



Autism Care  
Partners

# **CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM**

## **TRAINING MANUAL**

Rev. 01.05.2022



# Autism Care Partners

## **Clinical Psychology Internship Training Program**

### **History**

Autism Care Partners (ACP) provides state-of-the-art diagnostic testing, assessment of ADHD, Autism and other psychological disorders. Our clinical team is comprised of licensed clinical psychologists, board certified behavior analysts, speech therapists, occupational therapists, licensed social workers, and support staff who dedicate their careers to providing diagnostic evaluations and treatment to patients. We serve patients aged 2-30. We see a wide breath of clinical presentations, including ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, anxiety disorders, mood disorders, trauma and adjustment disorders, OCD, and more. Patients present from a variety of socioeconomic statuses, educational levels, and cultural backgrounds.

### **Who We Are**

#### **Rebeccah Costa, Psy.D.**

Dr. Costa is a licensed clinical psychologist. She joined Autism Care Partners as a post-doctoral trainee in 2019. Upon completing her post-doc, Dr. Costa joined ACP as a full-time clinical psychologist specializing in diagnostic assessment of young children. Dr. Costa developed an early passion for supervision and training and serves as the training coordinator for pre-doctoral and post-doctoral interns. Within this role, she directs and organizes the training program and its resources; is responsible for selection of ACP's interns; monitors and evaluates the program's goals and activities; and documents and maintains interns' updated training records. Dr. Costa earned her Psy.D. in clinical psychology with a focus in children and families and global mental health in 2019 from William James College.

#### **Marlana Borgos, Ph.D.**

Dr. Borgos is a licensed clinical neuropsychologist in RI and MA. She also has an M.A. and CAGS in school psychology. Dr. Borgos has diverse experiences working in inpatient and outpatient hospitals, schools, and private practice. She joined Autism Care Partners in 2020, where she evaluates children and adults with developmental, psychiatric, and neuropsychological problems. She also enjoys working with and supervising graduate students and postdoctoral fellows at ACP.

#### **Andrea Lavigne, PhD, BCBA, LBA**

Dr Lavigne is a licensed clinical psychologist and board certified and licensed behavior analyst. Dr. Lavigne joined Autism Care Partners in January 2019 and currently serves as the Regional Vice President. She earned her certification in Applied Behavior Analysis at the University of Massachusetts. Dr. Lavigne earned her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Rhode Island under the mentorship of Dr. Mark Wood with a focus on neuropsychological assessment and research. Dr. Lavigne serves as the director of Rhode Island services which include diagnostic pediatric assessment, home-based and center-based Applied Behavior Analysis programs, and professional training programs for undergraduate and graduate students in psychology.



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### **What We Do**

At Autism Care Partners, we conduct comprehensive psychological assessments regarding emotional, behavioral, social, and executive functioning to help patients receive the supports they need. We provide a comprehensive evaluation of patient strengths and weaknesses to provide diagnostic clarity and the most effective treatment recommendations. ADHD and other disorders may impact various areas of executive functioning, including attention, impulsivity, working memory, initiation, planning, organization, and emotional regulation. Interns who are accepted to this internship will be trained in individual psychotherapy, diagnostic psychological evaluations for children, adolescents, and young adults, and Applied Behavior Analysis treatment for children with autism spectrum disorder.

### **Diagnostic Psychological Evaluations**

We provide a comprehensive evaluation of patient strengths and weaknesses to provide diagnostic clarity and the most effective treatment recommendations. ADHD and other disorders may impact various areas of executive functioning, including attention, impulsivity, working memory, initiation, planning, organization, and emotional regulation.

### **Individual, Family, and Group Counseling**

We provide individual, family, and group counseling to support clients who present with a wide range of difficulties, including anxiety, depression, poor self-esteem, symptoms of ADHD, and other challenges that may be impacting their academic, occupational, or social functioning.

### **Autism Spectrum Disorder Treatment**

At Autism Care Partners, we recognize the importance of early identification and intervention. We provide diagnostic and intervention services for autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Our treatment program begins with a clinical interview with a licensed professional. We then determine the appropriate course of treatment, assessment, or referrals in collaboration with the client's family. Applied Behavioral Interventions (ABI) strives to help individuals with autism and developmental disabilities reach their full potential. We achieve this goal through using innovative, evidence-based treatment methods that target specific functional outcomes to enhance quality of life. We utilize directive and naturalistic teaching methods tailored to the specific needs of each client.



