About Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services

Since 1942, Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services has served Southern California residents by providing mental health and substance abuse services. As the first non-profit mental health outpatient clinic in Los Angeles, Didi Hirsch was initially founded to help adults cope with the aftermath of the Great Depression. Over the years, Didi Hirsch has evolved in response to the needs of our increasingly complex community. From our 11 sites and more than 60 schools, we serve more than 90,000 clients a year throughout Southern California—from Pacoima to South Los Angeles, Downtown LA to Santa Ana and many points in between. We offer a wide range of services through our service programs—Adult Services, Child and Family Services, Crisis Residential Treatment, and Suicide Prevention programs.

As a Department of Mental Health (DMH) contracted agency, we offer a wide range of clinical services, including out-patient counseling, crisis intervention and stabilization, short-term residential treatment, case management, youth-at-risk and family reinforcement programs, substance abuse treatment, Wellness Center services, and extensive community outreach. As a member of the Lifeline Network, we also operate the only free, accredited, 24-hour, seven-days-a-week, suicide prevention crisis line from Orange County to Santa Barbara.

Didi Hirsch continually endeavors to reduce the stigma attached to mental illness and to provide hope and support to the many individuals and families whose lives are affected by mental illness.

“Didi Hirsch transforms lives by providing quality mental health and substance use disorder services in communities where stigma or poverty limit access”.

About the Psychology Practicum Student Training Program

The mission of the Psychology Practicum Training Program is to provide in-depth, comprehensive training in the provision of clinical services to a diverse population of adults and children in a large Department of Mental Health (DMH) contracted community mental health agency. We believe that all future mental health professionals need to demonstrate competency in:

- Assessment, diagnosis and treatment of chronic severe mental illness and emotional/behavioral problems in adults, adolescents and children utilizing evidence-based interventions
- Ethical and legal responsibilities of mental health professionals
- Cultural/ethnic/gender-orientation/religious/class diversity
- Professional and personal interactions with others
- Community outreach activities

Students work primarily within our outpatient clinics in our Adult or Child/Family programs, however placements may also be available with our suicide prevention services and our crisis residential houses. We provide direct, practical experience with the range of clients and problems found in a community mental health center. Our client population is extremely diverse in a variety of areas: ethnically/culturally, gender, sexual orientation, age. Our clients are all in the low socio-economic range. With intensive supervision and formal teaching presentations, students gain knowledge and experience from our practical, hands-on approach. We emphasize both depth and breadth of experience, and on the quality of supervision and teaching. Students are also given considerable responsibility in order to prepare them for more independent work during the course of their careers.

During the course of the program, students gain:

Clinical Experience
Students are assigned 5-7 cases in their program, for which they provide individual and family treatment (as indicated), and may also facilitate a therapy or psychoeducational group. Students are given the opportunity to conduct initial assessments which include a DSM diagnosis. The students are fully integrated into treatment planning teams. The student’s work with clients may also include field visits to wherever the client is living depending on the placement site and program. Some school-based services may be provided within the Child/Family program.

Community Field Experience—Optional
Students have the option to participate in our Consultation, Education and Prevention program (CE&P). This community outreach project provides students with the opportunity to work in the community providing services focused on mental health awareness and reduction of stigma to members of community agencies, schools, and other community groups. The student is given a list of projects to choose from. Past projects have included facilitating a support group related to a health diagnosis, psycho-educational presentations at a senior center, and facilitating a 10 week educational group at a school.

Training Experience
All students are required to attend monthly educational seminars which provide instruction on a variety of mental health topics and specific intervention techniques.

Specialized Training Experience:

Crisis Oriented Recovery Services (CORS) Training—Optional
This training provides instruction on a short term crisis intervention model, which prepares students to use this model with selected clients. This training is an optional training experience that is available to students who are interested.

Seeking Safety Training
This evidence based practice designed for work with clients with substance abuse and PTSD is offered as funding permits.


Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST) Training
This training is a two-day intensive, interactive and practice-dominated course designed to provide skills to assess and intervene to prevent the immediate risk of suicide.

Professional Assault Crisis Training (Pro-ACT)
This training is a hybrid online and one-day interactive course providing information and strategies for de-escalating crisis situations and enhancing personal safety when working with clients.

Application Information—Masters Level Student Training Program

Minimum Psychology Practicum Level Student Requirements:
1. Work 2 full days (16 hours) per week.
2. Commitment to a 10 month training program from mid-September through the end of June, full year possible if desired.
3. Available to work at least one evening per week until 8 pm as needed (required for working in the Child/Family programs).
4. Required to be on site every Wednesday all day.
5. It is preferable if students have at least one practicum experience working with clinical populations using basic clinical interviewing and treatment skills.
6. Interest in developing clinical experience working with clients with serious mental disorders.

Application Procedures:
Please submit a letter of interest, current CV, an unofficial transcript, and one reference letter, preferably from a clinical supervisor who is familiar with your clinical work. In your letter of interest, please note your preference for the Adult Track or the Child/Family Track and location (if available). Your preference for location will be taken into consideration, but Didi Hirsch reserves the right to assign you to the program/site that best matches your training experience.

Applications should be sent via email to gcollins@didihirsch.org. Any questions can be addressed to the Practicum Coordinator, Giselle Collins, Ph.D., at gcollins@didihirsch.org. Didi Hirsch abides by the procedures and dates of acceptance set forth by the Southern California Association of Psychology Training Programs (SCAPTP). Completed applications are due by March 2, 2020 at 5pm. Interviews will take place the weeks of March 16th and March 23rd, 2020. Offers will be extended on the SCAPTP Uniform Notification Day on Monday, April 13, 2020 beginning at 9am PST.

General Information:
- **Stipend.** A $5000 per year stipend is available for students who are fluent in Spanish or Armenian (if you are placed at our Glendale site) and are able to use it in a therapeutic setting. To qualify, you will be required to take a brief language test.
- **Supervision.** One hour of individual supervision is provided with a licensed clinical psychologist. Live supervision or visual recordings of at least 2 sessions are required over the course of the year. Two hours of group supervision is provided bi-weekly.
- **Multidisciplinary team meetings.** Attendance at a 1.5 hour multidisciplinary team meeting is encouraged per week.
- **Time off.** Students are given a total of 10 days of time off inclusive of agency holidays.
- **Background check.** All students must be able to pass a background check as a final condition of placement.
- **Position locations.** For more information on specific placements and locations, please visit our website at https://didihirsch.org/training/student-training-programs/psychology-practicum-training/.