



MASTER'S LEVEL INTERNSHIPS AND PRACTICUM

Fall 2009

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About

DIDI HIRSCH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services was founded in 1942 as the Los Angeles Psychiatric Service, the first community-based, adult outpatient clinic in Los Angeles. Thirty years later, a social worker and ardent supporter of mental health services, Mrs. I. Kingdon (Didi) Hirsch, rallied community support and spearheaded fundraising to expand the clinic. Her work led to the construction of the center's main site in Culver City in 1974, and the agency was renamed in her honor. Over the past three decades, the agency has grown steadily, both in number of clients and breadth of services. In 1997, a merger was finalized with Family Service of Los Angeles (FSLA) which further expanded the Center's capacity.

Last year, Didi Hirsch served nearly 44,000 people at nine sites. With an annual budget of \$23 million, the agency employs approximately 350 staff and is an equal opportunity agency, actively committed to recruiting diverse staff and interns to serve the needs of our community and clients. The clients of Didi Hirsch reflect the cultural diversity of Los Angeles, and many of them rely on Medi-Cal or receive services through other sources of public funding.

Didi Hirsch offers a full spectrum of services, working with ethnically diverse clients of all ages (ranging from 4 to 90 years old), with a primary focus on children with serious emotional disturbance (S.E.D.) and adults with severe and persistent mental illness. Didi Hirsch serves clients mostly of lower socio-economic status (SES) who are insured under Medi-Cal or Healthy Families, as well as a limited number of indigent clients. Offering both mental health and substance abuse treatment among many others, services also include a 24-hour suicide prevention Crisis Line, crisis intervention, short-term counseling, school-based services, case management, a psychosocial clubhouse, intensive mental health treatment (also known as full service partnerships), crisis residential care, and residential care for women recovering from substance abuse and their children.

Didi Hirsch also 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.

About

MASTER'S LEVEL ADMINISTRATIVE INTERNSHIP

This internship is for students in the second year of an administrative (macro/COPA) MSW programs, or Masters in Public Health or Public Administration. We provide interns with direct, practical experience in program development and evaluation, and policy-making within a large, community-based organization. The program's emphasizes both the depth and breadth of the experience gained by interns, as well as the quality of supervision. With guidance from their supervisors, interns gain much knowledge and experience from our practical, hands-on approach. Interns are also given considerable responsibility in order to prepare them for more independent work during the course of their careers.

Interns are assigned to the Best Practices division, which encompasses the Quality Assurance and Outcomes departments. As members of the Best Practices team, interns work primarily at the Culver City (Sepulveda) site. However, they are expected to travel to other Didi Hirsch sites in order to gather information or to work on special projects. Within the Quality Assurance and Outcomes departments, interns participate in evaluating the agency's mental health and substance abuse services. Interns are extensively trained in the use of program assessment tools to assess client needs as well as the degree to which clients benefit by participating in the program, which rely on clinical outcomes as indicators.

Interns also assist in providing recommendations to improve services. The program evaluation results may be used to recommend organizational changes or develop a new program. Interns have the opportunity to take their program development one step further by writing a grant proposal in collaboration with the agency's Development department.

Interns also participate in many staff development activities, such as:

- Planning continuing education seminars and marketing them in the community.
- Conducting training needs assessments.
- Developing curriculum for staff/volunteer training.
- Assisting in the planning of an annual conference.
- Monitoring staff compliance with training requirements.

Other components of the internship include:

- Conducting a community needs assessment, which identifies the needs of the diverse communities that Didi Hirsch serves. This assessment may be used to recommend organizational changes or develop a new program.
- Designing outreach activities, conducting prevention activities in the community, and providing mental health consultation to other agencies, through our consultation, education and prevention program (CE&P).
- Representing the agency at community meetings.
- Participating in collaborations with other health service providers.
- Learning about the governance of the agency at management meetings.
- Monitoring compliance of licensing requirements.
- Participating in bi-weekly clinical seminars and workshops.

In addition, interns benefit from working closely with experts both within the various programs as well as within the Development department.

Starting the second week in September through early October, we offer an extended orientation to the agency. Interns must be available for a minimum of 18 hours a week, and be committed to our program for up to 9 Months. Interns have some schedule flexibility, but must be available all day Wednesdays. There are no weekend hours.

The mission of the Masters Clinical Internship and Practicum 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 community mental health agency. We believe that all future mental health professionals need to demonstrate competency in:

- Assessment, diagnosis and treatment of mentally ill or emotionally disturbed adults, adolescents and children utilizing evidence-based practices
- Ethical and legal responsibilities of mental health professionals
- Cultural/ethnic/gender-sexual orientation/religious/class diversity
- Professional and personal interactions with others
- Governance and funding of community-based agencies

Our interns work primarily within our Adult (including Older Adult) or Child and Family divisions. We provide direct, practical experience with the range of clients and problems found in a community mental health center. With intensive supervision and formal teaching presentations, interns gain much 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. Interns are also given considerable responsibility in order to prepare them for more independent work during the course of their careers.

There are two modes of supervision within the program structure:

Individual Supervision: Each intern has several supervisors, exposing them to different theoretical orientations and therapeutic styles, and receives at least one hour of individual supervision a week. As another form of supervision, Interns may also co-lead a therapy group with a senior staff therapist. In addition exploring clinical aspects of a case, supervision covers treatment plans, case management, and collaboration. Observation rooms and audiovisual equipment may also be used for direct supervision.

Intern Seminars and Group Supervision: This bi-weekly seminar focuses on professional development and addresses such issues as professional identity, ethical issues and development of his/her sense of self in the clinical hour. Interns also participate in staff meetings and weekly team meetings within in their chosen division.

