

GENDER HEALTH CENTER INTERN/TRAINEE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

NATURE OF AGENCY/POPULATION SERVED

GHC offers sliding scale individual, relational, and family counselling in English and Spanish, with an emphasis on gender and sexuality. Although we specialize in serving the transgender community, our counselling services are available to everyone: 40% of people served are transgender, 30% are LGBQ and 30% are cis-gender and straight. Our intern counsellors provide approximately 200 sessions of counselling each week; 80% of sessions are provided for 10\$ or less, and no one is turned away for inability to pay. GHC also provides clearance letters, which are typically a costly and cumbersome requirement for transgender people to obtain prior to qualifying for gender-affirming treatments.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY:

GHC is committed to providing low-barrier counseling services to meet the mental health needs of transgender and LGBQ persons as an act of social justice. As specialists in gender and sexuality, counsellors are trained in Queer-Informed Narrative Therapy, a post-modern approach to counselling that separates the person from the 'problem', honors clients' preferred narratives, and challenges dominant cultural assumptions about gender and sexuality. Queer-informed Narrative Therapy also recognizes the historic and ongoing legacies of violence perpetuated by psychiatry and medicine against LGBTQ persons, and seeks to redistribute power in the therapeutic relationship by inviting clinicians into reflective practices that privilege community member's lived expertise over that of the clinician.

Queer-Informed Narrative Therapy supports GHC's stance of anti-pathologization pertaining to gender and sexual minorities. We are committed to supporting our community's rights to self-determination, including access to health and mental healthcare, while at the same time we take a formal stance against diagnoses pertaining to gender and sexuality. We believe that every person should have the right to access life affirming care, and our team advocates at the systems level to ensure that people are able to access the care they require.

Additionally, GHC utilizes Feedback Informed Treatment (FIT), an evidence-based approach to monitor changes in community member wellbeing and the therapeutic alliance. FIT provides a structure for soliciting feedback from community members about the therapeutic process with the expectation that clinicians will individualize services by integrating community member feedback into care, from the very first session.

DIRECT/INDIRECT SERVICES

Gender Health Center offers a variety of services to community, including individual, relational, and group counseling, drop in counseling, respite programming, harm reduction services, advocacy, healthcare services, and legal services. Counselors are expected to assist their community members in accessing these additional services, and serve as the point person for community members who are receiving counseling.

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Gender Health Center uses Queer Informed Narrative Therapy, and offers extensive training in this area. Regardless of personal style, all counselors will work with crisis intervention, and provide LGBTQIA affirmative/specific services in a competent and appropriate manner. Training on this is also provided.

SUPERVISION

One hour of individual supervision and two hours of group supervision each week is required – and provided - for interns and trainees. Individual supervision is provided primarily by licensed mental health professional volunteers.

All supervision groups are facilitated by Dr. David Nylund, and are conducted four times a week:

Monday and Wednesday from 7pm-9pm
Tuesday from 9am-11am
Thursday from 10am-12pm

Group supervision is required by **every** person who sees community members at Gender Health Center, regardless of school or licensing status. Group supervision is **assigned**, and you may not choose which group you attend after your group has been assigned. If at any point you must change your group supervision time, you must seek approval from the Mental Health Program Manager, and a switch is **not** guaranteed. You should assume that your first assigned group supervision time will be the only time available to you.

TRAINING

Our required CORE Training is offered twice a year: once in May, and once near the end of August/beginning of September. Initially, training provided includes trainings on Narrative Therapy, Feedback Informed Treatment, LGB/Queer identities and responsiveness, Racial Justice, agency/departmental policies and procedures, etc. In addition, two hour supplemental trainings, as well as two hour classes on Narrative Therapy, are provided weekly. There is an additional Advanced Narrative Therapy classes provided during this same time slot in the New Year. The days, times, and topics of these will be made available on the In House Training Schedule page on the GHC Wiki.

TIME COMMITMENT

A 9- or 12- month commitment and a minimum of approximately 15 - 20 hours a week (inclusive of supervision) is expected from interns and trainees. This is because **all interns and trainees must maintain a caseload from which they see no less than 10 community members a week**, as well as allowing time for supervision and notes. Post-graduates, which may periodically be brought on, are expected to agree to a minimum of six months volunteering with Gender Health Center, and must maintain a caseload from which they see **no less than 5 community members a week**. This usually ends up looking like an 8 -12 hour a week commitment.

For interns/trainees who will graduate from their programs prior to the end of the standard 9- or 12- month commitment, whether they will finish their time with us at the time of graduation, or at the end of the 9- or 12-month period will be determined as soon ahead of time as possible. Interns for whom this is anticipated should seek consultation with mental health staff sooner rather than later.

REQUIRED ATTENDANCE/HOURS OF OPERATION

Required times for all interns include the initial CORE Training, and a minimum of 15 - 20 hours a week for clinical activities (sessions with community members, individual supervision, group supervision, and a clinical cohort).

Currently, Gender Health Center's hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM, and Saturday from 10am-6pm.

Students **must** be available to attend weekly trainings. For example, during the 2017-2018 academic year, these trainings occur weekly on Thursday from 2pm-4pm. Gender Health Center will announce any changes to this schedule as soon as we are aware that they are necessary. Unless you have been informed otherwise, please assume that these are the hours that you will be required to be on site for our intensive Narrative Therapy Seminar and our in-service trainings.

Individual schedules vary, and are established through negotiation with the Mental Health Program Manager.

Note: Group supervision slots are limited, and inability to attend group supervision through Gender Health Center will likely preclude someone from being able to continue seeing community members at Gender Health Center.

Every intern will be required to provide a certain number of hours staffing various events and/or clinical services. **This is mandatory**, and opportunities will vary depending on the timing of a placement.

Note: Individuals with erratic school or work schedules need to be able to identify and commit to the *same* hours every week.

VACATION

Gender Health Center closes for at least one week at the end of December. Additionally, most federal holidays are observed, as well as some additional holidays. This list will be made available on the In House Training Schedule page on the GHC Wiki.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Prospective trainees/interns/practicum/post graduate students must complete an application form, which includes a two-four page biographical statement (addressing their interest in becoming a therapist, as well as their particular interest in Gender Health Center as a training site, their interest in working with the transgender individuals, and to reflect on the impact of their own axes of privilege and oppression, and how this impacts their work as a clinician), after which interviews for selected candidates are scheduled.

Interviews are often held in small groups. We do not require you to provide additional documentation at the time or interview, nor do we require you to present yourself in a specific visual manner – in other words, dress as you are comfortable.

Applications are accepted December 1st through May 31st of each year. Because the selection process is highly competitive, it is recommended that applicants submit the required documentation prior to the established deadline(s).

Visit Gender Health Center's website/Mental Health Services page at www.thegenderhealthcenter.org for additional information, and to submit an application.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Transgender identified individuals, multilingual individuals, and people of color are especially urged to apply, as are others with the skills and knowledge to engage productively with diverse communities.

Please note that as a learner or volunteer at our organization, we expect you to be responsive to feedback in a variety of contexts. This will include examining your (race/gender/sexuality/religious/etc.) privilege(s), the ways it shows up in your work, how it impacts your community members, your peers, and others. While we do expect people to be continually learning around these topics, it is important that you be able to receive our feedback and critically incorporate meaningful change into your practice and time with us.

Note: The terms "intern" and "internship" are inclusive of trainees, interns, practicum students, and post graduates. The terms "traineeship", "internship", and "practicum" are used interchangeably.