
Bridgewater State Hospital Postdoctoral Fellowship in Forensic Psychology



Program Handbook (2021 – 2022)

Contact Information for Fellowship Director:

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APPLICATION DEADLINE: January 15, 2021



MISSION AND VALUES

The Bridgewater State Hospital (BSH) postdoctoral fellowship in forensic psychology is designed to provide advanced training in the specialized area of forensic psychology, with an emphasis on forensic mental health assessment. The objective is to provide training in forensic psychology that is both empirically and practically relevant. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the forensic field, and its increasing expansion into other arenas of psychology, it is our philosophy that a proficient forensic psychologist not only exudes exceptional psycholegal competence but also embodies well-rounded abilities as a researcher and clinician. We believe these skills complement each other and achieve a holistic impact. With this in mind, our training model is designed to provide advanced educational, research, and practical training that will carry real-world professional benefits.

Upon completion of the program, fellows will have acquired the expertise to produce high caliber forensic reports and be prepared to pursue state licensure and board certification. Training satisfies the necessary postdoctoral supervision requirements for licensure in all states. Further, the program is designed to provide the necessary training and experience for certification as a Designated Forensic Professional (DFP), which is required by state regulations for the provision of public sector forensic mental health evaluations in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Lastly, it is our hope that trainees will go on to obtain board certification as a specialist in forensic psychology from the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP). In line with this goal, the fellowship is structured to mirror the Postdoctoral Training in Forensic Psychology Guidelines provided by the American Board of Forensic Psychology (ABFP) and was approved for the ABFP Experience Waiver in 2019 (approved until 2023). Our program seeks to produce alumni who will be leaders in the field and serve as some of the most exceptional practitioners in forensic psychology.

Bridgewater State Hospital

Bridgewater State Hospital (BSH) provides inpatient forensic evaluation services for men in Massachusetts and was established in 1855. BSH adheres to a recovery-oriented, trauma-informed approach to all persons served. Individuals housed at BSH undergo pre- and post-trial evaluations for the courts, including those for competence to stand trial, criminal responsibility, aid in sentencing, and need for civil commitment. Given its designation as a strict-security facility, BSH is often selected by the courts to manage the risk and treatment needs of individuals with extensive psychiatric and violent histories. The Massachusetts Department of Correction contracts with [Wellpath](#) to provide operations to the hospital.



FELLOWSHIP TRAINING GOALS AND REQUIREMENTS

Training Goals and Objectives

Given the wide range of practice and research areas in forensic psychology, the BSH fellowship emphasizes certain core competencies while providing as many diverse opportunities as possible. The program's philosophy is for these experiences to serve as a foundation from which expanded forensic practice can develop. Consistent with the Education and Training Guidelines for Forensic Psychology (Forensic Specialty Council, 2007), the fellowship's primary aim is to develop competent forensic psychological practitioners. By the conclusion of the fellowship year, fellows will be able to demonstrate core competency in forensic ethical principles, forensic mental health assessment (including familiarity with various specialized forensic instruments), forensic evaluation report writing, interdisciplinary communication and consultation, and fundamentals of mental health case law. The program achieves these training goals through various types of activities, described in detail below.

Applied Clinical Forensic Experience

The primary goal of the clinical portion of the fellowship is the development of skills necessary to conduct high-quality forensic mental health assessments. The fellowship program is designed to provide the fellow with exposure to a wide variety of evaluations in criminal and civil contexts. The types of evaluations a fellow will conduct include:

- Competence to stand trial
- Criminal responsibility
- Need for care and treatment/civil commitment
- Need for hospitalization of mentally ill prisoners
- Aid in sentencing
- Violence risk assessments

Consistent with current standards of best practice in forensic psychology, an emphasis is placed on learning specialized methods for evaluating psycholegal constructs, including utilization of forensically relevant instruments and expertise with various forensic assessment instruments. It is also likely that a fellow will be asked to testify as an expert witness on any number of his/her evaluations for the court. This is an advanced skill that we recognize few fellows will have had any experience. As such, a heavy emphasis is placed on testimony preparation through supervision and, when possible, legal practitioners. Additionally, ample opportunities will be provided for the fellow to observe forensic staff testifying in court.

