

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 LGBTQ 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. Last year GHC provided clearance letters to over 100 people to facilitate access to life-affirming services such as surgeries, laser hair removal, and hormone therapy.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY:

GHC is committed to providing low-barrier counseling services to meet the mental health needs of transgender and LGBTQ 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.

DIRECT/INDIRECT SERVICES

Gender Health Center offers a variety of services to community, including individual, relational, and group 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 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 three times a week:

Monday from 6pm to 8pm, and

Tuesday from 12pm-2pm and 7pm-9pm.

TRAINING

Our required CORE Training is offered twice a year: once in May, and once near the end of August/beginning of September. Initially, approximately 40 hours of CORE Training are provided, and include trainings on Narrative Therapy, Feedback Informed Treatment, LGB/Queer identities and responsiveness, Racial Justice, agency/departmental policies and procedures, etc. In addition, two hour classes on Narrative Therapy are provided weekly on Mondays from 4pm-6pm. Periodically there are additional Advanced Narrative Therapy classes provided during this same time slot in the New Year.

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 maintain a caseload from which they see **no less than 5 community members a week**. This usually ends up looking like a 8 -12 hour a week commitment.

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. Students must be available to attend periodic in-service trainings. Currently, Gender Health Center's hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM. Individual schedules vary, and are established through negotiation with the Mental Health Program Manager. **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 a week at the end of December. Additionally, most federal holidays are observed, as well as some additional holidays.

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. **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.

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.