Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Program
War Related Illness and Injury Study Center
Washington DC VA Medical Center
Ryan Brewster, Ph.D.
WRIISC-DC Neuropsychology Fellowship Director
50 Irving Street, NW
Washington, DC 20422
(202) 745-8000 x56800
https://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/

Application Due Date: December 18th, 2019
Fellowship Year Begins: September 2020

Accreditation Status
The WRIISC-DC Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Program at the Washington DC VA Medical Center meets Houston Conference guidelines for board certification per ABCN guidelines. It is not currently accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association.

Application and Selection Procedures
The WRIISC-DC Neuropsychology Fellowship begins in August 2020. This is a two-year, full-time program with VA benefits, including 13 days annual leave, 13 days sick leave, health insurance, and 10 federal holidays. Current stipend/salary is $51,237 for Year One, increasing to $54,006 for Year Two. Our program is designed to provide two full years of postdoctoral training. However, advancement to the second year is contingent on successful completion of first year requirements.

We are recruiting for one WRIISC-DC Neuropsychology Fellow for the 2020-2022 training period and anticipate interviewing candidates in person or by telephone/video conference in January 2020. Notifications will likely be made prior to the APPCN match rank order submission deadline. Reciprocal offers will be considered if an applicant is able to demonstrate a verifiable offer from another program.

Eligibility
To be considered for our postdoctoral training program, an applicant must have completed a doctoral degree in Clinical or Counseling Psychology from an American Psychological Association (APA) accredited program and must have completed an APA accredited Psychology Pre-Doctoral Internship. Certification of U.S. citizenship and drug screening are required for all VA Postdoctoral Fellows. In addition, VA employment requires that males born after December 31, 1959 must have registered for selective service by age 26. Please review VA eligibility requirements for psychology trainees at www.psychologytraining.va.gov/eligibility.asp and www.psychologytraining.va.gov/docs/TraineeEligibility.pdf before applying.

The WRIISC-DC Neuropsychology Fellowship seeks and values diverse experiences and backgrounds as the building blocks of a rich training environment. Our program emphasizes respect for trainees, Veterans, and staff members representing all forms of diversity, including (but not limited to) race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, Veteran status, and political affiliation. Fellows are entitled to equal treatment in selection decisions and freedom from harassment and unfair treatment.
This program seeks to admit trainees from diverse backgrounds while selecting the most qualified candidates. As such, individuals from diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply. The VA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and the training program follows institutional guidelines in this regard.

Application Materials
Please submit the following materials in electronic format to Dr. Brewster through the APPA CAS Postdoc Online Application:

1. A cover letter that describes:
   a. Your background, current professional interests, and career goals
   b. Specific reasons you are interested in training at the WRIISC-DC
   c. Experience with neuropsychological assessment, diagnosis, and treatment, including settings you have worked in and patient populations you have worked with
   d. Research experience and aspirations. What questions would you like to try to answer?
   e. Strengths and weaknesses in both clinical and research skills
2. Curriculum vitae
3. Three letters of recommendation from faculty members or clinical supervisors who are familiar with your clinical work and research experience. Letters should be emailed directly from writers.
4. Graduate transcripts
5. Two recent neuropsychological assessment reports. Please de-identify samples according to HIPAA standards.
6. One research work sample (e.g., a first-author published article, chapter, or presentation if available)
7. A letter from your dissertation chair regarding dissertation status and anticipated dissertation completion date.

Application materials must be received by December 18th, 2019 at 11:59pm EST.

Please contact Ryan Brewster, Ph.D., WRIISC-DC Neuropsychology Fellowship Director, via electronic mail at Ryan.Brewster@va.gov with any questions about the application process.

Training Setting

The Washington DC VA Medical Center is a 205-bed hospital that provides care to more than 78,000 Veterans in our catchment area on an outpatient basis. There is a nursing home (the Community Living Center, or CLC) located on-site. In addition, the medical center has 5 satellite outpatient clinics (CBOCs)
located in Charlotte Hall, MD, northeast Washington, DC (the Community Resource and Referral Center, or CRRC), Fort Belvoir, VA, southeast Washington, DC, and Prince George’s County, MD.

The DC VAMC is located in the heart of the District of Columbia, approximately 3 miles from the US Capitol, 4 miles from the White House, and in close proximity to a number of other medical centers (e.g., MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital and Children’s National Hospital). Washington, DC is a vibrant, diverse city with many charming neighborhoods, exciting cultural opportunities (including the Smithsonian museums, which offer free admission), extensive and excellent dining and nightlife options, a comprehensive public transportation system, sports arenas, beautiful parks, and trails providing access to outdoor recreational activities.

