

The Psychology Service at Hines VA is committed to fostering and upholding an inclusive community that welcomes and supports individuals from all social identity groups. We believe a multi-pronged approach to creating an inclusive and supportive environment within the Psychology Service at Hines VA is essential. Some of the ways in which we seek to create an inclusive and affirming environment for all are:

- Cultivating and promoting an atmosphere of inclusion and acceptance, in which all individuals are supported and included within our work and professional environment.
- Welcoming honest and open discussion about issues in diversity.
- Incorporating diversity as a central component of our clinical training and didactics.
- Enhancing awareness of diversity issues and cultural competence through monthly case presentations for staff and trainees.
- Attracting psychology staff and trainees of diverse backgrounds to join our Psychology Service and our training programs at Hines VA.

Within our Psychology Service, our efforts to promote diversity are led by our **Psychology Diversity Committee** – a group of staff psychologists and trainees who coordinate and oversee continuing efforts to foster an atmosphere of inclusion, respect, and equality. The Psychology Diversity Committee serves the Psychology Service and the Mental Health Service Line (MHSL) in the following three primary ways:

1. Education and Training: Provide staff and trainees with opportunities to learn about and discuss a variety of diversity-related issues. These can include but are not limited to: trainings for staff and trainees, trainings specific to trainees, trainings specific to supervisors, CE training for staff, case conferences.
2. Consultation: Provide consultation to individual staff members, clinics, and/or programs around diversity issues as they relate to Veteran care. This can include but is not limited to: providing in-services/trainings to staff or Veterans in a clinic/program about a variety of diversity issues (e.g., microaggressions, language in the LGBT community) and helping staff find resources for Veterans (e.g., transgender support groups in Chicago).
3. Hiring: To assist in ensuring cultural and professional diversity among Psychology externs, interns, postdoctoral fellows, and staff. This can include but is not limited to: helping the Training Committee in recruiting diverse trainees and assisting the Psychology department in recruiting, hiring, and retaining diverse staff. In addition, the formal interview for Psychology applicants now includes questions related to diversity to ensure that we select candidates who are knowledgeable about and interested in issues related to diversity. It also sends a message to prospective candidates that diversity is important to us. Moreover, when feasible, a member of the diversity committee also serves on the interview panel. In this way, we place an added emphasis on the concept of diversity when recruiting new candidates.

The Psychology Diversity Committee also coordinates our **monthly Diversity Case Conference**. The Diversity Case Conference was implemented to provide an opportunity for staff and trainees to learn together about diversity issues that may not be commonly experienced in clinical rotations or seminars.

This monthly lunch-time presentation series is open to all psychology staff and required for all psychology trainees. Most typically, a staff member or a staff member and trainee will present a case that highlights an area of diversity. We strive to promote an open and non-judgmental atmosphere and active participation and discussion is encouraged from all attendees. Discussion focuses on the promotion of multicultural competence. Some of the topics discussed have included: the impact of race and disability during crisis intervention, spirituality in clinical practice, privilege, the intersection of disability, gender, and sexual orientation, diversity issues and body image; discussion of diversity issues in supervision, diversity considerations in the home care setting, the impact of internalized racism on case conceptualization and treatment, and issues that arise during discharge/termination of psychotherapy.

In the 2018-2019 year the **Diversity Seminar Series** was implemented for trainees. The Diversity Seminar Series is a sequentially structured series of seminars that meets bi-weekly from October through February and covers the 8 topics listed below. Staff members with expertise and interest in issues of diversity are invited to either present or participate in these seminars.

2018-2019 Diversity Seminar Series for Interns and Fellows

10/5/18: The Addressing Model. Kate Colangelo, Ph.D.

10/19/18: Understanding Intersectionality. Catherine Robertson, Ph.D.

11/2/18: Privilege/Exploring Self-Identity. Julia Rubinshteyn, Ph.D.

11/16/18: Cultural Competence in Evidence-based Care and EBPs for Diverse Populations. Annie Tang, Ph.D.

12/7/18: Race, Racism, and Oppression. Maurice Endsley, Ph.D.

12/21/18: Gender and Gender Roles in the Military and the VA. Justin Birnholz, Ph.D.

2/1/19: Spirituality in Diversity. Jonathan Hessinger, Psy.D.

2/15/19: Disability Diversity. Courtney Cornick, Ph.D.

Lastly, our service affords staff psychologists time to participate in hospital Special Emphasis Programs that address individual differences and focus on cultural diversity (Asian American/Pacific Islander Program, Black Empowerment Program, Federal Women's Program, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and Allies (LGBTQA) Program, Individuals with Disabilities Program, Hispanic Employment Program, and Native American Program). Psychology staff members are also encouraged to attend Psychology training program seminars that include many diversity focused topics as well as participate in such programming outside our service to promote continued enhancement of multicultural competence across professional domains. In addition, the service affords time for staff members and trainees to attend hospital-wide programming that raises awareness and celebrates diversity on a routine basis (e.g., Black History Month Celebration in February, Annual Diversity Picnic). Finally, competency in working with a wide range of age groups is incorporated in annual competency reviews of staff psychologists. These are mandated by hospital policy.