Forensic Seminar Series

Another component of the fellowship consists of a two-hour forensic seminar series occurring every other week from September - June, which will take place at Bridgewater State Hospital. The seminar series is taught by various fellowship faculty and outside presenters. The purpose of the seminar is to provide the necessary empirical and theoretical knowledge to obtain certification as a Designated Forensic Professional (DFP) in the state of Massachusetts and, eventually, ABPP specialization in forensic psychology. Many readings are directly informed by the ABFP's "[Suggested Reading List for Written and Oral Examinations](#)" (June 2017) and will cover the seven categories of forensic psychology included on the ABFP written examination:

1. Ethics, Guidelines, and Professional Issues
2. Law, Precedents, Court Rules, Civil and Criminal Procedures, and Judicial Practices
3. Testing and Assessment, Examination Issues, and Application of Scientific Knowledge to Legal Procedure (e.g., eyewitness accuracy, reliability of memory, jury behavior, and factors influencing confession)
4. Civil Competence, Individual Rights and Liberties, Workplace Discrimination, and Employment Rights
5. Juvenile, Parenting, and Family/Domestic/Matrimonial Matters
6. Civil Damages, Personal Injury, Disability, and Workers Compensation
7. Criminal Competence, Criminal Responsibility, and Sentencing

The seminar also involves in-depth discussions about landmark legal cases relevant to the field of forensic psychology. Cases have been selected from the ABFP [suggested reading list](#), but will also include statutes, cases, and legal standards relevant to Massachusetts. The seminar also addresses general topics relevant to forensic practice, such as provision of expert testimony, job selection and application, and preparing for state licensure and ABPP specialization in forensic psychology. The seminar series is open to other trainees at Bridgewater State Hospital and hospital staff that wish to advance their knowledge of forensic best practice, the state of science in forensic psychology, and the current legal terrain. Wellpath/Bridgewater State Hospital has been approved by the American Psychological Association to offer Continuing Education (CE) credits to psychologists for this seminar series. Participants will be given a seminar schedule at the beginning of the fellowship year and provided with all readings.

Applied Research Experiences

In keeping with our philosophy that well-rounded forensic psychologists should maintain broad academic excellence, fellows are required to engage in research during their fellowship year (up to 20% of their time, if preferred). Fellows will work with the BSH Research Coordinator, the Fellowship Director, and the Director of Forensic Services on a research project of their choosing. Fellows may elect to participate in an ongoing research project at BSH (recommended for practical purposes), or pilot a project of their own. All fellows are expected to present the results of their research project to the BSH faculty at the conclusion of their fellowship year. Publication and presentation of the research project is encouraged and supported. In addition, fellows have the opportunity to supervise graduate research assistants, participate in monthly Research Committee Meetings at BSH, and assist with at least one manuscript/law reviews (as available). Finally, there will be opportunity to create and update research briefs for commonly utilized forensic assessment tools.

Expert Witness Workshop and Mock Trial

In January of the fellowship year, fellows may participate in the Harvard Law School's Trial Advocacy Workshop (if available). This is a joint-training exercise intended to provide law students with experience in examining and cross-examining mental health professionals, as well as an opportunity for fellows to gain experience in being an expert witness under simulated courtroom conditions. Instructors consist of trial lawyers, judges, and mental health professionals with years of legal and forensic mental health experience. The workshop lasts a full day and takes place on Harvard's campus.

In addition to the Trial Advocacy Workshop at Harvard, fellows will participate in a mock trial in the courtroom at BSH with the aid of volunteer attorneys and a judge.

