

Advances in Assessment Training @ The Wright Institute*



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***Contact and Referral information for each program can be found on the last page of this newsletter.**

History and Advancements:

The last five years have seen exciting developments in assessment training at the Wright Institute.

The Wright Institute Assessment Clinic practicum, now in its 5th year, emerged as a response to the community need for low-fee psychological assessments and as a way to give 3rd and 4th year students an opportunity to increase their exposure to this aspect of psychological practice and become more competitive for internships and jobs in the future.

The Child Assessment series, which has long been a highly sought after training opportunity for our students, has added a second section with a focus on neuropsychological child assessment.

The advanced neuropsychological assessment series continues to be highly rigorous and sought after training for Wright Institute students.

In an effort to increase students' exposure to assessment practice earlier in

their training, The Wright Institute has also launched a pilot program to provide 2nd year students an opportunity to assess clients (not volunteers) under the supervision of licensed adjunct supervisors.

Other developments include the Sanctuary Project, a 4th year supplemental practicum providing culturally focused psychological evaluations to asylum seekers; and the recent introduction of assessment into our 2nd year training clinic allowing students to more effectively perform diagnosis and treatment planning.



Wright Institute Assessment Clinic

The Wright Institute Assessment Clinic offers low-fee psychological and neuropsychological testing for children (age six and above), adolescents and adults. Services are performed by a small group of 3rd and 4th year students participating in practicum training at this clinic. Clients are provided with focused psychological or neuropsychological testing guided by the referral question, a diagnosis (if necessary), and recommendations based on the results of the evaluation.

The trainees engage in weekly didactic training and lab with foci on assessment fundamentals, test administration, scoring, interpretation, diagnostic formulation as well as feedback and consultation. Students work closely with individual supervisors who are licensed clinical psychologists and board-certified neuropsychologists throughout the evaluation process. In addition students have opportunities to present and discuss their cases in group supervision.

Common referrals to The Wright Institute Assessment Clinic include: cognitive or psychological concerns due to developmental disabilities, brain injury or medical issue, learning and attention problems, mood and anxiety disorders, trauma, and substance use. Following evaluations, clients receive direct feedback and written reports to clarify assessment results for them. We also work with referring practitioners to integrate results and recommendations into continued treatment.



Wright Institute 2nd Year Assessment Pilot Program

In the 2013-2014 academic year The Wright Institute introduced a pilot 2nd Year Assessment Program. The Wright Institute 2nd Year Assessment faculty: Dale Siperstein, Ph.D., ABPP, Barbara Peterson, Ph.D., Andrew Pojman, Ed.D., Dale Watson, Ph.D., and Philip Keddy, Ph.D. have been integral in the development and support of this pilot program. Additionally, through collaboration with administration, field placement, Wright Institute Clinics, and volunteer supervisors this project has become a community-supported movement toward providing more comprehensive assessment services to our clients and assessment training for our students.

The goals of this program in the pilot year are multifaceted and include two comprehensive changes to how our students understand and engage with psychological assessment.

The first goal focuses on developing a program to provide second year students opportunities to complete psychological assessments with clinical cases while fulfilling their coursework.

This year 13 students were selected to participate in the program. In addition to receiving instruction from the assessment faculty through their coursework, each student is matched with a licensed collaborative supervisor who prepares them for meetings with clients from the clinical interview, to test administration, interpretation, and providing feedback to the clients they evaluate. Students also participate in bi-weekly trainings that supplement coursework and individual supervision, with a focus on taking a collaborative, culturally informed stance toward assessment. The majority of referrals to this program focus on psychodiagnostic evaluation.

The second focus of our 2nd Year Assessment Program pilot includes collaboration with Wright Institute Clinics in increasing focus on assessment in the intake process. Assessment measures that are being introduced will help us track client progress and outcomes. Both of our second year training clinics have worked to provide training and support to students in using these instruments. Each clinic focuses on integrating results from what is learned through the clinical interview and assessment measures into theoretically grounded, clinically relevant conceptualization, diagnosis, and treatment planning.



Child Assessment the *Wright* Way

For those of you who may not be aware, Child Assessment is thriving at The Wright Institute. Students have the opportunity to get supervised experience assessing children with a wide variety of presenting problems.

Students enter the child assessment course with varied child related experience from social workers, elementary school teachers, camp counselors, and some have never even been in a room alone with a child. All are welcome in child assessment as it is a class designed to experience and expand one's clinical knowledge of children. This year-long class is an elective, and most students take child assessment in their third year, but some opt to wait until the fourth year.

This year, Dr. Seth Ubogy was invited to teach a second section

of child assessment due to expressed interest in neuropsychological child assessment.

Dr. Ubogy's section emphasizes assessment of learning disabilities and neuropsychological procedures with children. In the Spring trimester, he will be teaching a pediatric neuropsychology class and invites Dr. Laeeq Evered's students who want child neuropsychology training, to participate. This is a wonderful supplemental opportunity for students taking Dr. Evered's advanced neuropsychological assessment course.

Dr. Siperstein's class has a focus on psycho-diagnostic assessments emphasizing children's objective and projective personality measures, in addition to cognitive testing. The focus in Dr. Siperstein's Spring section is on student case studies and techniques of intervention.

Many classes are held co-jointly with Dr. Siperstein and Dr. Ubogy. Both sections focus on an integration of the child's development with socio-cultural, cognitive and emotional adjustment in the overall assessment.

The majority of students are linked with an external supervisor, so that they can provide feedback to the child, referral source, and the parents.

