

Children's Research Triangle Practicum Training Program Overview (Therapy and Evaluation)

Program Description

CRT has a well-established highly regarded therapy practicum training program. We are now able to offer an additional clinical training track focused on medical and psychological/neuropsychological evaluations. Please note that the evaluation practicum options are only for 4th year advanced students who have completed both an initial diagnostic and therapy practicum.

Now that CRT is able to offer clinical training in both therapy and evaluation, trainees will have the option to choose their clinical training track at CRT depending on their standing within their school program. **Third and fourth year students** can choose to focus their clinical training on therapy only (approximately 10 clients).

Fourth year advanced students can choose to focus their training on evaluations only (conducting approximately 2 evaluations per month), or they have the option to split their clinical training with evaluations (approximately 1 per month) and a small caseload of therapy clients (4-5 clients). **This must be stated as part of the application and decided at the onset of the application process.**

The program follows a practitioner-scholar model of professional training, which emphasizes experiential learning and application of knowledge gained from scholarly research to clinical practice. Trainees will participate in didactic trainings on a variety of topics related to their clinical work at CRT. They will also be encouraged to do their own literature reviews when they encounter disorders or areas of challenge that they have never worked with before. They will receive weekly individual and group supervision, as well as specific training on subjects related to their clinical work at CRT. They will also have opportunities to participate in agency-wide trainings and attend presentations through PATHH. Additionally, all trainees working with youth in care must complete several trainings that DCFS requires (e.g., Mandated Reporting, LGBTQi+ & Youth in Care, Ethics, HIPAA, Harassment/Discrimination, Psychological First Aid, CANS training).

Therapy Track Overview

Through CRT's Trauma Treatment Program (TTP), we provide specialized trauma-informed clinical assessments and treatment services at our downtown Chicago clinic, schools, and community-based locations. We are currently serving in **Chicago West Side/Near Suburbs** at: A House In Austin and (Austin), Al Raby High School (East Garfield Park), North Lawndale College Prep (North Lawndale), John Hay Community Academy (Austin), New Moms (Austin), Noble Street College Prep High School (Pulaski Park), and VOCEL (serving the West and South sides); in **Chicago South Side** at: Englewood STEM High School (Englewood), Fort Dearborn Elementary School (Auburn Gresham), Johnson College Prep High School (Englewood), The

Montessori School of Englewood (Englewood), Edgar Allan Poe Classical School (Pullman), Wendell Smith Elementary School (Roseland-Pullman); **South Suburbs**-Ridgeland School District 122 (Chicago Ridge/Lawn area), Heights School District 170 (Chicago Heights), Pillars Community Health (Southwest suburbs); **North Side/Near North Suburbs**: Evanston Vet Center (Evanston); House of the Good Shepherd (domestic violence shelter, serves city-wide population).

The mission of CRT's Trauma Treatment Program is to provide youth in the communities we serve, as well as their families, with greater access to, and utilization of, effective and innovative trauma-informed mental health treatment services.

Clinical therapy practicum students at CRT generally hold the same job responsibilities as staff clinicians. Two days per week of the practicum are direct services days, and Fridays are spent at the clinic, during which training, supervision, consultation, and paperwork take place. The type of therapy provided will depend on the assessment results/recommendations, and may include individual, dyadic, family, or group therapy. Interventions are typically trauma-informed and family supportive, including key members of the child's and family's support system as needed and as available. CRT therapists generally work from an integrative therapeutic orientation, with a strong relational and attachment based foundation. We utilize treatments that fit the clients' needs, and specific evidence-based interventions include Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress (SPARCS), Trauma Focused CBT (TF-CBT), Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), Attachment, Self-Regulation and Competency (ARC), and Theraplay. These modalities are available for training and exposure to help students learn about various evidenced-based practices, and seek out support from clinicians on our team who may practice these interventions with fidelity. Students will also provide clinical case management and advocacy as needed. Clinical data collection occurs with each client system and this data is used for outcome research upon consent of the client/family.

