

My name is Christopher Hughes; I am currently a 5th year clinical psychology PhD student at Rutgers University working under the mentorship of Dr. Shireen Rizvi. I recently began working as an extern Trinitas Regional Medical Center's Child and Adolescent Outpatient Unit (TRMC COPU) under the supervision of Dr. Atara Hiller.

My broader career goal is to both treat and research disorders of emotion dysregulation, particularly Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD). Accordingly, my desired clinical training experiences in graduate school (and beyond) are ones that will provide me with the skill set to treat BPD and the wide variety of comorbid disorders with which clients with BPD often present. The externship experiences I have previously sought out have been in line with that broader goal. I have worked in Dr. Rizvi's Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) clinic since I began at Rutgers. My experiences delivering comprehensive DBT have provided me with a great deal of challenging yet invaluable learning opportunities, not only helping me to grow and develop as a clinician, but also solidifying my passion for and desire to continue working with the population. My work in the Rutgers Psychological Services Clinic provided me with training and supervision in the delivery of CBT for a wide variety of psychological disorders, delivering both protocol-driven and principle-based treatments. Given the frequent comorbidity of substance use disorders, I sought out an externship at the Rutgers University Program for Addictions Consultation and Treatment (PACT) clinic. At PACT, I learned skills relevant for assessing and treating substance use disorders, as well as ways to navigate the difficulties that arise when working with clients mandated to treatment. I have found the skills learned from my time at PACT to be tremendously helpful with working with clients with substance use problems in other clinical settings. My experiences as a member of Family Medicine's Behavioral Health Clinic have also provided me with additional valuable clinical training and experience in the delivery of evidence-based treatments to a transdiagnostic population in a short-term treatment framework. I gained invaluable experience working alongside physicians, nurses, psychiatrists, social workers, and other psychologists as a part of a multidisciplinary treatment team. It has also afforded me the opportunity to work with clients from diverse racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, and religious backgrounds, allowing me to practice tailoring treatments to clients' individual needs.

While my other clinical experiences have provided me with training and experience treating adult clients presenting with a variety of psychological disorders, I believe that working with children/adolescents and their families will provide me with a meaningful extension of my clinical skills by applying them within a novel population. In my work with adults, I witnessed firsthand the difficulties family members can experience when a loved one is struggling with psychological disorders, and the experiences at TRMC's COPU providing me with a greater understanding of how to help both the child/adolescent and their family members. While learning to provide evidence based treatments to children/adolescents and their families will be a novel challenge for me, I believe it would afford me invaluable opportunities for growth and learning. I believe the TRMC COPU is an ideal training site to learn and practice implementing skills given the variety of clinical experiences and training/supervision available to externs. I am particularly interested in the opportunities to engage in case management, as learning to work with schools, psychiatrists, and other treatment providers seems to be an essential skill for working with children/adolescents and their families.

My externship at TRMC COPU will provide me with a range of clinical experiences, including: conducting diagnostic intake evaluations; engaging in case management with schools,

psychiatric providers, and outside case managers; and providing individual cognitive-behavioral and family therapy to children, adolescents, and families with mood, anxiety, disruptive behavioral, trauma-related, and personality disorders. I will be trained and supervised in the delivery of empirically-supported interventions in both individual and group formats, with a specific emphasis on DBT for adolescents (DBT-A) and their families who exhibit symptoms of BPD and comorbid conditions. I will carry a case load of 2-3 individual DBT cases, 2-3 general COPU individual clients, one DBT-A skills training group, and one general COPU group, in addition to two monthly diagnostic intake assessments. Through my work at TRMC COPU, I hope to help clients and their families: improve communication; promote problem solving and crisis resolution; improve behavioral control; therapeutically reduce and stabilize distress and functional impairment; and collaborate with school, pediatricians, and outside collateral support systems to stabilize and facilitate family harmony.

As a supporter of the scientist-practitioner model, I cannot envision myself having a satisfying career that does not involve both research and clinical work. As such, I am eager to incorporate research into my externship experience at TRMC COPU. In graduate school, I have pursued my own research interests, heading up studies examining the processes related to emotional and behavioral dysregulation using both laboratory and ambulatory assessment paradigms. I have also had the privilege of fostering my interests in treatment research through collaborations with Dr. Rizvi on projects related to the evaluation, modification, adaptation, and augmentation of DBT. I hope to continue pursuing my treatment outcome research interests by collaborating with Dr. Hiller's research on evaluating the effectiveness of comprehensive DBT-A in a non-academic research clinic, the adaptation of DBT-A for a Spanish-speaking population, and predictors and moderators of DBT-A treatment outcomes.

In sum, I am looking forward to my experiences as a TRMC COPU extern, as I believe they will provide me with the opportunity to develop the requisite skills for working with children, adolescents, and their families, filling a meaningful gap in my clinical training and preparing me for a career researching and treating individuals of all ages with a broad range of psychological disorders.