (WVPM) for the Orlando VA Medical Center in Orlando, FL and has served in this role for the last 4 years. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who has been working in the field for the past 27 years. She received a Master of Social Work degree from the Boston College School of Social Work in Chestnut Hill, MA and a Bachelor of Social Work degree from Western New England College in Springfield, MA. Lisa spent the first 15yrs. of her career as a mental health clinician specializing in geriatrics in various community hospital, assisted living and long-term care settings. Lisa has been working for the VA for the last 12yrs. where she has worked as a clinical social worker and program manager in Mental Health, Polytrauma/TBI and Caregiver Support before joining the Women Veteran Program. Lisa has been involved in several Local and National Women’s Health Services (WHS) initiatives. In 2017, Lisa collaborated with the Florida Dept. of Veteran Affairs to bring the State Women Veterans Conference to the Central FL area. Over the years, she has secured several Women’s Health Services grants and implemented several local and VISN Mini-Residency Trainings for PCPs and Nurses geared toward care of women Veterans. Lisa serves as a member of the National WHS Webinar committee reviewing presentation content for Social Work licensure CEUs. She also serves as a consultant to the National WHS Office assisting other VISNs with program development and training implementation. In the community, Lisa is a member of both the Orange and Osceola Counties Sexual Assault Response Team Committees. She recently completed training in the state of Florida as a Field Instructor and Task Supervisor for MSW interns.

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 fellowship 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.

**Gabriela F. Ott, Psy.D.** Dr. Ott earned her bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Loyola University, New Orleans, and Doctorate degree in Clinical Psychology from the Georgia School of Professional Psychology in Atlanta, Georgia in 2004. As a commissioned officer in the United States Navy, she completed her pre-doctoral internship at the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Virginia. She completed her post-doctoral residency on active duty at the Naval Hospital Pensacola, Florida. After four years conducting Compensation and Pension Examinations, Dr. Ott joined the Orlando VAMC MH staff as a fulltime employee in 2013. For four years, as Orlando VAMC’s MH Champion for Telehealth, she developed and grew the facility’s Tele Mental Health service, providing 100% of her clinical services via Clinical Video Technology to four area CBOCs and patients in outlying areas, and participated in VISN-wide work groups for the advancement of Tele Mental Health services. As a female Veteran with an interest in promoting gender-specific care in our growing female population, Dr. Ott became involved with the Women’s MH Initiative and attended the first mini-residency that took place in 2016, becoming the Orlando VAMC’s Women’s MH Champion. After two years as the Program Manager for the MH Outpatient Specialty Team, Dr. Ott joined the BHIP program in the Mental Health Clinic. Dr. Ott is trained in and delivers
several evidenced-based psychotherapies, including Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) for PTSD; Prolonged Exposure (PE), Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Chronic Pain (CBT-CP), Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-i), and Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Regulation (STAIR). As part of the Orlando VAMC faculty, Dr. Ott supervises the Outpatient BHIP rotation, leads didactics, has served as an intern mentor, and regularly participates in intern selection. Dr. Ott’s extracurricular interests include endurance running, cooking, singing in her church choir, and volunteering at her children’s school.

Nikki Panasci, Ph.D., Program Manager, Therapeutic and Supported Employment Services (TSES). Dr. Panasci earned her doctorate in Clinical Psychology, with a dual-specialty in Severe Mental Illness (SMI)/Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR), from the University of Hawai’i in 2009. She completed a pre-doctoral psychology internship at the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System and a post-doctoral residency in PSR and Recovery-Oriented Services for Veterans with SMI at the VA San Diego Healthcare System. Subsequently, Dr. Panasci joined the VA Desert Pacific MIRECC in Los Angeles, CA, where she conducted mental health services research focused on improving quality of healthcare for Veterans with SMI. Prior to joining the Orlando VAMC staff in January 2015, Dr. Panasci has held clinical staff appointments at Schofield Barracks Army Health Clinic in Hawai’i and at San Francisco VA Healthcare System. Dr. Panasci is an affiliate Assistant Professor with the UCF College of Medicine and has been the Manager of the Therapeutic and Supported Employment Services (TSES) Program at the Orlando VA since May 2018. Prior to her TSES role, she served as the first psychologist and Program Coordinator for the Orlando VAMC’s acute inpatient psychiatric units. Dr. Panasci is licensed in both California and Hawai’i. Her primary clinical and research interests are in the development, implementation, delivery, and evaluation of recovery-oriented, psychosocial interventions for adults with psychotic disorders.