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### Training

The ACP Clinical Psychology Internship Training Program prefers interns currently matriculated in an American Psychological Association (APA) accredited doctoral program in Clinical Psychology or equivalent. All candidates for admission will have adequate preparation for internship as indicated by a statement from the applicant's Program Director. A minimum of 800 contact hours of formal, supervised practicum training is required.

The internship year starts on August 1st. All candidates for admission are held to the onboarding requirements of the practice. The Internship Training Program observes the guidelines regarding timing of internship offers and acceptances adopted by the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) and the Council of University Directors of Clinical and Counseling Programs. This internship site agrees to abide by the APPIC policy that no person at this training facility will solicit, accept or use any ranking-related information from any internship applicant.

At this time, the State of Rhode Island mandates that all healthcare providers and healthcare workers have received a complete series of COVID-19 vaccines (one dose of Johnson & Johnson, two doses of Pfizer or Moderna). The sole exemption in the regulation is a medical exemption. For more information, please visit the Rhode Island Department of Health, COVID-19 Information website.

Our commitment at ACP is to foster the development of highly trained clinical psychologists with the skills to accurately assess and diagnose children, adolescents, and young adults with psychological disorders, along with skills for providing exceptional services in the realms of individual and family therapy and group therapy. Upon program completion, we expect that all clinical psychology interns will demonstrate an intermediate to advanced level of professional psychology skills, abilities, proficiencies, competencies, and knowledge in the areas of professionalism, core clinical skills for assessment and intervention, and cultural and individual diversity. Competencies in these areas are acquired through face-to-face interventions, research projects, seminars and didactics, and ongoing mentoring relationships.



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### Program Goals

Our goal as an APPIC training site is to provide interns with comprehensive training in diagnostic assessment. Interns will participate in the entire assessment process, including initial intake, assessment administration and scoring, diagnostic formulation and report writing, providing recommendations, and providing evaluation results to patients and families. Interns will receive training in the areas of supervision, research, and didactics related to assessment and diagnostic presentations.

Interns participate in the entire psychological assessment process. They participate in conducting initial diagnostic evaluations, selecting test batteries, administering test batteries, conceptualizing the case, writing integrative reports, and providing feedback and recommendation to families. Due to the wide variety of clinical presentations, interns will have the opportunity to become proficient in cognitive testing, memory testing, evaluating social and emotional disorders, projective testing, and specialized assessment for autism spectrum disorders. Interns will receive supervision and feedback in every aspect of the assessment process.

Interns will have the opportunity to provide individual psychotherapy with children, adults and families, participate in individual behavioral therapy with young children with autism, and co-lead group therapy for children and adults. Other activities will include research projects, supervision, and seminars and didactics. We aim to provide interns with ample opportunities for face-to-face intervention and services, as we believe the most learning happens through these experiences. Interns will also participate in research projects related to the diagnostic population we serve.

All training activities will take place on site at our Warwick, Rhode Island office location. Interns will be expected to complete 1500 hours in no less than 12 months and no more than 24 months. Our practice offers the opportunity to work both on site and remotely based on scheduling availability. Interns will be provided with adequate space to conduct testing and therapy as well as space to complete scoring, writing, and research. Support staff are available to students to assist with scheduling, contacting patients, coordinating materials, and other administrative needs the intern may have. Assessment materials and office supplies are ordered on a weekly basis to ensure adequate supply of materials. Our office also purchases updated versions of testing materials and assessments as they become available in order to follow best practices.

Interns will begin their internship by participating in training and observation of administration to ensure confidence in their administration of assessment measures used within our testing battery. Interns will also observe psychologists conduct intakes and testing feedback appointments. An assessment of abilities will be conducted by supervising psychologists to



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ensure fidelity in the administration process. Once deemed competent, interns will begin independent test administration and begin conducting intakes with supervision. Interns will then work towards writing assessment reports, obtaining therapy clients, and beginning to participate in leading group therapy. Interns will also participate in weekly supervision and didactics along with test administration, intake/feedback appointments with their supervisor, individual therapy, and group therapy.