Journal Club

In March of the fellowship year, fellows assist in the organization and implementation of Journal Club, a bi-weekly one-hour meeting open to all trainees and staff. Journal Club has several functions, including exposure to scientific work that is an essential part of being a competent forensic clinician, and to encourage trainees and staff to read and appraise science critically and apply to practice as appropriate. Articles are chosen based on their potential influence to clinical and forensic practice at BSH.

Conferences and Other Training Experiences

Fellows have the option to attend various professional conferences, including the annual conference of the American Psychology-Law Society (APLS). The fellowship provides three administrative leave days for conference attendance and includes an educational stipend to cover some of the expenses of conference registration and attendance. While not required, fellows are encouraged to submit proposals for papers or symposiums at APLS.

Additionally, fellows are required to attend a series of daylong workshops for forensic mental health professionals that are provided by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH). These workshops also satisfy the requirements for credentialing as a DFP in the state. Towards the end of the training year (June or July), fellows will sit for the written DFP examination also required for credentialing as a DFP in the Commonwealth.

Fellows are also required to present one case conference during the training year, as well as the results from the yearlong research project.

STIPEND AND BENEFITS

The program is funded through the partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Correction and Wellpath. The fellowship aims to hire two full-time Forensic Psychology Fellows for the 2021-2022 term, which begins on September 7, 2021. The stipend for the twelve-month appointment is \$55,000.00. Fellows will be provided with a package of benefits upon starting the program, in addition to an educational stipend and paid time off (PTO).

SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION

Supervision

According to the Association of State & Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) Supervision Guidelines (2015), supervised practice is critical to the training and practice of psychologists. Furthermore, the APA has recognized supervision as a distinct clinical competency for postdoctoral training (APA Committee on Accreditation, 2016). In keeping with this view, our program has a specific vision for supervision and strives to provide the highest quality of supervision and evaluation for fellows.

The amount and type of supervision provided during the fellowship year is designed to satisfy the licensing requirements in all states and adheres to the ABFP's postdoctoral training guidelines. At the least, fellows are provided with the following supervision experiences:

- Supervision is provided by a licensed psychologist who is also a Designated Forensic Mental Health (FMH) Supervisor for all forensic evaluations conducted at BSH
- Two and a half hours of face-to-face supervision per week
- One hour of forensic group supervision per week

Supervision serves multiple functions throughout the fellowship year. First, the supervisor will facilitate the fellow's understanding of foundational clinical forensic principles (e.g., professional ethics, forensic mental health assessment) through direct observation and frequent consultation. Second, supervision will guide the integration of forensic knowledge acquired in didactics into the fellow's forensic practice. Third, the supervisor will ensure the fellow has acquired the necessary assessment skills for conducting forensic evaluations of the highest quality. At the very least, this will involve an emphasis on enhancing report writing skills, ethical decision-making, and forensic conceptualization. Fellows are expected to become gradually more autonomous throughout the fellowship year, with the aim of achieving professional independence and being prepared to provide high-quality supervision in forensic psychology themselves.

Evaluation

The program includes a formal written evaluation process that outlines the fellow's progress during the postdoctoral year. These evaluations will identify the strengths and limitations of the fellow's skills as a forensic psychologist and occur quarterly.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

All applicants must be U.S. Citizens and have completed the requirements of an APA accredited Ph.D./Psy.D. program in clinical or counseling psychology by the start of the fellowship, including the defense of their dissertation and successful completion of an APA accredited internship. Applicants of diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

The following application materials are required:

- Curriculum Vitae
- Three letters of recommendation (at least one from your graduate advisor and one from an internship supervisor) directly emailed to Dr. Young from your letter writer

- A statement of purpose (1-2 pages) on your experiences with forensic psychology and the reason you are applying to the fellowship program
- A sanitized clinical assessment/forensic evaluation will be required at a later point for those applicants invited for an interview

Please email all materials to Dr. John Young at Joyoung@Wellpath.us by **January 15, 2021**.

