



Family, School and Community Partnerships
Leading to Successful Learning

GENERAL OVERVIEW of the CLINICAL TRAINING PROGRAM in CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Revised: September, 2018

*These programs are recognized as
Members of ACEPT (Externship) & APPIC (Internship & Post-Doctoral Fellowship).*

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Connections Day School (CDS) is a private therapeutic day school, founded in 1998. We serve children and adolescents, ages 8-21, primarily from Lake County who, because of significant special education needs (ED, BD, LD, OHI, AUT, TBI, ID), require an alternative school program that is both educational and therapeutic. By utilizing therapeutic, educational, family and community connections, CDS is able to promote academic achievement, social/emotional well-being and personal growth. The Staff Members at CDS employ a variety of methods to help students make academic progress, appropriately manage their behavior, and develop and/or improve their coping, problem-solving and social skills. By utilizing a combination of respect, humor, empathy, and kindness balanced with firmness (i.e., maintaining high expectations and ensuring that students adhere to established rules, boundaries and limitations), Staff Members are able to establish and maintain supportive, nurturing relationships with our students. In turn, these relationships can help the students be more open to learning the life skills required for short and long-term success.

The students engage in an academically challenging curriculum emphasizing group instruction and hands-on activities. The Clinical/Therapeutic Staff at CDS utilize a cognitive-behavioral/problem-solving approach as well as psychodynamic, dialectical-behavior, family-systems and narrative principles. In addition, the Lakota-Sioux Circle of Courage – which teaches the value of belonging, independence, generosity and mastery – is explored to help students develop these essential life skills. This multi-faceted approach works to assist the students in: overcoming issues at hand; practicing positive, alternative behaviors; and exploring ways to “re-write” their negative life stories. The goal is to work with students to build on their strengths and gifts, and be allies with them in their struggle against the challenges and obstacles that get in the way of their success. The therapeutic milieu is based on a positive, nurturing model, where natural, logical consequences for behaviors are utilized as often as possible. CDS avoids using restrictive and/or punitive methods of behavior management and does not have a time-out room. Therapeutic holding (restraint) is only employed as a last resort, when a student is presenting as a danger to him/herself or others.

Ms. Betty Lindquist and Dr. John Schuler, the founders of our program, chose to base the mission of CDS on philosophical principles similar to those held at Counseling Connections – their multi-disciplinary group practice which specializes in the therapeutic needs of children, adolescents and families. The professionals at Counseling Connections have worked closely with the schools, courts and social service agencies of Lake and Northern Cook Counties since 1982.

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Connections Day School offers a comprehensive array of support services, including:

- Small Group and Individualized Academic Instruction
- Individual, Group, Family & Milieu Therapy and Crisis Intervention
- Psychiatric Consultation and Evaluation
- Individual and Group Art Therapy
- Substance Abuse Evaluation and Individual & Group Therapy
- Occupational Therapy and Speech & Language Evaluations and Services
- Social/Emotional, Problem-Solving & Coping Skill Building
- A Comprehensive Behavior Management Program
- Daily School Nurse Services
- Transition & Post-Graduation Preparation

II. TRAINING PROGRAM, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Clinical Training Program at Connections Day School is extensive - offering two Post-Doctoral Fellowship (APPIC), two Doctoral Internship (APPIC) and four Psychotherapeutic Externship (Practicum) positions.

The Clinical Training Program in Clinical Psychology has been designed to help trainees develop and refine their clinical skills in key areas of practice, all while functioning as a valued member of a Multidisciplinary Team. This team is comprised of Special Education Teachers, Program Assistants, Behavior Specialists, an Art Therapist, Substance Abuse Specialist, Speech & Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist and Psychiatrist. There is an emphasis on training in fundamental and advanced clinical skills with a primary focus on Individual, Group, Family & Milieu Therapy, and Crisis Intervention. The training program is designed and organized in a way that provides trainees with a planned, programmed sequence of training experiences – one that assures breadth and quality of training.

Trainees are provided with opportunities to work with high-risk children, adolescents and their families – individuals struggling with mild to severe: mood, anxiety, behavior, substance-related, psychotic, developmental, and personality disorders from diverse cultural, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. All of this is done under the supervision of the Clinical Director, and other members of our dynamic Clinical Training Staff.

Ultimately, our primary objective is to promote Trainee's professional growth in such a way that, by the end of the training year, they feel confident in their ability to competently function as Doctors of Clinical Psychology, who practice in accordance with the highest standards of care.

