

OVERVIEW OF PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICUM SETTINGS

Below are brief descriptions of local settings in which Psychology Practicum students may perform a Practicum. Actual availability of settings changes from year to year. Please discuss any questions you have about these with Dr. Leitzel.

Almost all of these settings require a car. A few settings are within walking distance of campus.

For each type of setting, we list a recommended number of Practicum credits and recommended background courses. Discuss these with Dr. Leitzel, especially if you seek an exception to these.

If you want to perform a Practicum outside the local region, or in another local setting, discuss that with Dr. Leitzel. Most of the placements described here are in Bloomsburg and the surrounding areas. The placement options that we have made arrangements with in other areas appear in a separate list following all of the Bloomsburg Area placement options. If you wish to complete your practicum elsewhere, at an agency not listed here, it is your responsibility to secure the agreement of the agency and supervisor where you are interested in completing your practicum. These arrangements should be made early in the process, as there is often some extra work involved to get an affiliation agreement in place between the placement site and the University.

School-Based Practicum Settings

School Counseling: We place Practicum students with school counselors in several elementary and middle schools, and one high school. They work with students who face a variety of challenges, including a recent stressful event, personal relationship issues, academic difficulties, emotional or behavioral problems, or psychological or educational disorders that require an individualized educational treatment plan. An advantage of the public-school setting is that a Practicum student sees almost the entire range of problems that children and adolescents face. Duties for Practicum students usually involve building informal mentoring relationships with students, performing classroom behavioral observations of individual students, assisting with classroom lessons on emotional topics or career plans, assisting with specific children in special education classrooms, assisting with standardized or individualized testing, and participating in professional team meetings to plan and evaluate how individualized educational plans are working. In a high school, there is more of a testing and career development focus. (Note: the school **psychologist** does individualized testing and leads educational planning; the school **counselor** does testing, counseling, classroom teaching, and helps with individualized educational planning.)

Recommended Practicum: at least 6 credits; some settings require or prefer more credits.

Recommended background courses: Early Child Development or Adolescent Development; Developmental Psychopathology; Community Psychology.

School Psychology: We place Practicum students with a few local school districts. Most of their work concerns children at the elementary level. School psychologists mostly perform individualized intellectual and psychological testing with children who seem to have a definable educational or psychological disorder, disability or challenge, or who may qualify for gifted-child classes. The psychologist then writes a report and leads a team of school professionals planning the educational interventions needed for that child. (Note: the school **psychologist** does individualized testing and leads educational planning; the school **counselor** does testing, counseling, classroom teaching, and helps with individualized educational planning.) Working with a school psychologist in a public school gives a Practicum student an overview of many major psychological and educational disorders that children face, and of tests to measure the impact of these for each child. Practicum students with a school psychologist usually observe and assist with some individualized testing, perform classroom behavioral observations of individual students, assist with specific children in special education classrooms, work with school counselors and special education teachers, and participate in professional team meetings to plan and evaluate how individualized educational plans are working.

Recommended Practicum: at least 3 credits; some settings prefer 9-12 credits.

Recommended background courses: Early Child Development; Developmental Psychopathology; Psychological Tests and Measurements.

School Outreach Coordinator: We place a few Practicum students with school outreach coordinators or blended program coordinators. These professionals link the mental health system with the school system, working mostly in middle and elementary schools and coordinating with school counselors and special education teachers. Their duties include individual and group counseling, often with children at risk due to stressful life events or family difficulties. They also do crisis interventions with individual students and home visits with families, and some classroom teaching on emotional topics. They are involved in individualized educational planning and interventions, but don't usually do testing.

Recommended Practicum: at least 6 credits.

Recommended background courses: Early Child Development; Developmental Psychopathology; Community Psychology.

School-Based Child Treatment Programs (DTAC-Danville or New Story School, Berwick): These are treatment programs for children (sometimes adolescents) with psychological (emotional and behavioral) disorders serious enough to require placement in an alternative school. In these programs, a Practicum student will assist with individual students in special education classrooms focused on behavioral treatment for academic and behavioral problems. Some classrooms focus on specific disorders, such as the autism spectrum or attention deficits and hyperactivity. Practicum students learn cognitive-behavioral treatment methods by working with individual children, and by participating in treatment assessment and planning under supervision of staff members, often including a behavioral specialist. These settings require patience, empathy, attention to details of the treatment plan, and assertive, firm communication.

