



DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRIC PSYCHOLOGY
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL ORANGE COUNTY

Psychology Training Program: Important Policies and Procedures

Problems that Could Arise:

As practicum students/intern/trainees who are in training, trainees are not expected to be an independently functioning psychologist. However, trainees are expected to: always consider the best interests of patients/ families, be aware of limitations and when more supervision is necessary, be assertive about needs for additional supervision and training, follow the APA Ethics Code, work hard, be conscientious, and follow all CHOC policies and procedures including but not limited to Associate Responsibilities policies such as the Code of Business Conduct, Attendance, Disruptive Behavior, Dress Code, Professional Conduct, Punctuality, and Therapeutic Relationships and Professional Boundaries policies. These policies are reviewed during new hire hospital orientation and available at all times to all CHOC associates through CHOC policy manager.

Minor infractions will typically be brought to your attention by your primary supervisor or the Director of Training at the earliest possible occasion. Our first goal is to work with you if there are any concerns. We do want you to be aware, however, of the steps that can be taken if there are repeated problems or if individuals are not willing to work on the problems identified. Minor infractions typically lead to a verbal warning. If repeated, they may lead to a written notice and may lead to a referral for counseling. Examples of minor infractions are inappropriate dress, uncooperative attitude, and repeated tardiness.

Moderate infractions typically receive a written warning, which is placed in your personnel file. Depending on the situation, CHOC reserves the right to take additional disciplinary action, such as temporary absence without pay. Examples of moderate infractions are improper or abusive language, refusal to perform work as instructed, disclosure of confidential information, and unexcused or misrepresented absence.

Serious infractions require disciplinary suspension or discharge. Examples of such inappropriate behavior for the workplace are intoxication, jeopardizing the health and safety of a patient, or insubordination.

Major infractions generally lead to discharge, but are limited to extreme behavior such as fighting, theft, immoral conduct, or sexual harassment.

DUE PROCESS, APPEALS and GRIEVANCES PROCEDURES

In the course of training, it is possible that problems will occur. These problems can be minor or more major. We believe in trying to resolve all problems informally if at all possible. However, if problems cannot be addressed informally, there are additional steps that can be followed as

detailed below. Trainees have the right to appeal any decision with which they disagree (see Appeals Procedures below).

Due Process for Problem Behaviors

Notice:

Step 1: Informal Notification

If problem behaviors (which can include deficiencies in training, an inability or unwillingness to acquire necessary professional skills, an inability to control personal stress or strong emotions which interfere with professional behavior) are identified, the supervisor or Director of Training will provide notice by discussing the problem behavior with the trainee directly. The training program is responsible for providing clear, direct, and timely feedback regarding problem behaviors within competency domains. As a part of this discussion, suggestions to address and resolve the problems will be identified. The training program will outline the steps that the trainee will be responsible for taking to rectify the problem behaviors and timeline, and the steps that the training program will be responsible for to rectify the problem behaviors and timeline. The supervisor or Training Director will also outline when feedback on progress will be given, generally speaking this feedback would occur during regular supervision or meetings with the Director of Training.

Step 2: Written Notice

If problem behaviors persist and the trainee does not appear to be able to resolve the issues informally, a written notice will be given by the Director of Training. The trainee will be aware of this progression through feedback on progress in the Informal Notification step. The written notice is determined by the trainee's training team and training director(s). The written notice will be provided within 2 business days of notice that the progress on the informal plan has not been successful and include descriptions of the problem behaviors, dates the problem behaviors were brought to the trainee's attention and by whom, steps already taken to address the identified behaviors and steps that the trainee will be responsible for taking to rectify the problem behaviors and timeline, and the steps that the training program will be responsible for to rectify the problem behaviors and timeline. The timeline may vary based on the type of problem, the steps to address the problem and what might be a reasonable time to remediate the issue and will all be discussed with the trainee. The written notice will also include the plan for evaluating progress on the remediation and a date for re-evaluation of acceptable performance. If the problem behavior is addressed in a CHOC Human Resources (HR) policy, the training program will also follow HR policies with regard to corrective and disciplinary actions.