III. CLINICAL WORK, SUPERVISION AND TRAINING

- Individual, Group, Family & Milieu Therapy, and Crisis Intervention with children, adolescents and their parents/guardians. Co-leading "Specialty Groups" with experienced staff group leaders (e.g., art therapy, music therapy, drug & alcohol education).
- Assisting with the facilitation of Monthly Parents' Support Group meetings.

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- Attending Multidisciplinary Staffings for students; and writing and presenting Treatment Summaries, and occasionally Social Developmental Histories, for these Staffings.
- 2 hours of Individual, and 3 hours of Group Supervision/Didactic/In-service Training per week with at least two Licensed Clinical Psychologists and/or other members of the Clinical and Administrative teams; and opportunities to consult, as needed, with other members of the Clinical Training Staff. The primary focus of this supervision is to explore and develop the psychological services rendered directly by the trainee, as well supporting their professional development.
- Trainees may be asked to audio/video tape their sessions for review within supervision; and any audio/video taped sessions that are utilized outside of the CDS building for academic, training or professional purposes may be reviewed by the supervisor.
- Monthly consultation meetings with the Medical Director/Consulting Psychiatrist for CDS.
- Daily Staff Meetings – from 3:30 - 4:00pm, to discuss the day’s events, problem-solve and develop plans for the future.
- Institute Days – in-school staff training which cover school & community-related, therapeutic and behavior-related topics and interventions; and include mandatory Non-Violent Crisis Prevention & Intervention (CPI) training (for which you will receive formal certification).
- An opportunity to engage in Animal Assisted Therapy by working with our Staff Therapy Dogs (all of whom are certified through *Therapy Dogs International*), within the milieu and individual & group therapy.

TRAINING NOTES:

- Although the Trainees at CDS do not conduct any psychological testing, when one of the students on their caseload requires testing, they collaborate with the Examiner in reviewing the data and developing a case formulation based on both the testing data and the trainee's therapeutic work with the student. Diagnostic Externs from Counseling Connection (and their Supervisors) are the only individuals who provide formal psychological testing for CDS students.
 - Trainees are also given the opportunity to sit in on the training that the Diagnostic Externship Supervisors provide for their Externs when psychological testing instruments and protocols are discussed, topics include: Psychological Testing & Special Education Eligibility; Risk Assessments; WISC-V & WAIS-IV; WIAT-III & Woodcock Johnson-IV; M-PACI, MACI & MMPI-2; Roberts-2 & Rorschach; Neuropsychological Testing; Conners-3; ADOS; and the SCERTS Assessment Profile.
- Trainees engage in data collection and progress monitoring for each of the students on their caseload, this is done through weekly tracking and graphing of the therapeutic and social/emotional goals identified on each student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP). Trainees utilize *Goal Tracker*, a school-wide, online, goal-tracking matrix to accomplish this task – this program helps CDS staff collect data within all tiers of therapeutic, academic, and behavioral intervention, and yields data charts of student progress. These charts are then utilized to assess quarterly progress on each student’s IEP goals, another outcome measure.

IV. TRAINING FORMAT

- 11 consecutive months ~ mid-August – late-July (Externs) | 12 consecutive months – starting mid-August (Interns & Post-Docs)

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- 3 days per week (a minimum of 24 hours) for the School Year; and 2 days per week (a minimum of 16 hours) for Summer Term – the final 7 weeks of training for Externs. | At least 40 hours per week from 8:00am - 4:00pm, Monday – Friday are required for Interns and Post-Docs.
 - **Please note:** some evening work may be required in an effort to be as available and accommodating as possible for Family Therapy sessions.
- Externs are required to participate in a minimum of 600 hours, and Interns & Post-Docs are required to participate in a minimum of 2,000 hours of Supervised Clinical Experience throughout the year; this time is spent in: Direct Service; Indirect Service; Training and Supervision.

V. EVALUATION

Evaluation is an active, ongoing process throughout the training year. All evaluations that a trainee's academic program requires will be completed by her/his Primary Supervisor. In addition, the Supervisor and trainee will have an active discussion of the evaluation itself, and the trainee's areas of strength and weakness (this type of discussion will occur at least 2 times throughout the course of the training year). Any serious concerns will be discussed with the trainee, the other members of the Clinical Training Staff, and the Director of Training at the trainee's academic program. All trainees will receive a copy of the document: *Due Process & Grievance Procedures*, for a full explanation of these policies, at the beginning of their training/orientation.