Required Practicum: at least 6 credits; some programs require up to 12 credits.

Recommended background courses: Early Child Development or Adolescent Development; Developmental Psychopathology; Behavior Modification, or courses in Exceptionalities related to this work.

Other Practicum Settings: Children and Adolescents

Behavioral Treatment of Autism in the Home and Community (Garner Behavior Services (GBS) or Children's Service Center (CSC-Danville)): We place students with one agency that provides behavioral treatment of children and adolescents with disorders on the autism spectrum. This involves assisting a behavioral consultant who plans the treatments, and therapeutic support staff who implement these plans with individual clients and families. Practicum students assist with behavioral assessments and behavioral treatments of individual children in school and home settings, learning the skills of applied behavioral analysis and working with children on the autism spectrum. This experience requires skills in assertive, firm communication. (See above for school settings that also provide treatment of children on the autism spectrum.)

Recommended Practicum: at least 6 credits.

Recommended background courses: Early Child Development or Adolescent Development; Developmental Psychopathology; Behavior Modification, or courses in Exceptionalities related to this work.

Child Mental Health Casework Services in the Community (CMSU): We sometimes place Practicum students with a mental health agency that provides home visitation and intensive case management for families of children and adolescents with a variety of psychological disorders. Practicum students accompany child mental health caseworkers on home visits with parents and children, and observe children with a variety of psychological and behavioral disorders. Caseworkers *don't* conduct counseling or psychotherapy. Instead, they assess the child's needs, advise parents, and coordinate mental health and related services. Students who can spend most of their week in this agency can be given more responsibility in helping to assess children.

Required Practicum: at least 6 credits.

Recommended background courses: Early Child Development or Adolescent Development; Developmental Psychopathology or Psychological Disorders.

Women's Center Children's Program: The Women's Center in town in Bloomsburg serves women who are victims of domestic violence or sexual assault; women fleeing domestic violence are sheltered there, along with their children. The Women's Center children's program involves a few hours per week of group activities: recreational, educational, and sometimes discussion of emotional topics related to having witnessed or been direct victims of family violence. Unless they have already done so, Practicum students need to complete 60 hours of training by the Center (this is about one-

half of a 3-credit Practicum), including learning to perform take telephone crisis calls. The children's program requires skills in leading activities with children and assertive, firm communication.

Recommended Practicum: 3-6 credits.

Recommended background courses: Early Child Development; Psychology of Sex and Gender, Developmental Psychopathology.

Columbia County Children & Youth: Is a County child welfare agency which deals with children and families who have abuse and neglect issues. Students would complete tasks such as: Shadow each unit within the agency to observe the different tasks required and be able to explain how a case moves through the system; Review files to learn the documentation required for all aspects of the agency; Attend court hearings to observe agency interactions with the courts and parent attorneys; Be familiar with the laws which dictate the agency's operation (CPSL, Juvenile Act, etc); Assist caseworkers with completion of documentation of client and collateral contacts; Assist caseworkers with the formulation and completion of service plans for children and families; & Apply the code of ethics to any tasks completed within the agency.

Recommended Practicum: 6-15 credits.

Recommended background courses: Early Child Development, Adolescent Development, Developmental Psychopathology, Psychological Disorders.

Adolescent Treatment Settings

Adolescent Behavioral Treatment Programs: These programs offer cognitive-behavioral treatment for adolescents with emotional and behavioral problems, often psychological disorders such as conduct disorder, attention deficits and hyperactivity, and related behavioral problems. (These settings exclude clients whose primary difficulty is an eating disorder or a chemical addiction.) These programs may have daytime or after-school treatment programs; clients live at home or in a foster care or group home. The programs emphasize cognitive-behavioral group treatment, treatment goals and behavioral incentives for change, and client accountability for actions. There are some opportunities to observe sessions with families. Practicum students participate in treatment groups and in team meetings related to client goals and progress. Practicum students eventually lead structured discussion groups and help conduct intake interviews. These settings require patience, empathy, attention to details of the treatment plan, willingness to enforce rules, and assertive, firm communication.

Required Practicum: 9-15 credits.

Recommended background courses: Early Child Development or Adolescent Development; Developmental Psychopathology or Psychological Disorders; Behavior Modification.

