

**IRVING FAMILY ADVOCACY CENTER (FAC)**  
**Psychology and Counseling Practicum Training Program**  
An agency of the Irving Police Department

**History and Current Services Provided**

The agency began operations in 1980 as Irving Youth/Family Counseling Services. Its primary concern was juveniles who were delinquent or potentially at risk for destructive behaviors. Over the years, services have expanded and now include counseling to all family members for many mental health issues, although the FAC does not address substance abuse/addiction and psychiatric stabilization.

Counseling services offered include play therapy, individual therapy, couple therapy, and family therapy. In addition, there are multiple groups offered to children, adolescents, and adults. Intervention programs include first and subsequent offender programs, parent education in English and Spanish, and domestic violence programs. Adult group programs are integrated with complementary child and adolescent group programs. Irving's diverse population provides opportunities to gain knowledge and experience working with clients from diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.

In January of 2002 the agency moved to its current facility. Other agencies now housed in this building are the Irving Police Department's Domestic Violence and Child Abuse units; two Dallas County Child Protective Services units; Family Advocacy Center Victim's Services; Counseling Services; and a representative from the Dallas District Attorney's office to help initiate protective orders. These groups work together to ensure that the victims of crime are provided coordinated services in one location. This cooperative effort, plus an increased visibility in the community, has resulted in greater numbers of clients being referred to the agency for counseling, case management, education and support.

The facility provides 17 counseling rooms, all of which are equipped with audio/video recording capabilities. Computers and phones designated for student use are provided.

**Experiences**

The FAC staff is thoroughly committed to providing practicum students with quality experiences in family, couple, individual, play and group psychotherapy. The staff makes every effort to facilitate growth and skill acquisition through training seminars, as well as through individual and group supervision.

**Agency Requirements**

Prospective interns are expected to have completed courses covering an introduction to counseling, assessment, treatment planning and diagnosing, a clinical training course, abnormal psychology, and counseling theories. Additional courses in family, couple or group treatment modalities can be beneficial.

A personal interview with the Clinical Director and other staff members is required. Background checks will be performed on all acceptable interns prior to making a formal offer of acceptance, and a criminal record could eliminate a student from further consideration. Interns will be required to sign a general release of liability for the City of Irving for personal injury arising out of duties at the Advocacy Center.

**Responsibilities**

All students are expected to verbally contract to a minimum of two consecutive semesters at the agency unless other arrangements (mini-practicum, independent studies, etc.) are made with the Clinical Director in advance. University affiliated students are required to work some evening hours and give approximately 18 to 20 hours per week for two semesters, with exceptions made on a case-by-case basis. Some more advanced students may complete their responsibilities in less time because they may not need group supervision, specialized supervision or peer group consultation, and they may complete case documentation more efficiently.

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These on-site hours are primarily determined by your university requirements but may include:

1. Three hours in didactic training session on Fridays from 9 a.m. to noon.
2. One hour of one-on-one supervision per week (required) to be arranged with assigned agency supervisor (or more if needed).
3. One hour (optional) of group supervision per week.
4. Eight to ten hours per week of direct counseling in individual, play, couple, family, group modalities (groups count for two hours of direct contact time) and screening or diagnostic assessment.
5. Three to four hours of preparation, case documentation, and miscellaneous administrative work (this varies by students' level of skill and experience).
6. One hour (optional) specialized supervision as needed (e.g. play therapy, family violence, sexual abuse).

Students are expected to complete the trainings offered by this agency in order to meet the needs of its client population. Examples of such training are:

1. Trauma Informed Care
2. Conceptualization and Treatment Planning
3. Play therapy
4. Trauma Focused CBT / Child Abuse
5. Interventions with Suicidal Clients
6. Working with Teens
7. Treatment of Domestic Violence
8. Parenting

### **Agency Hours**

The agency is open for business from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday.

### **Contact**

Melissa Harrison, MA, LPC-S, Clinical Director  
[mharrison@cityofirving.org](mailto:mharrison@cityofirving.org)  
(972) 721-6535

### **Location**

Irving Family Advocacy Center  
Irving Police Department  
600 W. Pioneer  
Irving, Texas 75061  
Agency Telephone: (972) 721-6521

### **Supervision Model**

As the Family Advocacy Center, we are tasked with conceptualizing our clients' cases within a family-oriented systemic framework. If a crime was committed or a person traumatized, it effects the entire family system. We work to staff our center with interns who are competent to provide services to the entire family. Some may have strengths in play therapy, couples, or family therapy, but we see our client as the family.

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Even if you are seeing a client for individual therapy, your supervisor will expect you to gain sufficient information during the first few sessions to be able to conceptualize your client's presenting issues within the context of his/her family system. Whenever it would be therapeutically advantageous for the client to invite one or more family members with whom they have a conflict or issue into a session, we encourage interns to do so.

If you are seeing a couple and another intern is seeing their children in play therapy, we will collaborate between therapists and supervisors to provide therapy to the family and conceptualize systemically to treat the family in a harmonic and cohesive way.

### **Collaborative Supervision**

- Supervisor collaborates with supervisee in formulating goals for supervision, treatment plans, etc.
- Supervisors collaborate on cases (open door policy).
- Site supervisors collaborate with university supervisors to evaluate / grade interns.
- Supervisees are encouraged to collaborate with clients to formulate treatment goals and their level of commitment to a number of sessions.
- Supervisees of a family member are encouraged to collaborate with fellow student interns or counselors who may be seeing another member of the same family to consider co-therapy or family therapy at some point in the family's treatment.
- Supervisees are asked to collaborate with the supervisor and IFAC by giving feedback and suggestions for growth and positive change (for themselves and the agency).

### **Expectations for Supervisee**

- Work diligently to provide ethical and effective counseling services (including timely documentation).
- Come to supervision prepared and ready to engage.
- Provide opportunities for observation of professional practice (live or taped).
- Intentionally reflect upon the therapeutic skills he/she hopes to develop and/or enhance through supervision.
- Actively work with supervisor to develop goals for supervision and professional development.
- Be open-minded.
- Bring a willingness to reflect upon personal feelings, characteristics and professional competence.
- Work actively to minimize personal resistance.
- Work collaboratively with supervisor to critically evaluate supervision experience.

**To apply for a practicum position,  
send your resume to [mharrison@cityofirving.org](mailto:mharrison@cityofirving.org)**