VI. TRAINING PROGRAM BENEFITS

- School Schedule - All National Holidays off along with Thanksgiving, Winter, Spring & Summer Breaks, and a modified Summer Schedule (3 days per week - Tu, W & Th - for the last 7 weeks of the school year)
- No pager, crisis phone line, or on-call duties
- Free lunch available daily from Organic Life (see CDS website for more info & sample menu)
- Free Parking
- Laptop Computer
- Monthly Allowance for Program/Clinical Supplies
- \$23,000.00 stipend (Internship) | \$30,000.00 stipend (Post-Doctoral Fellowship)
- Optional Healthcare, Dental and 401K benefits (Internship & Fellowship)

VII. CLINICAL STAFF

As a Connections Day School trainee, you will be a member of a dynamic Clinical Team:

Kristen Mittl Pollina, Psy.D.
 Illinois School of Professional Psychology
 Licensed Clinical Psychologist | Clinical Director & Director of Clinical Training | Primary Supervisor

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Giovanna Vitullo, Psy.D.
Illinois School of Professional Psychology
Licensed Clinical Psychologist | Diagnostic/IAES Program Coordinator | Primary Supervisor

Sol Rappaport, Ph.D.
DePaul University
Licensed Clinical Psychologist | Administrator/Owner | Auxiliary Supervisor

Kathryn Hefferon, Psy.D.
Illinois School of Professional Psychology
Licensed Clinical Psychologist | Administrator/Owner | Auxiliary Supervisor

Christina Bailey, Psy.D.
Illinois School of Professional Psychology
Licensed Clinical Psychologist | Psychodiagnostician | Auxiliary Supervisor

Heather Digby, Psy.D.
Adler University
Licensed Clinical Psychologist | Psychodiagnostician | Auxiliary Supervisor

Michael Greenbaum, M.D.
University of Illinois
Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist | Medical Consultant

Charlotte Edwards, Psy.D.
Illinois School of Professional Psychology
Licensed Clinical Psychologist | Consultant

Arlene Messner-Peters, LCSW
University of Illinois
Licensed Clinical Social Worker | Consultant

Samantha Daab, M.A.A.T., LPC
School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Art Therapist | Art Therapy Group Leader

Diana McNelis, M.A., LCPC, CADC
Loyola University
Certified Alcohol & Drug Counselor | Substance Abuse Education Group Leader

MaryPat Henders, M.A.A.T., LCPC
School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Senior Therapist from Counseling Connection | Personal Management Group Leader

Laura Grimes, M.Ed.
National-Louis University
Senior Behavior Intervention Specialist | Chosen Stars Adoption Group and Grief & Loss Group Leader

Larisa Liekys, B.A.
University of Wisconsin
Music Appreciation Group Leader

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Heather DeBruin, M.S., OTR/L
Mount Mary College
Occupational Therapist

John Lybolt, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
Northwestern University
Speech & Language Pathologist

Stephanie Conforti, Psy.D., LPC
Illinois School of Professional Psychology
Program Therapist

Nicolette Pilot, Psy.D.
Midwestern University
Post-Doctoral Fellow

Kayla Pedraza, M.S.
Rosalind Franklin University
Program Therapist

Shane Rondeau, M.S.
Wisconsin School of Professional Psychology
Doctoral Intern

Elizabeth Cotey, B.A. (M.A. Candidate)
Chicago School of Professional Psychology
Therapy Extern

Ceara Hershberger, M.A. (Psy.D. Candidate)
Midwestern University
Therapy Extern

Jessica Miller, M.A. (Psy.D. Candidate)
Midwestern University
Advanced Therapy Extern

Savannah Williams, B.S. (M.A. Candidate)
Rosalind Franklin University
Therapy Extern

Desiree Linderman, M.A. (Psy.D. Candidate)
Chicago School of Professional Psychology
Supplemental Therapy Extern

Stephanie Taylor, B.S. (Psy.D. Candidate)
Illinois School of Professional Psychology
Diagnostic Extern Assigned to CDS from Counseling Connection

Please note, at each level of training, CDS trainees have clearly and consistently designated titles: Post-Doctoral Fellows = “Fellow” or “Post-Doc”; Doctoral Interns = “Intern”; and Therapy Externs = “Extern”. Additionally, all school staff members are referred to by their formal title (Ms., Mr. and Dr.) to support a climate of respect and more clearly establish boundaries between students and staff.

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VIII. APPLICATION PROCESS

Please see specific program information for application information for each of the training programs (Externship, Internship and Post-Doctoral Fellowship).

If you have any further questions, please contact **Dr. Kristen Mittl Pollina, Clinical Director & Director of Clinical Training**, at:

E-Mail: kpollina@connectionsdayschool.net

Phone: (847) 680-8349 ~ Ext. 306

Please Note: A medical examination, fingerprinting, state & federal background checks and drug screening are required for all new staff members at Connections Day School. Placement at this site is contingent upon submitting all required health and medical examination forms and fingerprinting data, and passing both background checks and the drug screening.