Frederick Petty Ph.D., MD Supervisory Psychiatrist for the Community-Based Outpatient Clinics. Dr. Petty obtained the PhD 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 the Orlando VA Medical Center. Dr. Petty has also been active in teaching trainees in psychiatry and psychology and has received the Golden Apple Award.

**William E. Riebsame, PhD, ABPP Outpatient Mental Health, Viera Outpatient Clinic.** Dr. Riebsame 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 came to 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”!

**Lindsey Ross-Bailey, Ph.D.** earned her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Wyoming in 2013. She completed her doctoral internship, specializing in Health Psychology, at Geisinger Medical Center and completed additional postdoctoral training in Health Psychology at the White River Junction VAMC. She began her career in Primary Care Mental Health Integration in the Women’s Clinic at the Orlando VAMC and then transitioned to the role of Health Behavior Coordinator. She then moved to New York to see if the rumors of snow in April were true (it’s a real thing) and worked for Albany Medical College as a clinical health psychologist integrated into their Sleep Medicine, OB/GYN, Primary Care, and Endocrinology clinics before returning to the role as Health Behavior Coordinator for OVAMC. As current Health Behavior Coordinator, she is a member of the Healthy Living Team and provides a wide range of clinical and administrative support services to promote the health and wellness of our Veterans. Dr. Ross-Bailey provides staff training in Motivational Interviewing and related consultation services to staff on patient-centered communication and also on health behavior change. She also serves in the role of Tobacco Cessation Lead Clinician, in which she coordinates corporate-wide tobacco cessation services for OVAMC. Her clinical and research interests are in the area of clinical health psychology and she especially enjoys working with Veterans on making behavioral changes to improve: insomnia, weight loss, reduction of tobacco use, tinnitus, adjustment to medical illness, and their
diabetes management. In her free time she enjoys teaching as an adjunct lecturer for the University of Wyoming and when not doing that, she enjoys trying to keep up with her husband and young sons on hiking/camping/biking adventures.

**Marty Strachan, Ph.D.** *Trauma Recovery Specialty Team.* Dr. Strachan received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA. She completed her doctoral internship and postdoctoral fellowship in traumatic stress disorders at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) / Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center psychology training consortium in Charleston, SC. Prior to joining the Orlando VA in 2014, Dr. Strachan served as research faculty at MUSC for six years where she worked on several federally funded grants evaluating service delivery enhancements for Prolonged Exposure therapy for PTSD. Dr. Strachan is an author on PEWeb (pe.musc.edu), an online training refresher course for clinical providers in Prolonged Exposure therapy. Dr. Strachan is also the Military Sexual Trauma (MST) coordinator for OVAMC.

**Tatiana Ungredda, Psy.D., BHIP, Lake Baldwin**

**Laura Walker, Psy.D., HBPC Viera,** is a clinical psychologist at the Orlando VAMC who works in the Home-Based Primary Care (HBPC) program. She earned her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology with an emphasis in Assessment at Ball State University in 2014. She completed a predoctoral internship at the Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans’ Hospital in Columbia, MO, and went on to complete a postdoctoral fellowship in Geropsychology and Rural Mental Health at the Columbia VAMC. Dr. Walker has completed VA trainings in Motivational Interviewing, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Depression (ACT-D), and Problem-Solving Therapy for HBPC (PST-HBPC). Dr. Walker supervises practicum students in the HBPC program. Her clinical and research interests include family caregiving, diversity among older adults and LGBT aging, and adapting mindfulness and third-wave evidence-based treatments to the older adult population. Personal interests include family time with her spouse and two young children, distance running, photography, and baking.

**David Yutrzenka, Psy.D., Psychology Program Manager, BHIP.** Dr. Yutrzenka earned his doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio in 2013. He completed his doctoral internship at the Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System in Montgomery/Tuskegee, AL and was hired on as an outpatient staff psychologist by the Orlando VAMC shortly after. While he provides outpatient Mental Health service and supervision as a member of the Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program (BHIP) teams, he has increased his focus of providing care for Veterans struggling to cope with and manage chronic pain. He has been certified in therapy for chronic pain management and was selected to become a national consultant for
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy – Chronic Pain training. He grew up in South Dakota and Minnesota but traded in the cold for year-round summer.

**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 program is **fully accredited** by the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association (APA).

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