In the Spotlight: UHBH Training Department Celebrates First Year

In May, the UHBH Training Department celebrated the first year of its newly expanded training programs for counseling/psychology and social work masters and doctoral level students. Throughout the academic year, trainees gained in-depth exposure to both inpatient and outpatient mental health treatment. Across all settings, trainees provided individual therapy and group therapy. They collaborated with other providers, teams, and disciplines to provide patient-centered care, while also learning about the breadth of interdisciplinary services UHBH can offer.

This year, master and doctoral level trainees came from schools around the country, including UMKC Counseling Psychology, UMKC Clinical Psychology, KU Counseling Psychology, KU Clinical Child Psychology, KU Social Work, Avila, and West Texas A&M University. The two APA doctoral psychology interns came to us from Northwest University in Kirkland, WA, and Pacific University in Forest Grove, OR.

“Psychologists and counselors in training at UHBH are exposed to various training opportunities and experiences that help them deliver evidence-based care to underserved and economically marginalized patient populations,” said Dr. Abbey Gripka, UHBH Training Supervisor.

A survey given to the trainees at the end of the year revealed several developments and evidence of trainee growth throughout the year. Here are just a few comments and success stories shared by the trainees:

I have a patient who came to me with significant trauma symptoms and was feeling very hopeless when we began. For the first time in several years, he said that he noticed a reduction in his symptoms, and is starting to see hope for improvement!

As I near the end of my practicum experience here, it has been really cool and rewarding to see so many of my patients in the maintenance stage, and I feel like I am setting them up for success. I am also really proud of the way I handled some difficult patients’ concerns and resulting conversations between them and their parents.

I have a current client who told me that she “finally sees that therapy is working,” and although she is still going through a lot, she feels like she has “a better mindset” to handle it all with.

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A note from our COO...

This summer, you might notice a few new faces on-site at the Crossroads building! Students exiting their Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program and entering UMKC’s Master of Social Work (MSW) this fall are attending an eight-week course that bridges the two levels of study by providing an introduction to the field of behavioral health. Being hosted on-site and being taught by UH Behavioral Health staff, students will explore through panel discussions with staff, and each student will complete a project that serves as a tangible and organizationally significant “leave behind.”

This is just a small part of an initiative to create a regional training hub right here at UHBH. My vision is that UHBH is at the front and center of innovative and excellent behavioral health education and training, and my hope is that people interested in joining the behavioral health workforce will be inspired to come here to learn how to do it.

This builds on the success of previous years hosting practicum students and specifically the first iteration of the bridge class last year. Of the students who attended last year, two decided to do their MSW practicum on-site, and one was hired to join our staff at UHBH. Be sure to check out what previous students thought of the course in the Spotlight article on Page 1!

At a time when every industry is feeling the squeeze of workforce shortages, I believe cultivating our own workforce members will yield dividends for those we serve, ensuring they receive the very best care when they need it.

If you have any connections with people who would be interested in having a practicum placement, please be sure to connect them with our Behavioral Health Training Director, Dr. Ashlee Jones, at ashlee.jones@uhkc.org.

Sharon Freese, COO, University Health Behavioral Health

New Trauma-Informed Housing Toolkit

Andrea Dalton and Kreasha Williams recently assisted in the development of a new Trauma-Informed Housing Toolkit, a resource for advancing equity and economic opportunity in affordable housing. Trauma-Informed Housing — developed by Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) — is a model that combines two complementary frameworks: human-centered design and trauma-informed care. Both approaches prioritize people. This toolkit was born of a partnership with POAH, Design Impact, MASS., SAHF, Community Services League and UHBH’s Center for Trauma Informed Innovation (CTII).

According to POAH, the connection between trauma and housing is multifaceted. The housing system can cause trauma and can intersect with other systems that have caused trauma. Here are some examples:

- Racial discrimination in housing, such as redlining, restrictive covenants, and exclusionary zoning displaces longtime residents and prevents the accumulation of wealth through homeownership.
- Housing that is mismanaged or under-resourced means that critical repairs go unmet. The result is unhealthy living conditions within homes, which can contribute to or exacerbate health issues, such as asthma.
- A housing eviction is traumatic in and of itself. When housing providers report evictions to external entities, it also limits a household’s ability to obtain new rental housing in the future.

We’re proud of our involvement in the development of the toolkit as we know that when life hits us with stressful, overwhelming, or traumatic experiences, we’re more likely to bounce back – be resilient – when we have healthy ways to cope and a supportive environment. A safe, affordable place to call home can foster resilience and support overall well-being, when its design, management, and programming are trauma-informed. Learn more here: https://trauminformedhousing.poah.org/
Schutz Lecture Series Features Trauma Informed Care

On April 20, our own Andrea Dalton, Senior Consultant for UH Behavioral Health's Center for Trauma Informed Innovation (CTII), delivered a lecture as part of the Shutz Lecture Series at UMKC. Titled “Community Trauma, Community Healing, Community Resilience,” Andrea delved into the importance of connecting with the community to respond to trauma in innovative and strengths-based ways.