Training Model and Program Philosophy
WRIISCs provide a second opinion for Veterans with war-related illnesses and injuries that remain unexplained after examinations by local VA medical centers. These three centers are located in Washington, DC, East Orange, NJ, and Palo Alto, CA. Veterans in a large south-eastern US catchment area are referred to the WRIISC-DC, where they receive comprehensive interdisciplinary evaluations tailored to their medical concerns. Diagnoses are made when possible, and recommendations for management of the Veteran's concerns are given to the Veteran and their referring medical center. The WRIISC-DC team includes clinical (e.g., integrative medicine, neurology, nutrition, deployment health, neuropsychology, social work, environmental exposure, and health coaching) and research (e.g., neuroscience, exercise physiology, neuroimaging, and cognitive science) staff. Fellows that join our interdisciplinary team have the opportunity to directly assist our unique population.

The WRIISC-DC Neuropsychology Fellowship provides clinical, research, and educational training. Fellows will be trained to develop an advanced understanding of brain-behavior relationships; to develop advanced skills in neuropsychological evaluation and consultation; to develop and implement a feasible research project within the time constraints of the fellowship; and to learn to interpret, adapt, and incorporate new clinical research findings from the literature in order to improve assessment validity and treatment effectiveness.

Clinical Overview
Throughout the course of the two-year post-doctoral fellowship, the fellow will be provided with opportunities and training to develop a strong foundation of knowledge and skills pertinent to advanced clinical practice in neuropsychology. Through a variety of training-related activities, the fellow will learn fundamentals of functional neuroanatomy, neuropathology, and neuropsychological assessment. The neuropsychology fellow will develop skills working in an interdisciplinary setting and providing consultation to providers with varied backgrounds. Neuropsychological assessment is often a key component of a WRIISC-DC evaluation and the feedback provided by the neuropsychology fellow to the Veteran and their medical team can be critical.

Although the fellow’s primary clinical assignment is with the WRIISC-DC, the fellow will also see clinical cases through the DC VAMC Mental Health Neuropsychology Service and Polytrauma Service. This experience will provide the fellow with broad exposure to a diverse patient population (e.g., ages 18 to 85+) with a variety of presenting concerns (e.g., traumatic brain injury, multiple sclerosis, stroke, seizure disorders, dementia, etc.).

1. Clinical Caseload and Supervision: WRIISC-DC
The fellow is expected to see approximately four WRIISC National Referral Program evaluations per month, supervised primarily by the WRIISC-DC Fellowship Director (Dr. Brewster) and occasionally by the WRIISC-DC Director (Dr. Reinhard). The fellow will present cases at a weekly WRIISC Clinical Team interdisciplinary meeting. The fellow will also participate in the screening of WRIISC-DC consults. A weekly individual supervision hour will be completed with Dr. Brewster and additional supervision will be provided as needed.

2. Clinical Caseload and Supervision: Mental Health Neuropsychology Service
The fellow will receive supervision from neuropsychologists in the MH Neuropsychology Service. The first-year postdoctoral fellow will be scheduled for approximately two neuropsychological evaluations per month. This running average may vary due to patient cancellations, clinical need, holidays, and annual leave. The fellow will be responsible for the clinical interview, neuropsychological testing, test scoring, interpretation, and report writing for cases seen. Fellows will complete supervision with the supervisor that was present for each case seen through the MH Neuropsychology Service. The second-year fellow will be responsible for the above, and will also have the opportunity to supervise either a neuropsychology extern or intern per a vertical supervision model for one case per month. Based on their interest and clinical demand, fellows may also have an opportunity to develop a cognitive rehabilitation group in different clinics (e.g., Primary Care, Neurology, the Community Living Center, etc.) based on materials created by Dr. Strang.

3. Clinical Caseload and Supervision: Polytrauma Service
The fellow will have the opportunity to gain experience evaluating and treating Veterans with traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) and related co-morbidities under the supervision of the Polytrauma Clinic Faculty. Training opportunities may include provision of outpatient psychotherapy and participation (e.g., observation and research) in a social cognition rehabilitation groups for Veterans with TBI and PTSD. There is also the potential to participate in neuropsychology assessments through the Polytrauma Clinic. Caseload in the Polytrauma clinic will be arranged between Dr. Brewster, Dr. Sherer, and the fellow.

Research Overview
The research component of the fellowship is designed to provide advanced training in health care research related to deployment-related illnesses and injuries. Fellows will have the opportunity to enhance their research skills through a variety of educational, mentoring, and training activities. Fellows will be involved in multiple projects relevant to the WRIISC that may involve programmatic research, research that informs VA policy, environmental exposure research, neuroimaging research, and other topics. In addition, fellows are encouraged to develop a mentored research project based on their own interests. Fellows will have the opportunity to mentor study coordinators in research activities. Fellows will also have teaching opportunities in research meetings, journal clubs, assisting others with presentations/posters, and protocol and grant application writing. Fellows will receive individualized research supervision and mentoring from Drs. Costanzo, Brewster, and Reinhard.

