

# NYSPI

## NEW YORK STATE PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTE SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT

Welcome to the web page of the Department of Social Work at the New York State Psychiatric Institute! Here you will find information regarding the department's student training program, clinical care, as well as contact information. The Social Work Department is committed to delivering quality care while improving existing services provided to our patients.

### **The Social Work Department Vision**

*The overall aim is to maximize the quality of life for both the person with the illness and his/her social family.*

Psychiatric illnesses have catastrophic impact not only on the life of the person with psychiatric illness but also on the family as it can encroach on the quality of life of all its members. The episodic and ambiguous nature of psychiatric illness and its often bleak prognosis-accompanied by stigma-imposes inordinate stressors on the family. The aim of the Social Work Department is to provide individuals with psychiatric illness and their families with the most effective, modern and compassionate psychosocial treatments while at the same time advancing scientific knowledge about psychosocial dimensions of mental disorders and their treatments. This may take the form of learning about how families adapt to illness; psychosocial interventions in personal, family, vocational and social domains; understanding the impact that mental illness has on the individual as well as other members of the family, and advancing our ability to provide each family and psychiatrically ill individual with the most up-to-date information regarding illness management and adaptation. Hence, the mission of the Social Work Department is to provide and enhance clinical care, education and research at the New York State Psychiatric Institute.

### **General Contact Information**

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## Intern Training Program:

Under the direction of Elizabeth Golden, the Social Work Training Program continues to be a highly regarded and eagerly sought out training program for second-year masters level social work interns. Interns are trained in clinical practice, research, program planning, and social policy. The department at NYSPI serves as a field placement site for Columbia University School of Social Work, The New York University (Silver) School of Social Work, and Hunter College School of Social Work. Our interns can be placed on the Washington Heights Community Service inpatient and outpatient units, Eating Disorder Unit (4-Center), the 5-South Research Unit, the Children's Day Unit, and the Center for Practice Innovations. Our first year intern can be placed on the Consultation Service. Our department continued as a field placement site for an OMH initiative, which trains clinicians in Evidence-Based Social Work Practice initiatives, with five of our interns participating in this fellowship program. Evidence Based wellness groups continued on 5-South and 4-South. These groups are run by the social work interns.

**Social work interns must be fluent in Spanish to accept a placement at either the Audubon or Inwood Clinics.**

In addition, educational opportunities include Grand Rounds, Case Conferences, and a weekly social work intern seminar which focuses on diagnosis, treatment, theory and program planning. There is an opportunity for placement during the full academic year (September through May) as well as during the summer (a ten week summer internship). It is important to note that we only take interns from a graduate social work program.

All clinical interns have the opportunity to work with patients and their families, either in an inpatient or outpatient setting. Groups are available in all placements. Supervision is provided on a weekly basis and all interns are part of a multidisciplinary psychiatric team.

**For more information, please contact your respective field placement office at the School of Social Work.**

## Clinical Services:

### Washington Heights Community Service:

The Washington Heights Community Service (WHCS) is a comprehensive community-based program for individuals with mental illness who live in Northern Manhattan. The Service consists of a 22-bed inpatient unit at NYSPI and three outpatient clinics located in the communities of Washington Heights and Inwood (Audubon Clinic, Inwood Clinic and OnTrack NY). It is affiliated with the New York State Psychiatric Institute and reports to the New York Office of Mental Health. We aim to promote mental health recovery and hope in a culturally sensitive environment. Our mission is to help people achieve their goals for personal health, growth and community integration. We offer individualized treatment emphasizing rehabilitative practices on the journey from inpatient care to outpatient treatment, regardless of ability to pay. Given the demographics of Northern Manhattan with large number of immigrants from Latin American and Caribbean countries, all units of the WHCS offer bilingual services.

For more information, please visit

<http://columbiapsychiatry.org/nyspi/patients-and-families/washington-heights-community-services>

- ***Inpatient unit*** : The inpatient unit, called 4 South, is an acute care unit with an average length of stay of 15-40 days. Treatment is provided for a variety of psychiatric illnesses, with a majority of people receiving treatment for a psychotic spectrum disorder (e.g., Schizophrenia or Schizoaffective Disorder) or a major affective disorder (e.g., Bipolar Disorder or Major Depression). Social workers function as members of an interdisciplinary team composed of psychiatric residents, psychiatric attendings, social workers, nurses, occupational therapists, mental health therapy aides and peer providers. Every effort is made to provide coordinated care between the inpatient unit and outpatient clinics, whereby staff from each clinic attends weekly inpatient team rounds. Family work is a priority, and we consistently demonstrate high patient and family satisfaction with care, as well as low hospital readmission rates and high outpatient retention rates. ***The role of the social worker on 4 South is 1) to evaluate the patient and their family to determine psychosocial stressors that may have contributed to the need for hospitalization 2) to provide psychoeducation to the patient and family with respect to all aspects of the patient's illness 3) discharge planning and 4) coordinate provision of concrete services when necessary 5) develop recovery focused treatment and disposition plans. Patients are seen daily whereas families are seen at least weekly.***
- ***Outpatient clinics***: The Audubon Clinic is located at 513 West 166th Street. The Inwood Clinic is located at 26 Sherman Avenue, and OnTrack NY is located at 1051 Riverside Drive. The clinics provide a range of individualized services, including outpatient therapy, medication management, case management, outreach, physical health monitoring, group therapy, family support, peer programming and day treatment