The training curriculum offered by ACP is comprised of two main areas: testing, which is offered 12 hours per week over the course of four days; and therapy, which is offered three hours per week over the course of two days.

### **Sample Training Curriculum:**

- Months 1-2
  - Testing (4 days/week, 12 hours/week):
    - Objective: Interns will familiarize themselves with all assessment measures and testing batteries.
      - During Month 1, interns will observe a minimum of 36 hours (12 sessions) of test administration, including assessments and testing batteries. Interns will also participate in the scoring process led by their supervising psychologist. During Month 2, interns will conduct a minimum of 36 hours (12 sessions) of supervised test administration, including assessments and testing batteries. Interns will complete scoring of all materials on their own and will submit to their supervisor for verification.
  - Therapy:
    - Objective: Interns will familiarize themselves with various therapeutic interventions targeted to the clinical population we serve.
      - During Months 1 and 2, interns will work with their supervisor to obtain appropriate therapy cases based on the intern's clinical interests and experience. Cases will be assigned at a rate of 2 individual clients and 1 group therapy session per week. Interns will integrate evidence-based practice into case plans with clients. Interns will be required to develop and maintain treatment plans and session notes which will be reviewed by their supervisor weekly. Interns will also co-lead groups with supervisors.
- Months 3-4
  - Testing:
    - Objective: Interns will utilize skills learned during months 1 & 2 during testing and feedback appointments.
      - Interns will begin to conduct intakes, select testing batteries, administer the testing battery, and begin to write integrative reports.



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Reports will be reviewed in supervision weekly. Interns will also begin to participate in testing feedback appointments to practice delivering feedback to patients.

- Therapy:
  - Objective: Interns will continue to incorporate skills and experience into clinical practice with individual therapy clients and gain independence in leading group therapy.
- Months 5-12
  - Testing:
    - Objective: Interns will become more independent in the evaluation process.
      - Interns will conduct testing intakes with supervision, select the testing battery, administer testing, write integrative reports, and provide feedback to patients with supervision.
  - Therapy:
    - Objective: Interns will continue to incorporate skills and experience into their clinical practice with individual therapy and lead group therapy while developing ongoing group therapy activities and curricula.

### Current Assessment Measures:

- Cognitive measures: Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition; Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition; Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition
- Memory assessment: Wide Range Assessment of Memory and Learning, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition
- Measures of attention and executive functioning
- Measures of social and emotional functioning and personality assessments
- ADOS-2 administration (students will be able to observe)

### **Didactic Training**

Interns will participate in 2 hours of didactic training per week. Interns will have the opportunity to work with and learn from other professionals within our comprehensive team, such as Board-Certified Behavior Analysts, Applied Behavioral Analysis therapists, speech and occupational therapists, and clinical social workers. Seminars and didactics will be held weekly and cover a breadth of topics. Such topics will include diagnosis and treatment of a variety of developmental and psychiatric disorders, multidisciplinary team topics with our ABA staff and other professional therapists, training in therapy skills and techniques, current trends in research, and other topics as determined by the training coordinator based on needs and interests of the clinical psychology interns.

### **Supervision and Evaluation**

Interns will receive 4 hours of supervision per week. 2 hours will be individual supervision and 2 hours will consist of group supervision. Supervision is documented by both interns and



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supervisors. Supervisor's review and sign all clinical documentation and reports. Interns will receive written evaluations twice per year by their supervisors. Evaluations will provide summary information of performance in all major competence areas that are a focus of internship training. Evaluations will identify the intern's strengths and areas of growth. Interns will have the opportunity to review their evaluation with supervisors to ensure the fullest possible communication between supervisors and interns. Interns' progress within our program will be shared with their home academic program. Interns may also have the opportunity to provide peer to peer supervision to practicum students from programs such as the University of Rhode Island Clinical Psychology Ph.D. program and William James College Psy.D. program.