Secure Treatment of Juvenile Delinquency: North Central Secure Treatment Unit (NCSTU) is a juvenile prison that provides treatment and education for juveniles with serious criminal records, whom a judge referred to this specialized program. There are special residential units for treatment of addictions and psychological disorders as well as units with a variety of residents. Most units are for men; there is one women's unit. The best Practicum opportunities are in after-school programs that occur after 3 pm. This is a prison, but students are to be accompanied by staff at all times. This setting requires assertive, firm communication skills.

Recommended Practicum: 3-6 credits.

Recommended background courses: Criminal Justice courses; Adolescent Development; Psychological Disorders or Behavior Modification.

Settings for Working With Adults

Danville State Hospital (DSH): This is a psychiatric hospital for long-term treatment of adults with serious mental disorders/illnesses. We place students in the Therapeutic Recreation program at DSH. Practicum students there learn to plan and lead recreational activities to support consumer interaction and social skills, including music, games, and arts and crafts. (Some Psychology majors have assisted with these activities at DSH prior to a Practicum.)

Required Practicum: 3 credits. *Recommended background course:* Psychological Disorders.

Sunbury Partial Hospitalization Program: This program offers daily group therapy and activities for persons with serious mental disorders/illnesses, who are living in the community but need intensive daytime treatment. Practicum students

participate in group therapy and learn to lead structured group discussions and activities, and write treatment notes each day. This setting is an excellent place to learn group leadership skills with adults with mental disorders. It is operated by Community Services Group (CSG). It is a 40-minute drive from campus.

Required Practicum: 6-12 credits. *Recommended background course:* Psychological Disorders.

CMSU Community Mental Health Programs: We place several Practicum students with CMSU, the community mental health agency for this region, for working with adults with a variety of mental/psychological disorders in the community. These include the Recovery Central and Outlook programs, in which consumers (with staff help) choose activities to promote their own recovery, including recreational, social, educational, and skill-building programs. Recovery Central focuses especially on preparing for independent living, education and employment. Another CMSU Practicum setting is Adult Intensive Case Management, in which Practicum students assist staff with home visits and case management duties for consumers needing more intensive help. All of these settings offer valuable learning experiences with adults with a variety of disorders who are pursuing recovery and living in the community.

Required Practicum: at least 6 credits.

Recommended background courses: Psychological Disorders; Community Psychology.

Women's Center Medical/Legal Advocate: The Women's Center in town in Bloomsburg serves women who are victims of domestic violence or sexual assault. Their Medical Advocate works with health care settings to educate their staff about domestic violence and sexual assault, to improve their services for these victims, and to advocate for individual clients with these agencies. The Legal Advocate assists Women's Center clients with legal matters and works with court systems and district attorneys. Practicum students assist with these duties.

Required Practicum: 3-6 credits.

Recommended background courses: Psychology of Sex and Gender, Psychological Disorders; Community Psychology.

Residential Treatment of Substance Addictions: We place students in a residential (inpatient) addictions treatment center. Its treatment approach closely follows the Twelve-Step philosophy of Alcoholics Anonymous. Residents usually stay in the treatment setting for 4-6 weeks. Practicum students participate in group counseling and group discussions of the Twelve Steps, and eventually lead one of those discussion sessions (not group therapy). They also assist with intake interviews, and learn to conduct these and write reports on the findings. They also assist with supervision of resident behavior outside of treatment meetings, and can observe weekend treatment sessions. This setting requires assertive, firm communication individually and in groups. It is a 40-minute drive from campus.

Recommended Practicum: 6-12 credits.

Recommended background courses: Psychological Disorders.

Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities: We place some Practicum students interested in aging or gerontology in these residential facilities for frail, usually older adults. Nursing homes provide more nursing care and are for persons with more severe physical or mental disabilities. Assisted living facilities provide nursing services for persons unable to live at home but whose disabilities are moderate. In both types of settings, Practicum students assist with group recreational and social activities, and learn to plan and lead these. They also visit individual residents, and may assist with other activities.

Recommended Practicum: 3-9 credits.

Recommended background courses: Adulthood & Aging, Principles of Gerontology, Psychological Disorders.

Area Agency on Aging: We place some Practicum students interested in aging or gerontology in this agency, which provides a variety of services for older adults living in the community. These services include daytime senior center programs and home visits to assess client needs for specific help. Practicum students interact with senior citizens in the community, either learning how to conduct home visits and needs assessments, or to plan and lead educational and social activities in senior centers.

Recommended Practicum: 6-12 credits.

Recommended background courses: Adulthood & Aging & Principles of Gerontology.