programs. We also offer specialized treatments such as clozapine management, cognitive remediation and employment support, for more severe illnesses. ***Social workers in the clinics function as primary therapists and may also lead therapeutic groups. They are also part of a multidisciplinary team whose focus is to develop a targeted treatment plan, developed by providers and clients, and to carry out this treatment plan. All social workers on the WHCS attend quarterly social work staff meetings at the New York State Psychiatric Institute as well as in-service Social Work Grand Rounds. They are encouraged to attend the weekly Grand Rounds of the New York State Psychiatric Institute and weekly case conferences on the inpatient units.***

### **Eating Disorder Unit (4 Center):**

The Eating Disorder Unit is a 12 bed, adult inpatient unit which functions dually as an intensive treatment ward and a training site for social work students, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2nd year residents in psychiatry, psychology externs and interns, nursing students and students in recreational therapy. Patients are admitted to participate in various research protocols approved by the Institutional Review Board designed to enhance our knowledge about and ability to treat eating disorders. Patients with anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa are offered a full range of inpatient clinical services to address the symptoms of these disorders. Patients are treated clinically by a multi-disciplinary team offering comprehensive therapeutic services including individual, group, family, and recreational therapies. ***The primary responsibilities of the social work team on this unit are individual casework, family therapy and disposition planning. Family therapy includes those people connected to the patient deemed "significant others". Disposition planning focuses on the needs of the patient after discharge, including outpatient referrals, aftercare services and other concrete needs. Thorough evaluations and psychosocial assessments are conducted to develop an individualized treatment plan for patients. In addition, social worker interns are actively involved in the group therapy program. The social work component is an integral part of the total treatment approach which attempts to maximize patient care services.***

### **5-South Research Unit:**

5-South is an adult psychiatric inpatient research unit that has undergone a substantive change. Initially known as the Schizophrenia Research Unit (SRU), the unit's mission had been to provide comprehensive treatment and innovative research for those suffering solely from psychotic disorders. In 2008, under the direction of Dr. Elizabeth LeQuesne, the mission broadened to include research protocols that investigate causes and treatment for patients suffering from the full range of mental disorders. Currently 5South has 24 beds and is staffed by a multi-disciplinary treatment team. Patients are referred to 5South from many different sources, both near and far; some referred by psychiatrists who seek innovative treatment currently offered only through research protocols. Others may be recruited by NYSPI outpatient researchers or clinical patients, in crisis; being treated by PI affiliated clinicians. Upon admission, all patients receive a thorough psychiatric and medical diagnostic evaluation and if they are found to be clinically appropriate will be considered for participation in treatment research. If they are not

recommended for treatment or decline to participate, they are offered the opportunity to stay for non-research treatment. The complexity and diversity of our mission is best appreciated when considering the multiple research protocols and varied clinical cases that comprise the unit's patient population. While many of the 5South patients may be admitted for treatment-seeking protocols there are non-treatment seeking protocols as well i.e., involving brain imaging, substance use and the cognitive impact of treatment modalities. The diversity of adult mental disorders researched and treated on the unit offer many innovative treatment and research opportunities. ***The Social workers are highly valued among the multidisciplinary team and remains integrated in treatment decisions from admission to discharge. Social Work interventions include:***

- 1. reaching out to family and providing psycho-social evaluation and family assessment***
- 2. working with the family by meeting weekly throughout the hospital stay***
- 3. one to one counseling to address clinical issues that emerge in the milieu***
- 4. an inclusive discharge plan with the input of the treatment and research teams***
- 5. a comprehensive needs assessment and concrete services***
- 6. assisting the patient's family system through enriching and broadening resources***

Each research participant has two teams working with them; the research team which comprises of a psychiatrist (Principal Investigator) and a Research Coordinator and the treatment team headed by the Attending Psychiatrist. The two teams are in regular contact with each other to best coordinate the treatment needs of the participant. Ethical standards related to mental disorder research are carefully addressed and attended to through this design.