1. Ongoing WRIISC Research:
Fellows will become involved in at least one research project initiated and directed by WRIISC staff. Research may involve analyses with an administrative database, working directly with research participants, evaluating clinical efficacy, efficiency, or utilization, or assisting with program development and program evaluation. Data currently being analyzed
include a variety of neuropsychological assessment, medical symptomatology, treatment adherence, sleep, exercise, EEG, eye-tracking, and war-related exposure data.

2. Fellow Research Project:
   Fellows will design a mentored research study that can be completed within the term of the fellowship. This may include developing a sub-study based on an existent IRB-approved project or developing an independent study. Drs. Costanzo and Brewster will provide guidance in the development of a testable research idea, preparation of a research proposal, data collection, data analysis, and presentation of the results (i.e., abstract, manuscript). Mentors will also provide guidance on submission of protocols to the VA IRB and R&D Department.

Educational Activities

1. Neuropsychology Video Teleconference (VTC): Fellows will participate in a weekly neuropsychology video teleconference with trainees from several other neuropsychology training programs from 1:00-3:00 pm on Thursdays. This fellow-led educational activity generally includes one hour of reading discussion and one hour of case presentation per week.

2. Neuropsychology Service Seminar: Fellows will participate in a weekly MH Neuropsychology Service seminar. The seminar includes presentations on a variety of neuropsychology-related topics, case conferences, discussion of journal articles, and mock ABPP-CN fact findings.

3. WRIISC-DC Journal Club: Fellows will participate in a periodic meeting with WRIISC-DC staff and colleagues from outside departments to present research findings and discuss journal articles covering clinical and research interests of the group (e.g., exposure, health coaching, neuropsychological assessment, neuroimaging, etc.). Fellow will present an article of interest at least twice per year.

4. Professional Conference Attendance: Throughout the training year, fellows will have the opportunity to attend professional conferences with funding typically covered by the WRIISC for one conference per year. Following return from a professional conference, the fellow is expected to provide an informal presentation of relevant material to the fellowship faculty.

Additional educational activities are available at/near the DC VAMC campus. Attendance is encouraged, but not required. Activities will include but are not necessarily limited to:

- DC VAMC Neurology Grand Rounds
- MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital Didactics and Journal Club
- TeleECHO Integrative Cognitive Rehabilitation Seminars

Performance Evaluation

At minimum, the fellow will receive formal, face to face, feedback from the Dr. Brewster and/or Dr. Reinhard in regard to progress being made in the fellowship, twice yearly.

Training Faculty

Ryan Brewster, Ph.D. – WRIISC-DC Neuropsychology Fellowship Director
Matthew Reinhard, Psy.D. – WRIISC Director
Michelle Costanzo, Ph.D. – WRIISC-DC Research Director
Ernest Aucone, Ph.D., ABPP-CN – DC VAMC Neuropsychology Service Program Manager
Jennifer Strang, Ph.D., ABPP-CN – DC VAMC Neuropsychology Training Coordinator
Carolyn Sherer, Psy.D. – DC VAMC Polytrauma Neuropsychologist
Lauren Skalina, Ph.D. – DC VAMC Neuropsychologist

Recent Trainees
2017-2019 fellow:
    Chmaika Mills, Ph.D., Howard University
    Internship: Washington, DC VA Medical Center

2016-2018 fellow:
    Carleen Schwimmer, Psy.D., American School of Professional Psychology
    Internship: Bay Pines VA Medical Center

2015-2017 fellows:
    Kayleigh Hale, Psy.D., Pepperdine University
    Internship: Long Beach VA Medical Center

    Lauren Skalina, Ph.D., American University
    Internship: VA Maryland Health Care System

2014-2016 fellow:
    Salya Namazi, Ph.D., California School of Professional Psychology at AIC
    Internship: Washington DC VA Medical Center

2013-2015 fellow:
    Stephanie Brooks Holliday, Ph.D., Drexel University
    Internship: Washington DC VA Medical Center

2012-2014 fellow:
    Courtney Murphy, Ph.D., Palo Alto University
    Internship: VA Maryland Health Care System

2011-2013 fellow:
    Amanda Hull, Ph.D., Palo Alto University
    Internship: Washington DC VA Medical Center

2010-2012 fellow:
    Alyssa Adams, Ph.D., Marywood University
    Internship: Washington DC VA Medical Center

2008-2010 fellow:
    Kelly McCarron, Psy.D., The Wright Institute
    Internship: Washington DC VA Medical Center