[NOTE: BSH is participating in the Uniform Acceptance Date (UAD) process for forensic fellowships. This is distinct from the Uniform Notification Date (UND) established by the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC). Although offers may be extended prior to the UAD, applicants will not be required to accept an offer prior to this date.]

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FACULTY SKETCHES

Core Forensic Staff at Bridgewater State Hospital

Natalie Armstrong-Hoskowitz, Ph.D.

Forensic Evaluator/BSH Research Coordinator

Education: Sam Houston State University

Internship: Eastern Virginia Medical School

Postdoctoral Fellowship: Medical University of South Carolina

Research and Clinical Interests: Public policy, trauma, at-risk youth, the empirical validity of the MMPI-A-RF, mitigating institutional violence

Michael Burke, Psy.D.

Forensic Evaluator

Education: William James College

Internship: NYU-Bellevue Clinical Psychology Internship Program

Research and Clinical Interests: Intersections of forensic assessment and clinical intervention; systemic impediments to inpatient discharge; use of internet-based data sources in forensic assessment.

David Holtzen, Ph.D.

Forensic Evaluator/Neuropsychologist

Education: Boston College

Internship: The New England Memorial Hospital

Postdoctoral Fellowship: The Cambridge Hospital/Harvard Medical School

Research and Clinical Interests: Fitness-for-duty evaluations, forensic supervision and training, neuropsychological assessments

Sara Laniado, Psy.D.

Forensic Evaluator

Education: Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education & Psychology

Internship: Mendota Mental Health Institute

Postdoctoral Fellowship: Forensic Community Treatment Program – Gateways Hospital & Mental Health Center

Research and Clinical Interests: Forensic and neuropsychological assessment

Joshua Lapin, Psy.D.

Forensic Evaluator

Education: Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education & Psychology

Internship: Federal Correctional Complex – Butner

Postdoctoral Fellowship: University of Massachusetts Medical School

Research and Clinical Interests: Child witness testimony (effects of support on stress/accuracy and jurors' perceptions), plea bargaining in the juvenile justice system, forensic and neuropsychological assessment, trauma-focused treatment

Jennifer McAllister, Psy.D. (FMH Supervisor)

Director of Forensic Services

Education: Pacific University

Internship: Kane County Diagnostic Center

Postdoctoral Fellowship: Linden Oaks Hospital

Research and Clinical Interests: workplace factors that influence violence, employee characteristics affecting violence, cultural factors and barriers to treatment

Carla Munoz, Ph.D.

Forensic Evaluator

Education: Sam Houston State University

Internship: Patton State Hospital

Postdoctoral Fellowship: University of Massachusetts Medical School

Research and Clinical Interests: Multicultural issues in violence risk assessment, psychopathy, and cultural factors in malingering assessments.

Jessica Surrett, Ph.D.

Forensic Evaluator

Education: John Jay College of Criminal Justice (MA); Palo Alto University (Ph.D.)

Internship: Federal Bureau of Prisons- Federal Correctional Complex – Butner, N.C.

Postdoctoral Fellowship: Minnesota State Operated Forensic Services, St. Peter, MN

Research and Clinical Interests: Violence risk assessment, stalking, psychological testing, and therapeutic assessment

Alyson Theeman, Psy.D.

Forensic Evaluator

Education: John Jay College of Criminal Justice (MA in forensic psychology); William James College (Psy.D.)

Internship: Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital

Research and Clinical Interests: Treatment and assessment of mental illness and problematic sexual behavior

John Young, Psy.D. (FMH Supervisor)

Associate Director of Forensic Services; Fellowship Director

Education: William James College

Internship: Federal Bureau of Prisons- Federal Correctional Complex – Butner, N.C.

Postdoctoral Fellowship: University of Massachusetts Medical School

Research and Clinical Interests: Police training on responding to persons with mental illness; specialty courts; competence restoration