Ideal Applicant Profile

Students need to be professional—it is important for students to understand that this position is akin to a job, rather than a class. It is part of our training model to not only prepare students to enter the field as a clinician, but also as a professional. Students must be prompt, mindful of others' (colleagues and clients) time and expectations, and organized, as there is a great deal of responsibility to manage. Students need to be flexible and able to effectively communicate with a variety of professionals and personalities, both at CRT and our partner sites. Confidence in advocating for clients' needs with other professionals in the system is a must. CRT is a fast-paced environment and we work within traumatized systems. Students should be ready to participate in reflective supervision and consultation, thereby openly identifying the impact of the work on the student's functioning and vice versa (e.g., addressing parallel processes and transference/countertransference experiences). It is preferred if students have prior experience working in social service, family support, and/or child trauma fields.

Supervision Philosophy of Site

The CRT work environment is a place of constant learning and growth. Staff clinicians and students value each other's input and experiences, and know that we cannot do this work and stay healthy without support from others. Supervision is a formal process that takes place a total of 3 hours per week in individual and group formats. It also occurs informally "on the fly" throughout the week, meaning that there is constant consultation and support from colleagues as needed. We value reflective supervision in which the student is encouraged to explore their own experiences within the therapeutic relationship and understand how that impacts their treatment. There are also directive aspects of supervision when specific guidance and/or treatment modality is sought out. The supervisory team at CRT works hard to meet each student where they are at developmentally as a clinician in training, and adjusts supervision accordingly. We offer separate clinical and administrative supervision such that paperwork and logistic matters are separated from clinical discussions. Additional supervision formats including group supervision and a trauma process group.

Evaluation Track Overview

*The split track will include training and supervision from both tracks.

The Evaluation Practicum Track is a rigorous training program designed to introduce trainees to medical and psychological/neuropsychological evaluations. CRT's Evaluation Team works with children and adolescents ages 4 to 18 with a variety of different presentations and backgrounds. There are also opportunities to learn developmental assessments with children 13 months to 3 years. Trainees will work with clientele who are in the custody of DCFS and present with complex issues including but not limited to: fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, other neurodevelopmental disorders, trauma- and stressor-related disorders, mood and anxiety disorders, psychotic spectrum disorders, as well as emerging personality disorders in older adolescents.

Evaluation Practicum Track Training Goals

The Evaluation Practicum track's overarching goal is to prepare Advanced Practicum and Maintenance Practicum trainees to function competently in a psychological/neuropsychological or assessment-based pre-doctoral internship program by enhancing their ability to:

1. Identify historical factors (e.g., pre- and peri-natal, biological, developmental, educational, medical, socioemotional) that may impact current cognitive functioning
2. Display a depth and breadth of knowledge in fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and other prenatal substance exposure, neurodevelopmental disorders, trauma- and stressor-related disorders, as well as mood and anxiety disorders
3. Understand and conceptualize cases through a neuropsychological, biological, and psychological lens
4. Refine their clinical interviewing and diagnostic skills
5. Develop appropriate testing batteries based on client needs
6. Confidently and aptly administer psychological/neuropsychological tests with a trauma-informed therapeutic assessment approach
7. Learn how to administer, score, and interpret projective tests (e.g., Rorschach) as well as integrate projective testing data with psychological/neuropsychological testing data

8. Collaborate with CRTs pediatrician and integrate medical evaluation findings with psychological/neuropsychological findings
9. Present evaluation findings to caregivers in a therapeutic and effective manner
10. Recommend and apply appropriate evidence-based interventions
11. Write comprehensive, detailed, cohesive psychological/neuropsychological reports
12. Understand public and private school systems as well as procedures relevant to their clients (e.g., IEPs, 504 Plans, academic accommodations, standardized accommodations)
13. Display professionalism (i.e., competent, highly ethical, and culturally sensitive behavior) with CRT staff as well as other collaborative professionals outside of CRT (e.g., DCFS caseworkers, therapists, psychiatrists, etc.)
14. Consult with other professionals who work with their clients and collaborate to provide quality care

Ideal Applicant Profile

CRTs evaluations are conducted with children and adolescents with highly complex presentations (e.g., a child with comorbid fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, specific learning disorder, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) and our procedures are comprehensive, but fast-paced. While our trainees will be provided with supervision, continuous monitoring and feedback, and structured learning opportunities, this program has high demands for independence and time management. Therefore, applicants who will be successful should possess the following:

- Prior testing experience and general knowledge of test administration and scoring (e.g., basal/ceiling rules, standardized procedures, summing raw scores and converting to scaled/standard scores)
- The ability to generalize previous learning to new learning
- Strong written expression, report writing, and documentation skills
- Attention to detail
- Efficient time management and organizational skills
- The ability to take initiative and learn independently (e.g., researching a genetic disorder their client has that they have never seen before)
- And most importantly: flexibility and the ability to quickly adapt (e.g., discontinuing planned tests due to client dysregulation and the need to maintain rapport)

Evaluation Practicum Track Requirements

Only students who are applying for their Advanced Practicum will be interviewed and accepted. They are expected to exhibit a high level of independence in meeting school-required and site-required tasks and deadlines.

We ask that trainees have the following prerequisites:

- Coursework completed:
 - Prerequisite Coursework (or comparably titled): Intellectual assessment, advanced assessment, personality assessment, biological bases of behavior, cognitive bases of behavior

- Preferred Coursework (or comparably titled): Introduction to neuropsychology, applied neuropsychology, introduction to psychopharmacology, child and adolescent assessment
- Prior testing experience in previous practicum placements or professional positions that included test administration, scoring, and/or interpretation will add to the success of trainees in CRTs program.

Expectations of Time Commitment

Trainees are expected to be on site at the clinic or their placement sites 3 days per week—**Fridays are required.**

The **therapy track** will last approximately 9 months (mid/late August through May). There will be a two week orientation during the last two weeks of August. Placement site and clients will be assigned at this time. Hours will depend upon site placements. School placements will likely require trainees to be present 8AM-4PM; non-school sites (e.g., the clinic) will require trainees to be present 11AM-7PM to capture after school time slots for clients.

The **evaluation or split track** will last approximately 11 months beginning in July. From July until August, trainees within the evaluation or split track will work closely with their supervisors as they go through onboarding procedures that will scaffold them into learning our evaluation procedures. CRTs evaluations are typically conducted over 1 to 2 days, and these procedures typically consist of a 1½- to 2-hour diagnostic interview (conducted via telehealth or in person), approximately 6 to 8 hours of in-person psychological/neuropsychological testing including the medical evaluation with our pediatrician, review of client records, scoring tests throughout the day, and a feedback session at the end of the testing day.

During the first two months on the **evaluation or split track**, students will primarily:

- Observe several evaluations that their supervisor conducts and begin writing certain sections of the report
- Receive didactic training
- Learn administration of tests they are not familiar with and begin scoring client testing data
- Independent learning on common difficulties our clients present with (e.g., fetal alcohol spectrum disorders)
- Those on the split track will begin onboarding procedures with the therapy team practicum students in August.

As trainees begin to feel more competent with CRTs evaluation process, they will begin to conduct diagnostic interviews and testing as well as caregiver feedback independently with close supervision. Trainees will have face-to-face supervision weekly, as well as supervision during the report writing and editing process.

Application Materials

Applicants who wish to apply should submit the following materials:

- Curriculum vitae
- Cover Letter
- Two professional references (***a third additional reference from a prior supervisor who supervised their testing training/report writing is required for evaluation/split track**)
- Two de-identified prior psychological and/or neuropsychological testing reports they wrote (**evaluation/split tracks only**)
- A list of the courses they have taken related to the position (**evaluation/split track only**)

Interview Procedures

Applicants accepted for an interview will meet with our clinical training director and/or the psychologists from the evaluation team. For the **therapy and split** tracks, be prepared to discuss case material as well as previous clinical and supervision experiences.

For the **evaluation and split** tracks, applicants will be asked to administer two to three subtests from the WISC-V and/or WAIS-IV. They will also be given a brief outline of actual test scores and a brief client summary, and asked to provide their clinical impressions (e.g., what the data might suggest, what diagnoses they might consider, what additional tests they would like to see administered, what recommendations they think may be helpful, etc.).