### **Sample Weekly Schedule**

#### **Monday:**

- 9:00am-12:00pm: Test Administration/Observation
- 12:00pm-1:00pm: Individual Supervision
- 1:00pm-3:00pm: (Practice) Test Scoring/Report Writing
- 3:00pm-5:00pm: Individual Therapy

#### **Tuesday:**

- 9:00am-12:00pm: Intake/Feedbacks with Supervisor
- 12:00pm-2:00pm: Group Supervision
- 2:00pm-3:00pm: Test Administration/Observation

#### **Wednesday:**

- 9:00am-12:00pm: Test Administration/Observation
- 12:00pm-2:00pm: Didactics/Seminar
- 2:00pm-3:00pm: Individual Supervision
- 3:00pm-4:00pm: (Practice) Test Scoring/Report Writing
- 4:00pm-5:00pm: Group Therapy

#### **Thursday:**

- 9:00am-12:00pm: Intake/Feedbacks with Supervisor
- 12:00pm-2:00pm: (Practice) Scoring/Report Writing
- 2:00pm-5:00pm: Test Administration

#### **Friday:**

- 9:00am-5:00pm: Scoring, Report Writing, Research Projects

Clinical psychology interns will receive a stipend of \$22,500. Interns will also be eligible for health benefits, paid time off, and holidays as full-time employees. Funds will also be made available to interns for professional development, conferences, and trainings.

Upon successful completion of the program, a certificate is awarded by the Clinical Psychology Training Program at Autism Care Partners.





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### **Remediation and Grievance Policy**

The following procedures are established to meet the APA guidelines regarding progress of students in the internship program. APA (1979) standards for internships state: "Faculty have special responsibility to assess continually the progress of each student. Students who exhibit continued serious difficulties and do not function effectively in academic and/or interpersonal situations should be counseled early, made aware of career alternatives and, if necessary, dropped from the program. There should be specific advisement policies and mechanisms (including grievance and due process procedures) to handle academic problems, conflict situations, and problems related to expectations, interpersonal relations, and other areas."

Problems in a clinical psychology intern's professional or personal conduct can occur in many ways. Examples may include if a supervisor feels that a clinical psychology intern has significant deficiencies in skills or motivation, the intern is unable to function professionally because of emotional or substance abuse problem or physical illness. These stressors may be beyond the intern's control but prevent the intern from completing the internship training program or function clinically for a period of time. Should they occur, these stressors will be met with appropriate support and remediation in order to protect both the intern and the clients we serve.

The procedures described below are followed when supervisors observe that intern has a lack of sufficient knowledge or skills in order to carry out their duties as an intern; physical or emotional difficulties that are considerably affecting the intern's performance or the intern has demonstrated professionally inappropriate behavior. Should formal evaluations of intern's competence reveal any deficiencies or ongoing difficulties, this may trigger the Due Process procedures.

#### *Due Process*

If a problem is detected by a supervisor, the supervisor and the intern will discuss the problem and attempt to find a solution. If the supervisor and intern are not able to find a solution, the supervisor will inform the Training Coordinator, who will gather information in a manner so as to protect confidentiality within one week. The intern and their academic program will be informed in writing that the training coordinator is gathering information regarding the problem. If the training coordinator can suggest a solution that is agreed to by the intern and the supervisor, no further action will be necessary.

In the case of physical or emotional difficulties that are considerably affecting performance, the supervisor and training coordinator will determine whether the activities of the intern could potentially bring harm to patients and decide whether to temporarily suspend the intern's duties. Any decision to suspend the intern's duties will be documented in the intern's record.



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When appropriate, the training coordinator will support the intern in locating resources to deal with the difficulty and discuss timelines for resuming clinical duties with the intern.

If further remedial action is deemed necessary, a hearing will be held to allow the intern to hear and respond to concerns prior to decisions regarding remediation being made. Following the hearing, the Training Coordinator will develop a remediation plan and notify the intern, supervisors, and academic program in writing of the proposed remediation plan and potential consequences for lack of participation in the remedial plan. The written plan will include the problem, required actions by the intern, support necessary to complete the actions, and the timeframe in which the actions must be completed. The intern will be provided with a copy of the remediation plan and given the opportunity to provide feedback and request revisions to the remediation plan. A copy of this plan will be documented in the intern's internship file. The intern's progress towards the plan will be reviewed weekly to ensure the intern is taking necessary steps and has sufficient support. The plan will be updated as the intern shows progress in the remedial plan. Upon completion of the plan, if the problem is deemed resolved by the supervisor, no further action will be necessary.