So, if you know of parents who are looking for a child assessment that is collaborative, this is a great opportunity for both students and families. Students taking on these cases are incredibly dedicated and look forward to honing their skills, so they can showcase their assessment talents when they apply to internships.

The Wright Institute Sanctuary Project



The Wright Institute Sanctuary Project (WISP) is a partnership between the Wright Institute and the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant (EBSC) in Berkeley, CA, a legal aid organization. The practicum's main goals are to provide clinical services to the Bay Area's immigrant and refugee populations, and to offer advanced Wright Institute students an opportunity to develop assessment skills specific to working with these populations.

Trainees in this program are closely supervised and spend the training year learning how to complete forensic evaluations from an immigration perspective, collaborate with the legal system, gain experience in working with interpreters, and overall how to think about their clinical and assessment work in global and community contexts.

“It was a really rewarding experience to see how a psychological assessment fits into the immigration process and how it can make a real difference in someone’s life.”

-Student experience from 2012-2013 cohort



**The Wright Institute
Assessment Clinic:**

Participating in The Wright Assessment Clinic during my fourth year has allowed me to deepen my understanding and knowledge of mental illness etiology and expression, and has pushed me to develop a more thorough understanding of how a patient's difficulties may play out both in the context of diagnostic testing as well as everyday life.

Through the Assessment Clinic, I have had the opportunity to work with a wide variety of ages and presenting problems. I have gained exposure to a broad array of psychological and neuropsychological testing utilized throughout the country at assessment-based sites. Learning how to translate assessment findings into comprehensive and understandable language for the client and systems of care they participate in is not only an incredibly valuable skill, but one that I believe rests at the core of what it means to be a Clinician to Society. As I head towards internship, I feel stronger in my knowledge, as well as my ability to convey that knowledge effectively with my experience at The Wright Assessment Clinic.

I think the thing I am most grateful for thus far this year has been the chance to work closely with Learning Disorders, an area that had not been well-covered in other aspects of my education and training at the Wright, but is so important to understand and be able to identify and diagnose. Additionally, having only trained within community clinics and hospital settings thus far, the independent nature of the work in this assessment focused practicum has been a unique experience for me, and one that I feel has allowed me to continue developing my professional identity as a mental health practitioner.

Eliza Lehrke, M.A., 4th Year Student

2nd Year Pilot Assessment Program:

Through the Wright Institute's 2nd Year Assessment Program, I have had the opportunity to build on the knowledge I am acquiring in my assessment course.

Through supervision, I am receiving individualized support with administering, scoring, and interpreting test results – all within the context of an individual's story. My supervisor, a psychologist specializing in assessment, has instilled in me that a thorough clinical interview is a prerequisite to interpreting any test. He has also shown me how to facilitate a therapeutic and collaborative feedback session. With the support of my supervisor, I have been able to work with a client from the Berkeley CBT Clinic to address some of her and her therapist's concerns. I was able to not only conduct a mini assessment battery - which is required for my coursework - but also engage in a collaborative feedback session. During this feedback session, the examinee's therapist was present, and as a team we were able to engage in a conversation about the client's strengths, her growth in treatment, and how she felt about hearing feedback about herself. Moreover, we worked collaboratively to assess which information that emerged through the assessment was meaningful and which did not fit with the client's story. By the end of the meeting, the client seemed able to articulate her understanding of the areas she continues to struggle with, and how she might like to proceed in working with her therapist.

Overall, the assessment practicum has deepened my appreciation for assessment and how it can be conducted in a culturally-sensitive, collaborative manner. Furthermore, participating in this practicum has reinforced my interest in pursuing a career involving psychological testing, thus shaping my choices for my third year practicum.

Lilly Yamamoto, 2nd Year Student





Child Assessment:

The child assessment course series are a great way to share child therapy and assessment experience with peers, faculty, and supervisors, as well as to serve the community! The atmosphere in this series is quite collegial, and we look to find humor in sharing perplexing moments in working with children. In fact, Dr. Ubogy is known for his role-playing of difficult children to assess. The classes are a great adjunct and resource for those students currently placed in agencies where they are working with children. No matter how much experience you have had working therapeutically with children, The Wright Institute child assessment series is an opportunity for all of us to learn from each other. –Dale Siperstein, Ph.D., ABPP

Interested in Supervising?

The growth of The Wright Institute assessment programs and clinics is only possible with the support of our volunteer community based supervising psychologists. Both our students and the volunteer supervisors who work with them find the experience rewarding and a process that facilitates professional and personal growth.

If you are a licensed psychologist (or have a colleague who is) with experience in psychological and/or neuropsychological assessment, *and* you are interested in becoming a volunteer supervisor for one of our programs, please call: Caitlin Andrews, Psy.D. at (510) 841.9230 x105. Leave your name and phone number or email and we will get back to you with more information.

Benefits:

You will become an adjunct faculty at the Wright Institute, which means that the Wright Institute's Continuing Education program provides CE courses free of charge (<http://www.wi.edu/continuing-education>). You also have access to the Wright Institute library resources both on site and online. As a volunteer supervisor you have the opportunity to receive referrals from the Wright Institute Assessment Programs should you choose.

Role:

The role of volunteer supervisors is to provide weekly in person supervision during the period the assessment is taking place in a location determined by you and your supervisee. You will be the licensed provider responsible for the student's psychological assessments and will be asked to sign all related paperwork. Students will be completing between 2 and 3 psychological assessments each academic year.