



Aims and Objectives

The population of NSW is becoming increasingly diverse. Data from the 2006 Census indicate that 23.8% of the population of NSW was born overseas, and 21.3% of the population of NSW speaks a language other than English at home. For this reason, it is essential that mental health professionals and counselors are equipped to work effectively with clients from non-English speaking, as well as English speaking backgrounds.

The TMHC Psychology Intern Program (the Program) commenced in 1999. It is the only known Psychology Intern program in NSW to have as a primary focus the training of Psychology Interns to work effectively with clients from non-English speaking as well as English speaking backgrounds. Its aims are:

- To provide the supervision needed by four-year Psychology graduates (Interns) before they can obtain full registration with the NSW Psychologists Registration Board (the Board).
- To train the Interns to work effectively with clients from non-English speaking as well as English-speaking backgrounds.

The program provides training and supervision for each Intern for a two-year period. It is ongoing, with approximately five new Interns joining each year, and approximately five interns completing the program each year.

Program Content

Since its establishment in 1999, the Program has evolved in response to new cross-cultural mental health resources becoming available, feedback from the Interns themselves, and the Board publishing new supervision guidelines in January 2006.

Placements and Organisation Visits

Currently, Interns are required by the Board to be engaged in practical work of a psychological nature for a minimum of 20 hours per week throughout the Program. This work can be paid employment or a voluntary work placement arranged either by the Intern or the Program Coordinator.

Since the Program was established, Interns without paid employment of a psychological nature have participated in the following voluntary work placements: Transcultural Mental Health Centre's (TMHC) Clinical Consultation and Assessment Service, the Diversity Health Institute (DHI) Multicultural Problem Gambling Service (MPGS), DHI Co-exist, Bankstown Community Health Centre, Rockdale Community Health Centre, Burwood Community Welfare Services, Liverpool Adult Drug Court, the Prevention, Early Intervention and Recovery Service, the Corner Youth Health Service, the Area Parenting Program, Lifeline Sydney, and three private practices conducted by TMHC Sessional worker/Psychologists. The Interns' duties while on placement included participation in orientation to the particular service, observation of experienced Psychologists conducting assessments and interventions with selected clients, conducting assessments and interventions with selected clients, under supervision, and documenting their service provision in clients' files.

Since the program was established, Interns have also participated in organisation visits to Auburn Community Health Centre, Bankstown Anxiety Clinic, Area Parenting Program, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital's Sexual Assault Service, the Service for Treatment and

Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors, and Westmead Hospital's Psychology department. These visits were for half a day each, and familiarised the Interns with the nature of each organisation, including staff and client characteristics, mechanisms of referral, relationships with other agencies, and the kinds of services provided.

Training and Supervision

For each Intern, the Program commences with a half-day orientation to TMHC, the DHI Clearinghouse and the Cumberland Hospital library. The Interns are then required to attend weekly training sessions that are provided by the Program. The training sessions take either a workshop or a group supervision format, and address the following subject areas: ethics, legislation, psychopathology, clinical interviewing, working with interpreters, cultural competence, assessment and problem formulation, counselling models, techniques of cognitive-behaviour therapy, family therapy, solution focused therapy, use of standardised tests, research, evaluation, and report-writing. The Program Coordinator conducts many of the training sessions. Other TMHC staff members or guest speakers from the Health Care Interpreter Service, Harcourt Assessment, Australian Council for Educational Research and the Institute of Psychiatry conduct relevant training sessions. The Program Coordinator also informs the Interns of other education and training opportunities such as the bi-annual Diversity in Health Conferences, seminars, workshops and lectures conducted within Sydney West Area Health Service, and seminars and workshops advertised by the Institute of Psychiatry, the Australian Psychological Society and the Australian Association for Cognitive Behaviour Therapy.

In addition to the training outlined above, each Intern receives approximately one hour per week of individual supervision. Individual supervision sessions include review of Interns' psychological work, support and assistance of the Intern in solving any problems that arise in their psychological work, setting and reviewing relevant readings, demonstration by Interns of specific psychological skills, monitoring of Interns' work with clients, and review and correction of Interns' scoring of standardised tests, research work, record keeping and report writing. Most of this supervision is provided by the Program Coordinator. Since 2006, three other DHI Psychologists have become Board-accredited supervisors, and one of these staff has provided this supervision for two Interns in the Program.

Outcomes

The following outcomes have been achieved since the Program was established. Fifty-two Interns have joined the program, forty-five for the whole program, and seven for selected workshops only. Of the forty-five who have joined for the whole program, twenty-eight have completed it, seven have transferred to other programs (either because they have moved to another geographical area, been accepted into a Clinical Masters program, or found employment that offers free supervision for registration), one has discontinued, and nine are currently enrolled in the program. Of the twenty-eight who have completed the program, twenty-seven have obtained full registration with the Board, and one has recently applied for full registration with the Board.

Employment and Placements

All Interns who have completed the Program had paid psychological employment on completion. Table 1 shows the numbers of Interns in areas of employment on completion of the Program.

Table 1

Numbers of Interns in Areas of Employment on Completion of Program

Area of employment	No.	Area of employment	No.
Community Mental Health	7	TMHC	1
Drug and alcohol services	5	School counsellor	1
MPGS or Wesley Gambling	3	Chinese counselling service	1
Youth services	2	Brain injury rehabilitation, case manager	1
Centacare	1	Parramatta Mission, counsellor	1
DOCS	1	Psychological medicine, research assistant	1
Community Welfare service	1	Unknown	1
Paediatric practice	1		

Of the nine Interns currently enrolled in the Program, one is employed in Sydney South West Area Health Service Drug and Alcohol services, and one is employed at a Migrant Resource Centre in an early intervention program for CALD families in which children are at risk of abuse or neglect. Two are participating in placements with TMHC's Clinical Consultation and Assessment Service, two are participating in placements in private practices conducted by TMHC Sessional worker/Psychologists, one is participating in a placement with DHI Co-exist, one is participating in a placement with Liverpool Adult Drug Court, and one is currently on leave from the program.

Language Backgrounds of Interns

Table 2 shows the number of Interns who have reported speaking languages other than English either partially or fluently, due to their family backgrounds, since the Program was established. Some Interns reported speaking more than one language.

Table 2

Numbers of Interns Reporting Language Backgrounds

Language	No.	Language	No.
Azerbaijani	1	Italian	1
Arabic	10	Korean	1
Bengali	1	Macedonian	1
Cantonese	5	Maltese	2
Croatian	1	Mandarin	1
Dari	1	Polish	1
Dutch	1	Russian	1
Farsi	3	Serbian	2
Greek	1	Spanish	1
Hindi	1	Turkish	1
Hungarian	1	Vietnamese	3

Feedback from Interns

The Program Coordinator has conducted a semi-structured interview with each Intern on completion of the program. The purpose of this interview has been to receive feedback from the Intern about the ways in which the Program was useful for them, and also to receive suggestions as to how to improve the Program. Useful and feasible suggestions have been incorporated into the following year's Program as part of the continual evolution of the Program. The aspects of the Program that the Interns have reported benefiting from are as follows: cross-cultural focus, practical skills gained, learning how to work professionally and ethically, the variety of placements, small and interactive workshops and group supervision sessions, flexibility of supervision times, support from the supervisor, hearing from guest speakers, and the relatively low cost of the Program.