

Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

Washington DC VA Medical Center

War Related Illness and Injury Study Center

Christopher Hansen, Ph.D.

Neuropsychology Fellowship Director

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Washington, DC 20422

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<http://www.washingtondc.va.gov/>



Applications Due Date: December 22nd, 2017

Fellowship Year Begins: August 2018

Accreditation Status

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

Application and Selection Procedures

The Fellowship program in Neuropsychology begins in August of 2018. 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 \$46,169 for Year One, increasing to \$48,664 for Year Two. Our program is organized 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 Neuropsychology Fellowship position in 2018 and anticipate interviewing candidates between January 15 and January 25, 2017. Notifications will be made prior to the APPCN match rank order submission deadline.

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 the draft by age 26.

The Neuropsychology Fellowship seeks and values diverse experiences and backgrounds as the building blocks of a rich training environment. Our program emphasizes respect for trainees, patients, and staff members representing all forms of diversity, including (but not limited to) race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, veteran status, and political affiliation. Residents are entitled to equal treatment in selection decisions and freedom from harassment or unfair treatment. The 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:

1. A cover letter that describes your background, interests, and goals; career plans, and vision of how this will evolve over the coming years; reasons that you are interested in the WRIISC; previous experience with assessment/diagnosis and treatment, including the types of patients seen; research experience. What questions would you like to try to answer? What research skills would you say are your strongest and weakest?
2. A copy of your curriculum vitae.
3. Two letters of recommendation from faculty members or clinical supervisors who are familiar with your clinical work as well as your research. Letters should be emailed directly from writers.
4. Graduate transcripts
5. A recent neuropsychological assessment report. Please make sure to de-identify according to HIPPA standards.
6. A letter from your dissertation chair regarding disertation status and anticipated completion date.

Application materials must be received by December 22nd, 2017.

Please contact Christopher Hansen, Ph.D., Neuropsychology Fellowship Director, via electronic mail (preferably) at Christopher.Hansen5@va.gov or by phone at (202) 745-8000 x56793 with any questions about the application process.

Training Setting .



The Washington DC VA Medical Center is a 144-bed hospital that provides care to 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 federal agencies. 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, and beautiful parks and trails providing access to outdoor recreational activities.

Training Model and Program Philosophy

The neuropsychology fellow is a staff member in the War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC), located within Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center. WRIISC-DC provides a second opinion for Veterans with difficult-to-diagnose war-related illnesses and injuries who are nationally referred and travel to our medical center, where they receive comprehensive interdisciplinary evaluations.

The neuropsychology program trains neuropsychologists 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. The fellowship also offers opportunities for training in the rehabilitation of neuropsychological concerns.

The fellow will conduct in-depth neuropsychological examinations of combat-era Veterans as part of a multidisciplinary team for patients with debilitating symptoms that remain unexplained after medical examinations by local VA medical centers. Diagnoses are made when possible, and recommendations for management of the Veteran's medical problems are given to the referring medical center. The fellow will also conduct neuropsychological evaluations of local Veterans referred for assessment through the general Mental Health Neuropsychology Service and Polytrauma Service. Finally, the fellow will participate in ongoing research and will be responsible for initiating his or her own research project.

Clinical Overview

Throughout the course of the two-year post-doctoral fellowship in neuropsychology, 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 neuroanatomy, neuropathology, and neuropsychological assessment. The neuropsychology fellow will be integrated into the WRIISC clinical team, and will develop skills working in an interdisciplinary setting, providing consultation to providers with varied backgrounds. The WRIISC evaluation is multidisciplinary and focuses on the particular problems of each Veteran. The neuropsychological assessment is often a critical component of the evaluation, and the feedback provided by the neuropsychology fellow to the Veteran is often times quite valuable.

Although the fellow's clinical assignment is with WRIISC, as noted above, the fellow will also see clinical patients through the Mental Health Neuropsychology Service and the Polytrauma Service. This experience will provide the fellow with a 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, seizure disorders, dementia, etc.). This exposure is essential for the fellow's general development as a clinical neuropsychologist. Other clinical opportunities exist and can be fit into clinical training as needed or depending on interest (e.g., Sleep Clinic, Pain Clinic, Palliative Care)

Clinical Case Load National Referral Program

With respect to seasonal variation and scheduling demands, the fellow will see up to 4 WRIISC National Referral Program evaluations per month (as available), supervised by the WRIISC Fellowship Director (Dr. Hansen), Dr. Reinhard (WRIISC Director), or other qualified VA staff.

Clinical Case Load Mental Health Neuropsychology Service

The WRIISC post-doctoral fellow will receive supervision through neuropsychologists in the MH Neuropsychology Service. A discussion of supervision and relevant issues will take place between WRIISC staff and MH Neuropsychology Service supervisors through scheduled meetings, as well as informally. Supervisors in the MH Neuropsychology Service will have input into quarterly feedback of the fellow's program progress. Further, supervisors are invited to participate in didactics and research. WRIISC fellows will conduct clinical work in the following manner:

1. The first year postdoctoral fellow will be scheduled for **two** neuropsychological evaluations per month. This would take place on the second and fourth Monday of every month, or by arrangement with supervisor. The running average may run below two patients due to patient cancellations, holidays, and annual leave.
2. The second year postdoctoral fellow will be scheduled for **two** neuropsychological evaluations per month. These would take place on the first and third Monday of every month, or by arrangement with supervisor. The fellow would be responsible for clinical interview, neuropsychological testing, scoring, interpretation, and report writing for one case, and will be responsible for supervising either a neuropsychology extern or intern for the second case. The running average may run below two patients due to patient cancellations, holidays, and annual leave.
3. Fellows have the opportunity to see more than two neuropsychological evaluations per month. For example, interesting clinical cases may arise that may require the fellow to see more than two assessments in a month, in order to participate in a valuable clinical experience. While this is encouraged, it is important to ensure this does not interfere with the fellows' other responsibilities. Therefore, proactive communication is requested between the fellowship director (or WRIISC director) and the supervising staff; either at regular meetings, direct conversation, email, or through communication with fellows.
4. Fellows will receive one hour of individual supervision per week with a MH Neuropsychology Service neuropsychologist.
5. Fellows will participate in the Neuropsychology Service seminar with neuropsychology externs, interns, and supervising neuropsychologists one hour per week.
6. Based on their interest, Fellows also have an opportunity to co-lead a cognitive rehabilitation group in either the Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC) or the Substance Abuse Recovery Program (SARP). Other such group opportunities may arise and/or be developed by fellows (e.g., in Primary Care, Neurology, the Community Living Center (CLC), etc.)

Clinical Case Load Polytrauma Service

The WRIISC postdoctoral fellows 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 co-facilitation of a yearlong social cognition rehabilitation group for Veterans with TBI and posttraumatic stress disorder, and outpatient psychotherapy/cognitive rehabilitation cases. There is also the potential to participate in neuropsychology assessments through the Polytrauma clinic if this is an area of training need or interest. The Polytrauma Neuropsychologist will provide individual supervision tailored to specific training needs, will participate in fellowship meetings, will contribute to feedback of fellow performance, and is invited to participate in didactics and research. Caseload in the Polytrauma clinic will be arranged between Dr. Hansen, Polytrauma Neuropsychologist, and the fellow.

Clinical Supervision: One hour weekly individual supervision with WRIISC neuropsychologist. Additional supervision will be provided as needed.

- 1) Monthly meeting with neuropsychology program faculty.
- 2) Supervision with Polytrauma Service and Outpatient Mental Health supervisors as determined by these services.

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 at least one project relevant to the WRIISC that may involve programmatic research, research that informs VA policy, environmental exposure research, among other topics. In addition, fellows are encouraged to develop a mentored research project based on their own interests.

Research Activities

1. 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, evaluating clinical efficacy, efficiency, or utilization, or assisting with program development and program evaluation.
2. Individual 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 that is feasible to complete within the term of the fellowship. Drs. Bloeser and Hansen will provide guidance in the development of a testable research idea, preparation of a research proposal, conduct of the research, data analysis, and presentation of the results (i.e., abstract, manuscript). Mentors will also provide guidance on submission of protocols to the IRB and R&D.

As per guidelines set forth by the Assistant Chief of Staff for Research, all research-related trainings must be completed within 30 days of beginning the fellowship.

Research Supervision: In addition to the research activities described above, each fellow will receive individualized research supervision and mentoring from Drs. Bloeser, Hansen, and Reinhard. Individual meetings will be scheduled as needed.

Research Mentoring Activities: 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.

Departmental Activities: Weekly WRIISC staff meeting attendance is mandatory. Staff meeting occurs from 1:00-1:30 pm on Wednesdays. Please notify Dr. Reinhard in advance of any staff meeting absence.

Educational Activities

Neuropsychology Video Teleconference (VTC): Fellows will participate in a weekly neuropsychology video teleconference from 1:00-3:00 pm on Thursdays. This fellow-led educational activity includes one hour of reading discussion and one hour of case presentations per week. Each fellow is expected to

arrive at the VTC prepared to discuss the assigned readings for that week. Active participation in case discussions is also expected.

Neuropsychology Service Seminar: Fellows will participate in a weekly neuropsychology seminar from 2:00-3:00pm on Fridays. The seminar includes presentations on a variety of neuropsychology-related topics, case conferences, discussion of journal articles, and mock ABPP-CN fact findings.

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 will provide an informal presentation of relevant material to the fellowship faculty.

Additional educational activities will be required at least per quarter, with attendance of at least two neurology rounds per year. Activities will include but are not necessarily limited to:

- Brain Cuttings
- Diversity Seminar
- Radiology Grand Rounds
- Neurology Grand Rounds
- National Rehabilitation Hospital Didactics and Journal Club

Research meeting/Journal club: Drs. Bloeser and Hansen will organize a monthly research meeting for fellows and staff to present research findings and discuss journal articles covering clinical and research interests of the group (e.g., CIM, neuropsychological assessment, neuroimaging, etc.) from September-May. Postdoctoral fellows, WRIISC fellowship faculty, and other colleagues will be invited to present research findings and articles.

Feedback: The fellow will receive formal, face to face, feedback from the Fellowship Director and/or Dr. Reinhard in regard to progress being made in the fellowship, twice yearly. Signed copies of this feedback will be kept in the fellow's file and provided to the fellow for their own files.

Training Faculty

Christopher Hansen, Ph.D.

Matthew Reinhard, Psy.D.

Ernest Aucone, Ph.D.

Jennifer Strang, Ph.D.

Kayleigh Hale, Psy.D.

Lauren Skalina, Ph.D.

Current/Past Trainees

2017-2019 fellow (Name, Graduate Program, Internship):

Chmaika Mills, Ph.D.

Internship: Washington, DC VA Medical Center

2016-2018 fellow:

Carleen Schwimmer, Psy.D.
Internship: Bay Pines VA Medical Center

2015-2017 fellows:

Kayleigh Hale, Psy.D., Clinical Psychology, Pepperdine University
Internship: Long Beach VA Medical Center

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

2014-2016 fellow:

Salya Namazi, Ph.D.
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.
Internship: Washington DC VA Medical Center

2010-2012 fellow:

Alyssa Adams, Ph.D.
Internship: Washington DC VA Medical Center

2008-2010 fellow:

Kelly McCarron, Psy.D.,
Internship: Washington DC VA Medical Center