

Training goals & professional responsibilities at the BHWC

Training at the BHWC, as part of the ETSU Department of Psychology's Clinical PhD curriculum, is intended to complement the generalist training mission of the broader program. The BHWC serves a diverse community in the rural southern Appalachian region that also includes the student, staff, and faculty population of ETSU. Appropriate training cases come from varied backgrounds, inclusive of differences in age, gender, sexual orientation, race/culture/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, level of education, employment status, and diagnostic presentation. Student training with diverse populations is a priority of the psychology PhD program at ETSU.

Students begin their supervised clinical training in the BHWC following completion of three academic semesters in residence for those who enter the program with a Bachelor's degree, and as early as following one semester in residence for those who enter the program with a clinical psychology Master's degree. Prior to direct clinical service provision in the BHWC, students in the program receive both didactic and clinical training via the following mechanisms: 1) completion of coursework in professional ethics, interprofessional interviewing techniques, and evidence-based assessment and intervention; 2) participation in one or more vertical teams at the BHWC, in which junior and senior student clinicians present and discuss cases, and additional clinical skills or techniques are demonstrated; and 3) successful completion of program-sanctioned clerkship positions in regional primary care clinics and mental health centers. Approval to begin clinical training in the BHWC is predicated on a student's successful engagement in these training mechanisms as well as satisfactory progress toward major programmatic milestones (i.e., proposal of the Master's thesis).

The BHWC serves as a resource for the clinical concentration of the PhD program to facilitate and promote student training. The training goals of the BHWC are consistent with the principles and standards of the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA, 2002). Though the BHWC is also a regional mental health provider, its primary purpose is to facilitate generalist psychological training for the students in the program, with a secondary aim of providing quality and affordable mental health services to the people of the region. Within these broader aims are goals more specific to student involvement and demonstration of clinical competence in the BHWC, as are articulated below.

Goal 1: Development as an emerging scientist-practitioner

The stated mission of the clinical concentration of the psychology PhD program at ETSU is to provide doctoral training in clinical psychology for rural behavioral health research and practice in the context of integrated primary health care. In order to accomplish this mission, students engage in scaffolded didactic and experiential learning, culminating in the completion of their doctoral dissertation and a full-time internship year. The BHWC plays a vital role in this process.

- A. Students are expected to participate in vertical team at the BHWC beginning with their first semester in the program. This expectation continues until they have completed their required five semesters of Psyc 7010 and until they are no longer seeing clients or providing peer supervision at the BHWC. This allows for continued growth as a clinician and provides exposure to a diversity of perspectives and clinical formulations.
- B. For those students participating in vertical team who are not yet seeing their own cases, each semester the student will complete a live or recorded observation of at least one administration of an assessment at the BHWC by a more senior student participating on their vertical team. Similarly, these students will also observe a live or recorded therapy session each week, to briefly discuss with the student clinician who conducted the session and the supervisor of record in vertical team meetings. These actions will facilitate early exposure to clinical practice, provide the opportunity to observe diverse skill sets, and to formulate questions that will aid the student in their own development as a clinical professional. Participation in vertical team also allows for modeling of evidence-based decision-making, wherein supervisors and senior students model the use of up-to-date, empirically rigorous, and relevant research for case conceptualization and treatment planning. This process helps guide developing student clinicians in the integration of science and practice.
- C. Student clinicians are assigned cases referred to the BHWC at the discretion of their assigned supervisor. It is expected that students may have some input in their cases of interest, though the final decision for case assignment is the responsibility of the supervisor of record. Students are expected to clearly communicate their caseloads and training expectations with the supervisor at the beginning of each term, and supervisors are likewise accountable for communicating their expectations to the student. This ensures that students are assigned cases that are appropriate for their level of training.
- D. Student clinicians at the BHWC are expected to become increasingly proficient in identifying client needs, triaging cases, and formulating collaborative treatment plans as they gain further clinical experience. The BHWC has a transparent mechanism for making decisions regarding the appropriateness of client referrals. Students should understand and adhere to these procedures to facilitate their growth as clinical professionals.

Goal 2: Development as an emerging professional

The psychology PhD program at ETSU is additionally tasked with ensuring that students continue to grow and develop as professionals within the field. The BHWC is a valued part of this process, providing faculty and clinical supervisors the opportunity to interact with students in a professional setting beyond the classroom, and ensuring that students are adequately prepared as ethical professionals to begin supervised community placements. The clinical faculty recognizes that clinical service responsibilities are not the only indicator of professionalism and growth. The program is committed to ensuring that students engage in responsible, ethical, and diligent behavior as a part of their training at the BHWC and throughout the doctoral program at large.