Services for people with Intellectual Disabilities: This placement would be with Suncom Industries, an agency that helps people with developmental and physical disabilities improve the quality of their lives. Their goal is to provide the vocational training and skill development for individuals to grow to their fullest potential. Services support, educate and empower people with disabilities to be employed and live full and independent lives filled with everyday joys and accomplishments. Suncom's mission is to promote socialization and provide vocational assessment, training and employment opportunities to enable persons with disabilities to fulfill their greatest potential within the community. Suncom has a site in Bloomsburg as well as multiple sites in the Northumberland/Sunbury area. More information about the agency and their programs can be found at www.suncom.org.

Recommended practicum: 6-12 credits

Recommended courses: Introduction to Individuals with Exceptionalities (SPECED 101), Behavior Modification, Developmental Psychopathology

Geisinger Medical Center/Health Plan placements (Multiple settings)

1. Community Health Assistant

A Community Health Assistant (CHA), also known as a Community Health Worker, is a non-clinical extension of the Care Team that interacts with members and patients in their homes, doctors' office, and the community. CHAs work with patients to identify resources needed such as reliable transportation, medication assistance, secure housing, which can allow for improved access to quality healthcare. This opportunity offers students a valuable career experience and the chance to enhance what they are learning in the classroom with direct exposure to the healthcare environment. Students will be visiting patients at home or at Geisinger clinics (this can include up to 1 hour of traveling). Students will have the opportunity to close care gaps, a critical part of improving overall quality and patient outcomes through care coordination. At the conclusion of the program, students will be able to successfully identify care gaps closed.

2. Other Opportunities

We have occasionally been able to place students at the behavioral health unit at Geisinger Bloomsburg Hospital or with Psychologists at the main behavioral health unit at the main Geisinger campus in Danville. These placements can be more difficult to arrange, as these settings prefer to take graduate student interns, but especially if you have made some sort of connection with someone at either institution through volunteering or other means (NOT by seeing someone for treatment, that would be a dual relationship, which is unethical), we can try to set something up in these settings.

Criminal Justice Related placements (all working primarily with adults)

Correctional Facilities (Prisons)

SCI Muncy - Placements with the Psychology service at SCI Muncy, a PA State prison for women, can be arranged.

FCI Allenwood – Practicum placements with the Psychology service at FCI Allenwood. This facility is a complex of Federal prison facilities, with a number of different institutions located at the Allenwood complex.

Columbia County District Attorney's Office Victim Witness Unit – this placement involves working with staff from the DA's office to support victims and witnesses throughout the trial process.

Columbia County Treatment Court – this placement involves working with the treatment court program, which is a diversionary program aimed at assisting those who have found themselves in the criminal justice system as a result of substance abuse or mental health issues to obtain appropriate treatment for the condition which contributed to the offense which placed them in the court. Successful completion of the program typically results in dismissal of the charges.

Placements outside the Bloomsburg Area

Children's Service Center (CSC) of Wyoming Valley

Children's Partial Hospitalization Program

335 South Franklin Street

Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702-3897

The Partial Hospitalization Treatment Program provides a range of therapeutic activities to help students stay with their families and to minimize the need for placement in more restrictive environments such as inpatient or residential settings. The Partial Hospitalization Treatment Program promotes stabilization of mental health symptoms, encourages appropriate behavior within a supportive educational setting, and provides the opportunity for youth with serious emotional disturbances to function to the best of their ability.

Population Served: This program serves children and adolescents who are between ages 4 and 18 and who are in need of more intensive treatment than can be provided in an Outpatient setting. The children enrolled in this program have been unable to succeed in their school placements and have been determined to need a more intensive treatment program. Although the program has an educational component and is designed to replicate a classroom setting, the primary focus is to promote a therapeutic setting with a variety of mental health interventions. The program runs year round.

Services: The Partial Hospitalization Treatment Program integrates psychiatric, psychosocial, and educational services for children in need of an intensive, structured and therapeutic setting to stabilize mental health or behavioral symptoms while living in their home setting. Service is provided 5 days a week and includes the following components:

- The client and his or her family
- Psychologists
- Behavioral Specialist Consultants
- Master's level clinicians
- Bachelor's level therapeutic staff support workers
- Case managers
- Collaborative agencies
- Educational staff

Consistent with our private special education school license, the services offered will be prescribed by and carried out in accordance with each child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). All children entering the program receive a diagnostic assessment that includes a psychiatric evaluation, an educational assessment and a biopsychosocial assessment. Each child will have an individualized plan developed with their family's involvement to support improving their emotional health and promoting the highest level of functioning. Collaboration with the schools and a well-coordinated discharge plan will be completed to ensure a successful return to school when the child is ready. The average length of stay is approximately three months but can vary with each child.