### **Children's Day Unit:**

The Child and Adolescent Day Unit at NYSPI formally opened in June, 1989. Research at the Day Unit, under the direction of Dr. Moira Rynn, is designed to provide researchers in child psychiatry a unique opportunity to initiate and develop innovative treatment for childhood mental disorders within a highly controlled but nurturing environment. Dr. Rynn is an expert in anxiety disorders in children and adolescents, and current studies on the CDU include novel treatments for pediatric OCD. Children may continue to live at home while receiving intensive psychiatric treatment. They can remain in their own schools while participating in treatment studies or, if indicated, they may attend regular classes at PS 186X, a special education arm of the New York City Board of Education that is located within the Unit. Detailed and reliable medical and psychosocial observations are made by highly trained personnel without significant interruption in the youngsters' lives or education. Having the children on site allows for careful observation of responses to research treatments.

The Unit is open to youngsters from ages 6 to 18. The goal of the Unit is to conduct research on the full range of childhood and adolescent mental disorders. The Day Unit program serves adolescents from 13-18. When a youngster is admitted to the CDU the team does a complete diagnostic work-up, including psychiatric evaluations, psychological tests, neurological workups, and psychosocial and education assessments. Treatment modalities include individual and family therapy, behavioral therapy, as well as psychopharmacologic intervention. Planning for

discharge is given priority from the time of admission to ensure appropriate after-care with a view towards gradual improvement once stability is achieved at the Children's Day Unit. *Social Work clinicians and graduate social work interns are active members of a multidisciplinary team that provides services at the Day Unit. In addition to family assessment and intervention when needed, both social worker and graduate students act as primary therapist for some cases, assuming full responsibility for treatment planning and implementation. There are also opportunities to become involved in research studies. Social Work students are a welcome and important part of the Day Unit program and have made valuable contributions to the service.*

### **The Consultation Service:**

The Social Work Consultation Service, under the Direction of Nancy Turret, provides in-depth consultation to the residents in PIRC and to all MDs in the research outpatient clinics at NYSPI for patients who require social work assistance.

## **CURRENT CLINICAL RESEARCH:**

### **The Center for Family Education and Resilience (CFER):**

The Center for Family Education and Resilience (CFER) was established in 1997 in collaboration with Columbia University School of Social Work. Although psychosocial research has been ongoing at NYSPI, having a Research Division within the Department of Social Work allowed for the establishment of a focus research agenda as well as the establishment of an infrastructure for ongoing psychosocial research. Headed by Drs. Lukens and Thorning, CFER functions as an umbrella under which a range of clinical and research initiatives take place. CFER's primary objectives are 1) to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of services focused on the needs of patients and families, 2) to facilitate and strengthen Social Work research on the impact of mental disorders on the self and family and to provide training and education for social workers and social work interns on effective models of intervention

### **Clinical Initiatives and Training: Community Awareness through Psychoeducation (CAPE):**

CFER faculty includes Dr. Ellen Lukens and Dr. Helle Thorning. Dr. Lukens continues to provide a comprehensive psychoeducation/wellness management internship that trains social work students at the masters and doctoral level in theory, practice and evaluation using a culturally sensitive lens. Community Awareness through Psychoeducation (CAPE) groups have been conducted on the Psychotic Disorders Unit and the Washington Heights Community Service (both in and out patient) during under the supervision of CFER. The CAPE intervention follows a structured curriculum consisting of 12 modules that cover topics related to wellness, recovery and self-care including social support, self-esteem, and connection with the

environment, anger management, and medication management. Dr. Thorning has also worked in collaboration with staff at the East Village Access- PROS program, Community Access to implement CAPE groups for persons diagnosed with psychotic disorders in an additional community-based outpatient setting.

### Integration of Peers into Clinical Services at NYSPI:

A collaboration among the Department of Social Work, the NYSPI Peer Task force and CFER has led to a strategy to integrate peers in the clinical services at NYSPI. Liz Golden and Helle Thorning lead the project and supported the Peer Advocacy Task force. The Peer Advocacy Task Force is an initiative founded to meet a New York State mandate to incorporate peers (i.e. Individuals in recovery who have coped with a mental health illness) onto inpatient and outpatient units of the New York State Psychiatric Institute (NYSPI). The first Peer Specialist graduated from Howie the Harp, Peer Training and Advocacy Center (HTH) and was subsequently hired at NYSPI. The goal is to expand the Peer program. We continue to train interns from HTH on a yearly basis. In the future we hope to hire peers for the inpatient and outpatient units/clinics to provide advocacy, entitlement services, and co-lead group therapy and to participate in research-related activities as well.

### Research Training:

CFER is currently training master's level students from Columbia University School of Social Work (CUSSW), Silver School of Social Work at New York University (SSSW) and Hunter College School of Social Work to implement and evaluate evidence-based and evidence-informed interventions for persons with severe mental illness at NYSPI.

Dr. Lukens is working in collaboration with Mara Eilenberg, Associate Director of Social Work and Clinical Director for the Children's Day Unit and two MSW interns (one from NYU and one from Columbia) to develop and implement a qualitative research study to assess the needs of parents and siblings of outpatient and day patient adolescents diagnosed with OCD.