



Fellowship Training at The Menninger Clinic

Overview

The Menninger Clinic is a not-for-profit private psychiatric hospital located on a beautiful 50-acre campus close to Houston's Texas Medical Center. Founded in 1925 by the Menninger family in Topeka, Kansas, The Clinic embraces a holistic, depth-oriented approach to mental illness and suffering. The Clinic relocated to Houston in 2003 to affiliate with Baylor College of Medicine and has carefully preserved its value of intensive, patient-centered care that integrates the art and science of psychotherapy. Menninger's commitment to excellence has earned it a national ranking in US News & World Report's Best Hospitals list for psychiatry for 30 consecutive years. In 2019, Menninger continues to specialize in providing intensive, individualized treatment for individuals with complex and treatment-resistant illness.

In joining The Clinic, trainees will be a part of a psychology tradition that has existed since the 1930s. The psychology fellow will work within the inpatient programs with sub-acute patients, spending their yearlong rotation on interdisciplinary teams, currently on the Compass or Hope programs. In both programs, the fellow provides individual psychotherapy and psychological assessments, co-leads process and psychoeducational group psychotherapy, meets with patients during weekly team rounds, and creates and integrates diagnostic formulations into treatment planning. The Compass Program serves young adults, ages 18-30, who are having problems managing the transition to adulthood. The Hope Program serves adults (ages 18+) who have found that their mental illnesses (i.e., personality disorders, mood disorders, substance abuse, etc.) have taken a toll on their relationships with themselves and others. Both units have a length of stay between six and eight weeks.

Assessment and Consultation

Modern approaches to psychological testing are indebted to the pioneering work of key psychologists (such as David Rapaport) at Menninger during the 1940s. Following this tradition, psychological testing remains highly valued at the clinic, as there is an emphasis on using assessment to gain a deeper and more nuanced sense of the patients' personality and struggles, especially when the treatment team is unable to answer clinical questions through interviews, observation, and standard clinical contact. For the year, the fellow will carry a caseload of two to three assessment cases at a time, and will be expected to use objective (i.e., MCMI-IV, MMPI-2), projective (i.e., Rorschach, TAT), cognitive (e.g., WAIS-IV) and neuropsychological measures (e.g., RBANS) measures. The fellow will share the results with patients, families, and the treatment teams. Additionally, fellows learn more about using collaborative assessment, a therapeutic approach to psychological testing that joins the patient and examiner as co-investigators in understanding the patients' dynamics and "stuck points" in treatment. Experience with test administration, interpretation, and integrated report writing is essential.

Psychotherapy

The Menninger Clinic's strength is in its identity as a therapeutic hospital. Rather than focusing solely on crisis and stabilization, the treatment teams work together to understand complex, treatment-resistant elements of patients' struggles. Menninger prides itself in its culture of therapeutic plurality; the theoretical orientation of the hospital itself is integrative, valuing and assimilating psychodynamic, attachment, and second and third-wave behavioral that access the patients' relational capacity as the primary mode of healing. Individual therapy is a key component in patients' growth in the hospital's therapeutic milieu. As such, fellows will hold a caseload of two to three psychotherapy patients, meeting two or three times per week.

Access to Diverse Populations

Menninger specializes in treating complex and treatment-resistant mental illness; the majority of our patients have experienced multiple hospitalizations and/or failed treatments. Many of these individuals usually suffer from an underlying or undiagnosed personality disorders along with depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders, and we frequently work with other mood and psychotic diagnoses. While most patients come from the United States, Menninger receives a fair number of patients who come from other countries. The Compass Program serves a significant number of patients who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender, as well as patients who may be questioning or exploring their sexuality and gender.

Research

Excellent clinical practice is enhanced by the ability to seamlessly and effectively integrate research and treatment. Research is an important part of Menninger's history, with many clinical advances developed through cutting edge clinical research. Trainees will have the opportunity to collaborate with Menninger and Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) researchers under the guidance of Dr. Rohr, the trainee research mentor. Dr. Rohr will help trainees to assess their level of research self-efficacy, identify a research question, and develop a plan to test the question.

There are several opportunities for trainees to answer their chosen research questions. Menninger collects data from all inpatients at admission, weekly, and just prior to discharge; this data includes variables assessing trauma, depression, anxiety, working alliance, attachment, psychological flexibility, emotion regulation, sleep, suicidality, and more. It also includes full SCID interviews and PID personality questionnaire data. This data is available to trainees who may have a research question that can be answered with it. Trainees have also completed quality improvement projects on campus and written case studies.

Full funding is available for trainees to present their work at a national conference; posters and paper presentations are highly encouraged. Depending on the time needed to produce the project and whether the project will be used as the mandated end-of-year fellowship project, research time may be available.

Researchers currently working at Menninger who may be available for collaboration include:

- Michelle Patriquin, PhD, ABPP: biological and objective precursors of mental illness and translating these findings into actionable clinical interventions
- Jessica Rohr, PhD: women's mental health issues, trauma and personality
- Katrina Rufino, PhD: suicide, sleep and nightmares, obsessive compulsive disorder, statistics and psychometrics

- Ramiro Salas, PhD: human brain imaging, especially with respect to study of drug addiction, depression, anxiety, autism and other brain disorders
- Raymond Cho, PhD: psychosis and noninvasive neurostimulation therapeutics
- John Oldham, MD, MS: personality disorders

Supervision

The theoretical orientations utilized at The Menninger Clinic are integrative, broadly and flexibly psychodynamic, with cognitive behavior therapy, family systems, and other skills-building and research-informed treatment approaches represented. Regardless of orientation, trainees typically receive assistance in the careful development of treatment formulations. Fellows will receive at least two hours of individual supervision per week (testing and therapy supervision) by various members of the psychology faculty. Patricia Daza, PhD, serves as the psychology fellowship training director at The Menninger Clinic.