



VA Central Western Massachusetts Clinical Neuropsychology Practicum Training

Worcester Lake Avenue VA Clinic
55 North Lake Avenue
ACC - 7th Floor
Worcester, MA 01655
(413) 584-4040 x6651

Application Procedures:

Applications should include:

- Cover letter detailing your interest and experience related to neuropsychology
 - This can be sent either as a separate document or embedded within the application email
- CV
- A de-identified sample report, if available
- Two (2) letters of recommendation

Interested candidates should send application materials by e-mail to Lee.Ashendorf@va.gov.

Objectives:

The Neuropsychology practicum student obtains broad training experiences evaluating outpatient Veterans across the age spectrum. Consult questions are varied but most often include differential diagnosis of dementia, assessment of civil capacities, and evaluations of head injury, neuropsychiatric disorders, substance/alcohol abuse, medical/neurological disorders, and ADHD. Reports center on recommendations to improve day-to-day functioning and identification of appropriate consultation/treatment services. The practicum is designed to

prepare students for advanced training in neuropsychology and effective participation in care across multiple relevant professional contexts.

The overall goals of the practicum program include:

- (1) Develop and refine neuropsychological evaluation skills, with a focus on assessment, conceptualization, and report writing.
- (2) Broaden knowledge of neuropsychological domains and syndromes.
- (3) Enhance an understanding of and appreciation for military Veterans and military culture.

In response to the current pandemic we have also been conducting remote / virtual video evaluations. While we hope to have a fully functioning in-person clinic by the 2021-22 practicum year, it would be reasonable to expect some continued involvement in this alternative evaluation modality.

Program Structure:

Practicum training runs through the academic year, from September through June. The practicum week consists of 16-20 hours. Practicum students are generally expected to be on-site on Thursdays and Fridays, and additional time may be available on other days via remote access if needed. Any exceptions to this schedule need to be discussed prior to acceptance of the position. This is an outpatient clinic and is open only during daytime business hours, so supervised hours are only available between 8am-4:30pm.

VA orientation takes place on the first day of the training year. This is when students complete paperwork and receive their ID badges. The remainder of the first week will feature neuropsychology orientation. Trainees will be oriented to the site/facility, the electronic medical record, and clinic procedures. Neuropsychological assessment tools and procedures will also be reviewed / introduced.

Didactics:

The Worcester Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Seminar is operated in conjunction with the neuropsychology training program at the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Medical School. This is a lecture-format series that is operated by faculty from the VA, UMass, and the local community of neuropsychologists and allied health professionals. This series also includes a monthly internally-operated fact-finding seminar. We also have a monthly Worcester Lake Avenue psychology

journal club that is open to all psychology staff and trainees. Didactic training typically also includes a few off-site field trips to observe brain cuttings, to provide trainees with exposure to neuroanatomy and histopathology. Trainees have the additional opportunity to attend Psychiatry Grand Rounds at UMass on Thursdays.

Facilities:

The VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System provides primary, specialty, and mental health care to a population of more than 120,000 Veterans in central and western Massachusetts. The System includes Northampton's Edward P. Boland Medical Center, a 5-star facility with many inpatient and outpatient services, as well as five community-based outpatient clinics in Worcester, Springfield, Fitchburg, Greenfield, and Pittsfield. The Worcester Lake Avenue (WLA) clinic, which is the primary training site for the practicum, is scheduled to move into a brand-new building on the UMass Medical School campus in September 2021.

Clerical support is provided by the VA for all scheduling needs and materials/supplies. The VA and UMass libraries are available for use and provide electronic access to various collections of other research, university, and hospital libraries.

Expectations:

Students remain in good standing while on practicum if they are able to maintain acceptable minimum levels of engagement in training-related activities and demonstrate minimally acceptable levels of competence with regard to their work, as dictated by the expectations set forth by their graduate institution's training program. Successful completion of the program entails completion of the necessary hours as required by their program, in addition to achieving at least a satisfactory level of competency within the training areas relevant to the practicum position. In cases where there may be concerns regarding the student's level of functioning, the graduate program is directly involved in any possible remedial plan or intervention.

Students are allotted up to two weeks of vacation (no more than one week within any four-week period), which can coincide with school vacations if so desired.

Neuropsychology Practicum Training Staff:

Lee Ashendorf, Ph.D., ABPP-CN, is the Director of Neuropsychology Training and Coordinator of the WLA Neuropsychology Service. He received his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University at Albany, State University of New York, and completed a predoctoral internship in neuropsychology at VA Connecticut Healthcare System (West Haven). He also completed a 2-year neuropsychology postdoctoral residency at the VA in Bedford (Massachusetts). He worked briefly for a private group practice before returning to the Bedford VA as a staff neuropsychologist, where he was Co-Director of Neuropsychology Training. He has been with VA Central Western Massachusetts at the Worcester Lake Avenue Clinic since 2016. Dr. Ashendorf was a mentee of Edith Kaplan, adheres to the Boston Process Approach, and was the lead editor of the book, *The Boston Process Approach to Neuropsychological Assessment*. He holds several leadership positions in local and national neuropsychology organizations. He has over 25 publications and conducts research that mostly focuses on psychometric and validity topics in neuropsychological evaluation.

Bradley Brummett, Ph.D., is a neuropsychologist, Co-Director of Internship Training, and Coordinator of the Edward P. Boland VAMC Neuropsychology Service. He completed his clinical psychology Ph.D. in 2007 at Fordham University in Bronx, New York, with training in neuropsychology, substance abuse treatment, multicultural issues, and Schema Therapy. While completing his degree, he spent a year providing counseling services at a methadone clinic in the heart of San Francisco, and he lived overseas. Dr. Brummett completed a 2-year, clinical neuropsychology postdoc and was employed as a staff neuropsychologist at Kaiser Foundation Rehabilitation Center before moving back East to Massachusetts. He worked at VA Boston Healthcare System as a neuropsychologist and as a research scientist with the Translational Research Center for Traumatic Brain Injury and Stress Disorders (TRACTS). Dr. Brummett serves as a site-PI for two funded studies: one examining remote benefits counseling and another involving motivational interviewing approaches to pain management. He is actively involved with professional organizations such as the Massachusetts Psychological Association (member of the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs, former Director At Large).

Sarah Ward, Ph.D., ABPP-CN, is a board-certified neuropsychologist and Compensation & Pension psychologist. She earned her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Minnesota (Twin Cities Campus), where she

trained in neuropsychology and psychological assessment (including training at the Minneapolis VAHCS), and her research examined the genetic and environmental contributions to the development of psychopathology. She completed a pre-doctoral internship in clinical neuropsychology and serious mental illness at the Massachusetts Mental Health Center/Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. She completed her two year post-doctoral neuropsychology fellowship at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center/Harvard Medical School. She has been with the VA Central Western Massachusetts at the Worcester Lake Avenue Clinic since 2016. She divides her time between neuropsychological assessment and compensation and pension evaluations (psychiatric disability evaluations for Veterans seeking benefits through the VA). She also completes neuropsychological evaluations at a private practice in Cambridge, MA.