If the problem has not been resolved, further remediation will be proposed and reviewed. If the intern does not then complete the remediation plan after an additional month of training, the Training Coordinator, supervisors, and Human Resources department will decide whether the intern will be granted additional, unpaid training opportunities in order to complete the plan or if the clinical psychology intern will fail to complete the internship. Interns may fail to complete the internship if the intern continues to lack necessary skills order to carry out their duties as an intern, physical or emotional difficulties that are considerably affecting performance continue, or the intern has continued to demonstrate professionally inappropriate behavior despite participation in the remediation plan or if the intern fails to complete the remediation plan in the time given. If the determination is made to terminate the intern from the internship program, they will be required to complete any incomplete documentation. The intern will be able to receive credit for hours obtained prior to the date of creation of the remedial plan.

The intern has the right to appear before the Training Coordinator and supervisors to appeal a decision regarding remediation and termination. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Training Coordinator within 3 business days of the decision. The intern will then appear before the Training Coordinator and Regional Vice President to appeal a decision within one week of submitting their written notice. The intern has the right to involve other individuals in their appeal meeting to present upon their behalf. Decisions regarding the intern's appeal will be made by the Training Coordinator and Regional Vice President with Human Resources support if necessary. Decisions will be based on results of prior attempts to resolve the problem by the intern and involved staff members as well as the intern's ability to adhere to the internship standards in question. The decision will be sent in writing to the intern and intern's academic program within 3 business days following the intern's appeal meeting.



Should there be a conflict of interest where the person of concern is the Training Coordinator, the steps of due process will be followed by the Regional Vice President.

### Grievance

Interns may file a complaint when they observe that a supervisor possesses insufficient knowledge or skills necessary to carry out their duties, physical or emotional difficulties that are considerably impacting their performance, or if the supervisor has demonstrated professionally inappropriate behavior. Interns may also file a grievance regarding any element of the training program deemed unsatisfactory by the intern. Grievances may be filed at any time for any reason during the internship.

If a problem is detected by an intern, the intern and the supervisor will discuss the problem and attempt to find a solution. If the intern and supervisor are not able to find a solution, the supervisor will inform the Training Coordinator, who will gather information in a manner so as to protect confidentiality. Should the intern feel uncomfortable discussing the problem directly with the supervisor, the intern should inform the Training Coordinator orally. If the Training Coordinator can suggest a solution agreed upon by the intern and the supervisor, no further action will be necessary.

If further action is necessary, the Training Coordinator, Regional Vice President, and Human Resources will decide whether any disciplinary action is necessary based on criteria outlined in the Staff Handbook regarding poor performance of professional duties. It will then be decided if a remediation plan will be developed. If the intern does not feel comfortable continuing with the supervisor, an alternate supervisor will be assigned to the intern. Progress towards the plan will be reviewed at weekly intervals in the plan to ensure the supervisor is taking necessary steps and has sufficient support. Upon completion of the plan, if the problem is deemed resolved by the Training Coordinator, no further action will be necessary. If the problem has not been resolved, further remediation will be proposed and reviewed, or suspension of intern supervision privileges is made. If a supervisor disagrees with a decision, he or she may appeal in writing to the training coordinator and Regional Vice President within 3 business days of the decision. The supervisor may then appear before the Training Coordinator and Regional Vice President to present their appeal. The final decision regarding the appeal will be provided to the supervisor in writing within 3 business days of the appeal meeting. In the event of professionally inappropriate behavior, Human Resources will determine necessary actions.

In the case of physical or emotional difficulties that are considerably affecting performance, the training coordinator and Regional Vice President may request that the supervisor's clinical training activities be suspended. When appropriate, the Training Coordinator will support the supervisor in locating resources to deal with the difficulty and discuss timelines for resuming supervision duties.



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Should the intern have any grievances with internship policies and procedures or any other aspect of the internship training, the intern should contact the Training Coordinator who will follow similar due process steps to address the intern's grievance. This process will include meeting with the intern to discuss the problem and attempt to determine a solution. Should the Training coordinator be unable to determine a solution, the Training Coordinator will consult with the Regional Vice President and Human Resources department in order to determine a solution depending on the nature of the grievance.

Should the grievance be directed towards the Training Coordinator, the steps regarding the grievance process will be followed by the Regional Vice President.