

Equity-focused Recovery and Community Engagement

This new psychology internship rotation at the Institute of Living (IOL) integrates Hartford HealthCare's Radical Recovery mission with clinical opportunities across three key areas, each offering various clinical experiences for interns: gender-affirming care through the Center for Gender Health, family engagement in the Hartford community through the IOL Family Resource Center, and Psychosis Intervention through the Schizophrenia Rehabilitation Program and the Young Adult Potential Program. The Radical Recovery initiative challenges traditional mental health care, promoting patient empowerment, health equity, and innovative recovery models. Interns will have the option to select one or more experiences across these areas, with each path providing a rich, multidisciplinary environment that aligns with the IOL's emphasis on health equity, underserved populations, and recovery-focused care. This structure will provide interns opportunities to engage in evidence-based treatment planning and interventions (Aim #2), while fostering an appreciation for individual differences and cultural diversity (Aim #5).

Clinical Options for Rotation:

The Center for Gender Health offers interns the opportunity to provide gender-affirming care to transgender and gender-diverse individuals (ages 15+) through both individual and group counseling (Aim #2). In this setting, interns will work within multidisciplinary teams to address the unique medical and behavioral health needs of this population, contributing to their development of expertise in cultural humility and equity-focused care (Aim #5).

The interns interested in working with severe mental illness have the opportunity to work in the Schizophrenia Rehabilitation Program and Young Adult Potential programs which emphasize strength-based recovery models, support patients in regaining autonomy and improve quality of life. Interns will help facilitate community reintegration, apply cognitive-behavioral and interpersonal strategies, and engage in patient-centered care, which builds their expertise in treating chronic mental illness (Aim #3). This program will challenge interns to apply theories of recovery, intervention (Aim #2), and treatment planning (Aim #2), while learning to balance the needs of long-term therapy with short-term stabilization goals.

Interns interested in family systems work can choose to focus on family engagement, working with couples and families in the Greater Hartford community through the Family Resource Center. This option allows interns to provide therapy addressing family dynamics and supporting individuals with mental health needs, offering a systemic approach to treatment and developing skills in both assessment and intervention (Aims #1 and #2). Furthermore, interns will have the opportunity to engage with our family consultation team,

supporting families and individuals who are receiving care from one of our inpatient or outpatient care facilities.

Community Engagement:

The Family Resource Center (FRC) enhances all three clinical options by giving interns additional opportunities to develop Consultation and Interprofessional Skills (Aim #9), offering psychoeducation, family consultation, family therapy, support groups, multi-family therapy groups, and workshops to educate and support families (e.g., psychoeducational workshops to community members about psychological disorders and/or evidence based treatments). Interns will hone their communication and interpersonal skills (Aim #8) as they help families navigate the complexities of mental illness, reduce stigma, and access community resources. Working with the FRC also promotes understanding of Diversity (Aim #5), as interns learn to navigate the intersection of family systems, cultural backgrounds, and socio-economic barriers. This opportunity will allow interns to develop skills in consultation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and outreach to underserved communities (Aims #7, #8). Interns will also be exposed to a broad range of holistic practices that support patient care (e.g., sound healing, yoga). Finally, as a part of the interns work with the FRC, interns will have the opportunity to participate in the Institute of Living and/or Hartford Healthcare Behavioral Health (HHC BHN) Patient and Family Advocacy Council (PFAC). Herein, interns will work with individuals with lived experience and their families, facilitating dialogues that offer invaluable insight into the strengths and areas for continued growth within the organization.

Furthermore, trainees interested in further developing their research skills (Aim #4) will have the opportunity to work alongside an interdisciplinary team of researchers housed in our Center for Research on Racial Trauma and Community Healing. Herein, interns will be exposed to grant-preparation and manuscript writing skills as well as quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Research conducted at this center aims to deeper understanding of the psychological and behavioral consequences of discrimination and trauma and advancing equity and healing through the power of community.

Throughout the rotation, interns will benefit from robust supervision and training in psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, and family system psychotherapy models, consistent with the IOL's training philosophy of integrating theory and empirical evidence (Aim #9). The combination of clinical experiences across these three primary areas will ensure a well-rounded internship, preparing interns to enter the field as competent, ethical, and reflective practitioners.