Andrea’s lecture focused on the idea that traumatic events can impact multiple members of a community. “While community resilience efforts have often focused on preventing trauma from occurring, prevention is only one aspect of resilience. We must consider how we navigate and heal from trauma, building safe and trustworthy relationships that prioritize equity and justice in our communities,” she said. Watch now: https://bit.ly/45aWgSc

About Andrea Dalton
After graduating from the UMKC Conservatory with a Master of Arts degree in Music Therapy, Andrea worked for nearly 12 years as a board-certified music therapist, primarily in inpatient mental health units serving some of the most vulnerable adults and children in the Kansas City area. Early in her career, she became interested in the powerful possibilities of transformation through the paradigm of trauma-informed care. Andrea currently works at University Health in the Center for Trauma-Informed Innovation, partnering with leaders and organizations in developing trauma-informed, culturally-responsive programs, practices and policies.

About The Marilyn T. & Byron C. Shutz Lecture Series
The annual Marilyn T. & Bryon C. Shutz Lecture Series hosts lectures, seminars, and workshops in fields such as creative writing, literature and art history. See past lectures here: https://bit.ly/3pPGADL

UHBH Hosts Bluford Healthcare Leadership Institute Scholars

On May 24, UH Behavioral Health was excited to host 15 students from universities around the country for a Behavioral Health Day, part of Phase 1 of the Bluford Scholars Healthcare Leadership Institute (BHLI). Its mission is to eliminate health disparities among minority and vulnerable populations by cultivating a pipeline of culturally competent, underrepresented scholars for leadership roles in healthcare.

Over the course of the two-week professional development program held annually in Kansas City, students participate in a series of experiential activities, site visits and internships, and spend time analyzing healthcare issues with expert local and national presenters. Topics include leadership skills, critical thinking, ethics and integrity, health disparities, behavioral health, equity of care, hospital administration, healthcare law, nursing leadership and socio-economic determinants of health, among others. Based upon the scholars’ performance during Phase I, they may be selected to participate the following summer in Phase II, a 10–12 week paid internship in a premier healthcare environment where they are exposed to the development and execution of health policies by the C-Suite.

During the Behavioral Health day, scholars were welcomed by UHBH leaders Sharon Freese, Chief Operating Officer, James Glenn, Associate Administrator, Business Strategies and Vladimir Sainte, Senior Project Coordinator. They then spent the day shadowing our clinicians and staff for hands-on learning about some of our programs, including: Futures, Housing, Intake/Outreach, PATH/ICS, Specialized Services and Employment. The students represented universities from all over the country, including Vanderbilt, Florida A&M, Franklin and Marshall College, Hampton, Morehouse College, North Carolina A&T, Spelman and University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Funding News: UH Behavioral Health Receives Extension of Funding for ATTC/SUD Services

We were excited to receive word in May that we received an additional $743,000 in funding through September 2024 from SAMHSA. Funds will be used for substance use disorder (SUD) workforce training in Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska. This is a collaborative initiative since 2017 with UMKC’s School of Nursing & Healthcare.
There's No Place Like Home
A client success story from Kim Jackson, Team Leader, Supportive Housing Program

In the fall of 2018, Lisa entered the Intensive Community Services outreach facility (formerly ACO at Truman Road & Woodland). She was homeless, using substances to manage her mental health diagnosis and “on the verge of giving up.” After working with Lisa for a period of time, we identified that she was eligible for a HUD-funded housing grant managed by University Health called Haven of Hope (HOH). Requirements for the HOH grant included: chronic homelessness (>12 months) and a diagnosis of a severe and persistent mental illness.

Lisa entered the housing program, complied with the rules of the program and her lease, paid her rent on time (via budgeting weekly), and met at least monthly with her Housing Stabilization Specialist.

Over this time period, Lisa was a model tenant! She successfully maintained her one-and-only housing placement for more than three years, while also juggling a part-time job. And for more than five years now, she has worked for the same company and is a manager of one of their stores!

Lisa stays in touch and periodically will provide “her housing team” updates about her progress. Recently, she informed us that she and her husband have moved out of the area. They are approved for a home loan and are in the process of purchasing their very first home!

We couldn’t be more excited for her, and words just can’t grasp the magnitude of how heartwarming her story is.

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My patient used a grounding exercise every day last week and said she felt “relief” because she was reminder herself that she is safe. She also opened up in therapy and met a goal of telling me about a traumatic event exposure she experienced. She said “I was ready to tell you.”

I feel like I have grown in my ability to assess for crisis in a straightforward and effective way. I can see how my teens were more comfortable sharing details of passive SI with me because I was able to normalize it — a skill I gained here. I have also grown in my ability to collaborate and consult with other clinicians around me!

While discussing this year's accomplishments, Dr. Ashlee Jones, UHBH Training Director, excitedly shared, “One of the trainees — Madeleine Posz (pictured at right) — has been hired as a full-time QMHP at UHBH Lakewood Counseling, and two of this year's counseling/psychology trainees are coming back next year to do a different rotation because they loved their experience at UHBH.”

Looking Ahead

During the upcoming academic year, the UHBH Training Department plans to bring in at least 12 counseling/psychology practicum students, and two, full-time Psychology Doctoral Interns to work in the following clinics/departments: Crossroads Counseling, Lakewood Counseling, BHAC (Behavioral Health Acute Care), LGBTQ Specialty Clinic, Lakewood Family Medicine (Integrated Behavioral Health). Additionally, approximately 12 Social Work practicum students will be working with our community-based teams.