- A. The BHWC is a full-time professional mental health clinic licensed by the State of Tennessee. Beginning in their first semester with the PhD program, students are expected to begin orienting themselves to tasks and procedures in the clinic by attending orientation and working office shifts each week, at the discretion of the clinic director and the DCT. This is with a goal of introducing them to a clinical practice environment and orienting them to clinic procedures, which will serve them as they develop as student clinicians and later as independent professionals. Relatedly, attendance and punctuality in assigned clinic work and required trainings will be monitored by supervisors and the Clinic Director to ensure progressive professional development throughout a student's training.
- B. Professional ethics dictate that client records are clear, thorough, and accessible in accordance with state and institutional guidelines. Assumed within is that records are completed in a timely manner. This is true for professional psychologists as well as trainees, who are striving to become independent practicing clinical psychologists. Thus, progress notes must be completed and in the chart within 48 hours (2 business days) of the client session at the BHWC. Students will send a draft assessment report within two weeks of completing the administration and scoring of assessment instruments, to be extended by supervisor with cause. To promote clarity in record-keeping, students will also refrain from using abbreviations beyond those on the approved abbreviation list available in the BHWC, which has been developed using CMS and Joint Commission medical record-keeping guidelines.
- C. Student clinicians at the BHWC are additionally learning professionalism in their conduct and communication within a clinical training environment. Students will strive for respectful and professional written and verbal communication when consulting with peers or supervisors regarding clinical matters, when receiving or providing constructive feedback, and during resolution of conflicts with peers, supervisors, or BHWC personnel. This includes respectful and professional behavior in the context of talking about cases in vertical team, hallways, or the front office of the BHWC.
- D. Student clinicians and student personnel in the BHWC are learning to transition from the role of student to professional. An important goal within the BHWC is for students to appear professional and capable in the context of clinical service delivery. Students should recognize the needs of different client populations, and recognize that different forms of therapy, clients, or immediate needs may drive choices in professional dress. Appropriate professional attire will be at the discretion of the supervisor of each vertical team and will be defined for students at the beginning of their term on that team.
- E. As is true in any professional environment, there is an established chain of command. Students new to professional clinical training are often unaware of to whom questions should be addressed, how interpersonal disagreements or conflicts are to be resolved, or appropriate roles and responsibilities of others with whom they work. As part of their continued professional training, students in the BHWC will become oriented to these hierarchical roles and facilitate their growth in knowing how to address issues that arise during the course of their clinical practice.

Goal 3: Generalist training and experience

The stated program mission embraces a generalist training model, emphasizing the importance of broad-based training experiences to prepare students for practice in integrated primary care settings and rural communities. Students engage in supervised clinical practice in a variety of settings as part of their training, inclusive of clerkship, beginning and advanced practicum in the BHWC, and community placements within the southern Appalachian region. Since student clinicians receive their first direct clinical service opportunities within the BHWC, it is imperative that their experiences promote and reflect this generalist training model.

- A. Student clinicians at the BHWC will enhance their clinical skill by seeing both adult and child therapy and assessment cases. This will correspond to the reality of generalist mental health needs in rural and integrated primary care settings. In particular, throughout their training within the program (inclusive of beginning and advanced practicum in the BHWC), students will, at a minimum, work with three adult and three child therapy cases, as well as three adult and three child assessment cases. These cases may be within or beyond the BHWC, though it is recognized that the training afforded by the BHWC caseload may be more easily controlled and assigned according to student need than what is possible in an external community clinical placements.
- B. A balance of therapy and assessment cases is also critical. Recognizing that students obtain clinical experience through both the BHWC and community placements, each varied in available opportunities, the clinical faculty have agreed upon established minimums that will facilitate student growth and acquisition of clinical service hours necessary for competitive application in the internship match. Within their five or more semesters at the BHWC, student clinicians will engage in a minimum of three therapy hours per week, not to exceed a caseload of six therapy clients. This will facilitate not only generalist training but will promote emerging professional skills associated with recognizing limits of competence, triaging client needs, and clear communication with supervisors, as articulated above in Goals 1 and 2. Students are also expected to complete a total of ten integrated assessments during their time in the BHWC. This will provide sufficient exposure to assessment in relation to therapeutic training, and will assist students in obtaining relevant assessment experience for community placement and later internship.
- C. A critical component of generalist training extends beyond direct clinical service; supervision and therapeutic orientation are also relevant to broad-based clinical training. The clinical faculty provides ranging exposure to preferred therapeutic orientation and expertise in client populations, corresponding with empirically-supported practices in the field. In order to promote the development of varied therapeutic skills and techniques, student clinicians will work with at least three clinical supervisors across their five semesters at the BHWC. Student clinicians are expected to actively seek new opportunities for growth with regard to case formulation and treatment modality and should communicate their training needs to supervisors.

Goal 4: Diversity, cultural competence, and fair and equitable provision of services

As is noted by the Psychology Department's commitment to diversity and inclusivity, the clinical concentration of the PhD program strives to recognize many forms of diversity and to promote sensitivity to individual differences through both formal and informal training experiences. We adhere to the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct in recognizing the need to eliminate biases and respect all persons whom we serve. As a program, we embrace diversity and seek diverse training experiences for our students. As such, during their clinical training, students are likely to be exposed to individuals who challenge or stress their personal values or belief system. Such is to be expected, even sought out in clinical training. Clinical cases are neither assigned nor negotiated based on a student's personal beliefs, but rather on professional development and training needs. As an extension of the training mission of the clinical concentration of the psychology PhD program, the secondary mission of the BHWC is to provide reasonable and effective empirically-based therapeutic and assessment services to the surrounding region, an area characterized by diverse individuals and needs. This is evidenced in several ways.

- A. The clinical faculty recognizes that diversity manifests itself in many forms. This includes not only age, race, ethnicity, country of origin, gender, or other potentially visible forms of diversity, but a wide range of other individual differences that may be less immediately visible. These include, but are not limited to, factors such as sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, physical or mental disabilities, level of education, type of employment, religious beliefs, and diagnostic or treatment needs. Students and student clinicians at the BHWC will be provided with the opportunity to learn and consider diversity in its many forms as part of their clinical training in the program. The BHWC will strive to be inclusive in its recruitment of appropriate training cases for students.
- B. Student clinicians in the BHWC are encouraged to seek a broad and diverse caseload of clients, again recognizing that diversity manifests itself in many forms. Though students may have particular types of clients that appeal most to them from the perspective of professional specialization, supervisors and student clinicians will work together to ensure that the student's experience in the BHWC reflects the diversity mission of the larger program. It is also expected that students will seek appropriate consultation and didactic opportunities to further their growth as culturally competent professionals.
- C. The BHWC and the PhD program are additionally committed to fair and equitable provision of services to the community and the students of ETSU. This is reflected in an established fee structure that provides affordable services to members of the community while off-setting the costs of training in the BHWC.