During the course of the program, clinical interns gain:

Clinical Field Experience: Interns are assigned five to six cases in their primary program, for which they provide individual or family treatment, and may also participate in group treatment. Interns are given an intake assessment period during which they conduct the first psychosocial evaluation of a new client, which includes a DSM five-axis diagnosis. Cases are then presented to the team for treatment planning and assignment. Within the Child and Family division, duties include off-site activities such as school observations, IEPs and home visits. Interns also work with Crisis Intervention clients (in a four to six week model) or Short-term clients (ten to twelve week model).

Community Field Experience: Interns participate in our Consultation, Education and Prevention program (CE&P). This field experience component allows clinical interns to work in the community, leading prevention activities and providing services to non-clinical populations, community agencies, schools, or the community at large. The assignment is the intern's choice of a ten to twelve week psycho-educational group held in a school, in an after-school program or at another community site. Topics include Safe Dating, Improving Grades, Substance Abuse, or Parenting Skills. Other opportunities to meet the intern's specific interests include leading a reminiscence group in a nursing home or senior citizen centers, providing suicide prevention outreach, working with volunteers to reach out to minority communities in order to reduce the stigma of mental illness, and giving presentations to high schools about mental illness.

Training Experience: As part of supervision, interns attend general training seminars that cover a variety of topics such as crisis intervention theory and treatment, psychosocial assessment, and special intervention techniques. All clinical interns are also required to attend bi-weekly Continuing Education Seminars, which provide training on various mental health topics, such as trauma, cultural competency, legal or ethical concerns, specific treatment techniques (e.g., play therapy), treatment of special populations (e.g., HIV/AIDS patients, older adults), and updating clinical understanding of a specific mental disorder. Expert guest professionals and Didi Hirsch staff lead these seminars.

Placements

MASTER'S LEVEL CLINICAL INTERNSHIP AND PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICUM

FIRST YEAR PLACEMENTS

Adult Outpatient Division - Psychosocial Rehabilitation Program | Headquarters (Culver City) and Inglewood Center

This program, for adults with chronic mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, depression, bipolar and schizoaffective disorders, teaches social, vocational and daily living skills in a supportive environment. Activities include facilitating skills group, providing crisis intervention, and serving as a role modeling.

SECOND YEAR AND BEYOND PLACEMENTS

Adult Outpatient Division - Older Adult Team (optional) | Headquarters (Culver City)

The older adult team serves adults aged 55 and over, and their families. Services include individual, family, and group psychotherapy; psychological assessment; and case management. While interns usually provide some services to this program, those interested in working with a senior population may be assigned to the older adult team and include clients from this age group in their caseloads.

Adult Intensive Mental Health Services (Full Service Partnerships) | Headquarters (Culver City)

This program provides specialized services to adults with serious mental illness, which have led to frequent hospitalizations or homelessness. Diagnoses include schizophrenia, bipolar, major depressive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Staff members work with members in the community settings such as work, home, hospitals, and court to help them remain in the community and achieve the highest possible level of functioning. Staff members have small caseloads to ensure individualized attention to meet clients' needs, and services are provided multiple times a week if needed. Activities include conducting intake assessments, providing short-term therapy (12 weeks) in Solution Focus Model, coordinating with the treatment team (psychiatrist, case manager, nurse, psychologist), and providing group and individual therapy. They may also include providing crisis intervention and participating in a community prevention group.

Adult CalWORKS program | Inglewood Center

We provide assessment and mental health treatment for adults on public assistance, through a state program that helps reduce the barriers to employment and increase self-sufficiency. Activities include conducting intake assessments, providing short- and long-term therapy, coordinating with treatment teams, and providing group, family and individual therapy. They may also include participating in a community prevention group.

Emergency Services Division | Headquarters (Culver City)

This division handles all initial service requests to the agency, determines need, makes referrals, schedules intakes, and assigns crisis intervention and short-term counseling cases. The division also encompasses the Suicide Prevention Center (SPC) and the 24-hour suicide prevention Crisis Line. Interns in the adult emphasis carry a caseload of up to two short-term counseling cases through this division. Interested interns have also participated in SPC's community outreach programs or undertake program evaluation projects with SPC.

Family Division Outpatient Program | Inglewood Center

All Family Division program sites serve multiethnic populations. Services are provided to children up to 18 years old and their families. While the majority of children are diagnosed with disruptive behavior disorders, clients diagnosed with mood and/or anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders, and pervasive developmental disorders are not uncommon. A significant number of clients are children who have been victims of abuse, neglect, or trauma, and interns have an opportunity to work with this population. Interns are involved in child/family intake evaluations; comprehensive psychological assessments; individual, family, and group psychotherapy; and collaboration with schools and other community systems.

Seminars

FOR BOTH ADMINISTRATIVE AND CLINICAL INTERNSHIPS

The following is a partial list of seminars offered each training year:

Continuing Education Seminar Series

This series addresses the needs of licensed agency staff. Guest or agency speakers present twice a month on a variety of advanced topics related to issues in mental health service delivery or special client populations. Examples of topics recently addressed include immigration and acculturation issues in clinical practice, working with immigrant Latino families, mental health needs of African-Americans, PTSD, ADHD, working with children and adolescents with cognitive impairments, suicide assessment and prevention, and current methods of treatment for substance abuse. The seminar series also included information on psychopharmacologic treatments in child and adult disorders, legal and ethical issues, and current topics in clinical supervision.

Jacobson Model Crisis Intervention Course

This seminar series, offered in the beginning of the year, provides training in the crisis intervention model, preparing interns for their work using this model during the remainder of the internship year.

Early Psychological Intervention

This course refers to a body of psychological interventions designed to mitigate acute post-incident distress while not interfering with natural recovery processes. Interns receive training in helping people cope with traumatic community or school events. Following training, interns have the opportunity to co-lead crisis intervention responses in the community.