

Naval Medical Center San Diego



Psychology Internship

Also known as "Balboa" Hospital because of its location within beautiful Balboa Park, Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS D) offers a variety of exciting opportunities for our psychology interns. You will not only work with experienced psychologists, but you will also be a contributing member of a network of physicians, dentists, nurse practitioners, and others dedicated to providing quality care to military members and their families.

NMCS D Doctoral Internship in Clinical Psychology

Fully accredited by the [American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#) since 1991, the NMCS D psychology internship provides exceptional learning experiences that may not be available in "mono-focused" internships, such as those affiliated with student counseling centers, correctional institutions, or even community mental health settings.

The NMCS D internship provides varied training experiences in numerous venues, while maintaining a cohesive faculty core and a central training vision.

Overall Training Aims

The internship has two overarching aims. The first is to train psychologists with intermediate to advanced competency for entry level, generalist practice in health service psychology. The second is to provide these psychologists with the knowledge and skills required to practice health service psychology effectively within the military.

Competencies

By the end of the internship year, interns are expected to demonstrate intermediate to advanced competency in the nine Profession-Wide Competencies outlined in the APA's Standards on Accreditation.

Major Rotations

Four unique rotations support NMCS D's overall mission. The primary supervising psychologists of each rotation, in consultation with the internship Training Director, tailor these training experiences to each intern's educational needs.

Adult Outpatient Rotation

Our outpatient mental health clinic provides assessment and treatment services to active duty members, their dependents, and military retirees.

Typically, interns provide assessment, individual psychotherapy, and group psychotherapy. Patients are primarily active duty military members, although interns also have the opportunity to work with military spouses and retirees. This rotation includes a focused "mini-rotation" in psychological testing, with intense exposure to assessment and psychometric interpretation. Although psychometric testing is a vital part of all four rotations, instruction and training on the administration and interpretation of psychological tests is concentrated in this mini-rotation.

Health Psychology Rotation

During this rotation, interns respond to health psychology consults from other inpatient and outpatient services, including cardiology, neurology, oncology, and the pain clinic, among others. Some of the more common issues addressed are sleep disorders, chronic pain, poor adherence to prescribed medical regimens, and anxiety disorders co-occurring with physical illnesses and injuries. Interns treat these problems with behavioral and health psychology interventions such as mindfulness, biofeedback, stress-management techniques, and cognitive behavioral strategies.

Operational Mental Health Clinics

During this rotation, interns work off-site with active duty Navy and Marine Corps personnel who are stationed on ships or at nearby Navy and Marine Corps bases. Interns typically spend 10 weeks each in the Mental Health Operational Outreach Clinic at Naval Station San Diego, and in the Mental Health Clinics for San Diego's Marine Corps Recruit Depot and Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. In these settings, interns are able to experience the working life of Navy Psychologists, who often work outside the traditional hospital setting.

At the Mental Health Operational Outreach Clinic, interns help active duty members with issues ranging from adjustment disorders to active psychosis. Assessment of fitness for duty, and initial access to mental health care, are the primary clinical goals of this clinic. At the Marine Corps clinics, interns provide services to both Marine Corps recruits and Recruit Depot staff Marines, as well as to Marines serving in aviation roles in the Marine Corps Air Wing. Problems range from mild depression to first break schizophrenia.

Inpatient Service and Consultation/Liaison Rotation

Through this rotation, interns gain experience with the unique demands of emergency mental health as well as working on an inpatient mental health treatment unit. During five weeks on the Inpatient Mental Health Service, interns work daily with psychiatrists, social workers, psychologists, and hospital corps staff, gaining

competence with the admission, diagnosis, treatment, and disposition of patients with mental health disorders of a severity that requires hospitalization. Interns also “take call” one day every other weekend, giving them the opportunity to respond to psychiatric emergencies in the Emergency Medical Department, on the inpatient psychiatric wards, or elsewhere in the hospital.

Interns spend the other five weeks of this rotation on the Emergency Psychiatry/Consultation Liaison Service, responding to crisis-oriented consults as part of a multi-disciplinary team of physicians, psychiatrists, social workers, and other mental-health professionals. During these emergency consults, interns learn how to work quickly with emergent issues, and combine data from numerous sources into a well-developed picture of a client’s current functioning.

Trans-Rotational Clinical Experiences

In addition to their normal rotation caseloads, interns follow three to four long-term cases (over 4 months) during the internship year. These cases involve clients with disorders related to psychological trauma, as well as clients dealing with complex mood, anxiety, and personality issues. All interns receive weekly ongoing supervision in support of these treatment cases.

Additional NMCSO Opportunities

NMCSO offers a variety of additional training experiences to help interns achieve their educational and professional goals. These include:

Didactic Training Presentations

A variety of seminars and workshops are offered to present contemporary information and training to supplement an intern’s clinical experiences. These presentations vary in scope and content, but they focus primarily on issues that are of concern to Navy psychologists. Frequently, presenters are distinguished colleagues from the Navy or civilian clinical/academic communities.

Operational Experiences

Numerous operational experiences are offered to interns throughout their training year. These include participation in Marine Corps Recruit graduation ceremonies, weapons training, and serving as the medical center’s Officer of the Day (OOD).

Interns also get underway aboard a major Navy combatant vessel (often an aircraft carrier), where they interact with Sailors, learn the duties of the ship’s psychologist, and develop an appreciation for the demands of shipboard life. In addition, every intern class spends time with the First Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, California. Here they gain familiarity with the operational stresses of the Marine Corps, and develop the skills required for effective consultation with Marine Corps Commands.

Supervision

Interns are supervised weekly by the supervising psychologist of their primary rotation and by the internship Training Director. For trans-rotational cases, interns are supervised by either the Training Director or the director’s designated psychologist.

At a minimum, interns receive 4 hours of direct supervision a week. An "open-door" policy allows for additional supervision or consultation as needed.

For more information on our internship, please see our [Training Manual](#).

Important dates:

Deadline for submitting APPIs: 8 November 2021

Deadline for completing Navy commissioning application: 15 December 2021

Application interviews will be conducted between 30 November and 2 December 2021. We do not yet know if these interviews will be in-person or virtual. That information will be communicated to applicants in the late summer/early fall of 2021.

Contact:

David B. Mather, Ph.D.

Internship Training Director

Naval Medical Center San Diego

San Diego, California

Phone - (619) 532-6065

Email – david.b.mather2.civ@mail.mil