Catholic Social Services Wilkes Barre, PA, and other locations (limited services in Bloomsburg Area)

Provides a variety of services in Wilkes-Barre, Hazelton, Stroudsburg, and Bloomsburg (in addition, affiliated programs in Scranton area)

33 East Northampton St.
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701

In Bloomsburg, the main program they run currently is Big Brothers/Big Sisters. The program here in Bloomsburg, they work with about 75 cases annually. They have petitioned their national organization to allow them to start offering programming in Montour, Snyder, Union, Lycoming, and Northumberland Counties.

In Hazelton, foster care and adoption services are offered, along with general counseling services.

In Stroudsburg area (Pike and Monroe Counties) primary services offered are Big Brothers/Big Sisters and drug and alcohol.

In Wilkes-Barre/Wyoming Valley, they offer the broadest range of programs, including Big Brothers/Big Sisters, criminal justice, both pretrial programs and services for people in prisons and people out on bail, they provide services to drug court participants, general case management, they have children & youth services contracts, providing parenting programs and family preservation services, as well as housing programs and child welfare programs. They also do some things working in homes with senior citizens.

Could do paid practicum if eligible for work-study.

The Scranton Office also runs a similarly broad range of programs. These are under a different director. Main office in Scranton is 516 Fig Street, Scranton, PA 18505, Phone: 570-207-2283

Clinical Outcomes Group, Inc.(COGI)

Clinical Outcomes Group, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health of the community. Their focus is on behavioral health issues such as substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, tobacco, workplace wellness and family services. Placements can be arranged in the Pottsville area or at a variety of locations in the twelve County Northcentral PA region.

437 North Centre Street
Pottsville, PA 17901

Wellness Program (Currently only Pottsville area, planning to expand to Montour, Columbia, Northumberland, Snyder, & Union Counties)

The Wellness Program is designed to assist employers in maintaining a healthy and productive workforce by offering employees and immediate family members of employees rapid access to licensed health professionals who are able to assist individuals to effectively manage health, family, and personal issues. The Program also assists with creating employee programs that can increase employee health and reduce employer costs associated with unplanned employee leaves, absenteeism, sick time, staff turnover, early retirement, and workers compensation claims. A healthier workforce can be more efficient and increase rates of job and employer satisfaction.

Drug and Alcohol Counseling (Pottsville area)

Clinical Outcomes Group, Inc. offers adult substance abuse counseling on an outpatient and intensive outpatient basis (they are starting to offer adolescent services in 2016). They provide clients with a comprehensive assessment, treatment planning (including 12 step programs), referral, drug and alcohol education, individual and/or group counseling.

Their physicians use Suboxone and Vivitrol as part of a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach that will be used in conjunction with other recommended therapies. A student doing a practicum here would be able to experience completing assessments, formulating a treatment plan & carrying out a therapy session, with supervision.

Northcentral PA Tobacco Control Program across 12 Northcentral Counties, this program is working toward integrating tobacco control from a chronic disease perspective into an integrated wellness model, due to relationships with cancer, diabetes, and other conditions. A student in this placement could work with the coalition on shifting the focus from tobacco alone to overall wellness and assist with managing the expansion into an integrated wellness approach. Students might have opportunities to assist with grant preparation, e.g., RW Johnson Foundation or others.

Justice Works Youth Care

Provides community based services for delinquent and dependent youth. They also have an alternative education program, Compass Academy, located in both Williamsport and Mt. Carmel.

www.justiceworksyouthcare.com for details about their programs

Abraxas Youth & Family Services

Locations throughout PA and adjoining states. Harrisburg, Allentown, Pittsburgh, South Mountain, Morgantown, and Marienville, PA sites.

Abraxas offers specialized treatment options for youth with histories of delinquency, behavioral disorders, mental health and emotional disorders, substance abuse, firesetting, sexually abusive behaviors, and educational issues.

Dr. Leitzel also has connections with a number of provider agencies in the Scranton, PA area. Placements can be arranged at Scranton Counseling Center, a comprehensive community behavioral health/intellectual disabilities center and Friendship House, an agency providing a variety of therapy services for children and adolescents.