Step 3: Competency Remediation

If the problem persists upon the agreed upon re-evaluation, the training program will recommend remediation for the problem behaviors, including a competency remediation plan. The trainee will be aware of this progression through feedback on progress in the Written Notice step described above. The competency remediation plan need is determined by the trainee's training team and training director(s). The competency remediation plan will include descriptions of the problem behaviors, dates the problem behaviors were brought to the trainee's attention and by whom, and ways that these behaviors have been attempted to be addressed by the trainee and by the training program. The competency remediation plan will also include a detailed description of the expectations for acceptable performance for each problem behavior, the trainee's responsibilities and actions, the supervisor's, training team, and training director's responsibilities and actions, the timeframe & method for receiving feedback about progress

towards the remediation plan goal, the timeframe for acceptable performance, the assessment methods to document acceptable performance, and consequences for unsuccessful remediation. The competency remediation plan will be reviewed with the trainee in detail within 2 business days of notice to the trainee of moving onto a competency remediation plan. and the trainee will have the opportunity to ask questions, indicate agreement or disagreement with the plan, and if in disagreement, provide a detailed description of the rationale for the disagreement and alternative suggestions. The competency remediation plan will also include a summative evaluation of the competency remediation plan detailing follow-up meeting dates, outcome of the remediation plan (e.g., remediation met, partially met, or not met), next steps (e.g., remediation concluded, remediation continued and plan modified, or next step in Due Process), timeline and format for receiving feedback on progress towards competency remediation and next evaluation date if needed. A copy of the competency remediation plan will be given to the psychology trainee as well as kept by the Director of Training. If a psychology practicum student or intern is placed on competency remediation plan, the Director of Training will also notify the Training Director of their doctoral training program of the reason for the remediation plan and a copy of the written competency remediation plan. If the problem behavior is addressed in a CHOC HR policy, the training program will also follow HR policies with regard to corrective and disciplinary actions.

While we expect that all trainees will successfully complete the program, we do have guidelines for placing trainees on probation if problems cannot be resolved utilizing the above process, and for terminating the individual if problems cannot be resolved with a formal probation plan. All trainees would receive feedback about their progress on the remediation plan and have notice about possible probation prior to any movement towards probation. As described above, there are numerous steps and you will be fully informed long before any of the probation or termination processes would be initiated. We also have policies that guide the early resignation from the program if the trainee decides to do so. Finally, as noted above, trainees can appeal any decisions made by the Training Program (see below for the steps).

Notice: Probation and Termination

Probation: If, despite the steps above, a trainee does not perform their duties as required, or if the trainee conducts themselves in a manner that is contrary to the interest of the hospital, the Director of Training may place them on probation according to the following procedures:

1a. The Director of Training will discuss the matter with the psychology trainee, review the competency remediation plan and expectations, and summative evaluation of the competency remediation plan. The Director of Training will then discuss placing the trainee on probation and revise the competency remediation plan to reflect the probation status. The probation competency remediation plan will include a detailed description of the expectations for acceptable performance for each problem behavior, the trainee's responsibilities and actions, the supervisor's, training team, and training director's responsibilities and actions, the timeframe for acceptable performance, the assessment methods to document acceptable performance, timeline and format for receiving feedback on progress towards competency remediation and consequences for unsuccessful remediation while on probation. The probation competency remediation plan will be reviewed with the trainee in detail and the trainee will have the opportunity to ask questions, indicate agreement or disagreement with the plan, and if in disagreement, provide a detailed description of the rationale for the disagreement and alternative suggestions. A copy of the probation competency remediation plan will be given to the psychology trainee as well as kept by the Director of Training. If a psychology practicum

student or intern is placed on competency remediation plan, the Director of Training will also notify the Training Director of their doctoral training program of the reason for the remediation plan and a copy of the written competency remediation plan. If the problem behavior is addressed in a CHOC HR policy, the training program will also follow HR policies with regard to corrective and disciplinary actions.

1b. If the psychology trainee has satisfactorily met the conditions of the probation competency remediation plan, according to written input from supervisors and other relevant hospital staff focused on the evaluation criterion outlined in the plan, the psychology trainee will be removed from probationary status. In the case of a practicum student or intern, the Director of Training will also notify the Training Director of their doctoral training program of the successful remediation.

1c. If the psychology trainee does not fulfill the requirements of the probation competency remediation plan, and consequently does not perform their duties as required or conducts themselves in a manner that is contrary to the interests of the hospital, the hospital may terminate the psychology trainee appointment.

Termination:

2a. If the psychology trainee does not fulfill the requirements of the probation competency remediation plan, and consequently does not perform their duties as required or conducts themselves in a manner that is contrary to the interests of the hospital, the hospital may terminate the psychology trainee appointment. All trainees would receive feedback about their progress on the remediation plan and have notice about possible probation prior to any movement towards termination and have an opportunity for the appeals process (see below for the steps).

2b. If a practicum student or intern is terminated, a letter will be written by CHOC's Director of Training to the Director of Training of the graduate program outlining the problems, the attempts at resolution, and the reasons for the decision to terminate the trainee.

Resignation Procedure for Trainees

It is the policy of the Department of Psychology to have a procedure for the early withdrawal or resignation of a trainee. The procedure will clarify the Departmental expectations of trainees, who may, for personal reasons or reasons of dissatisfaction, wish to terminate their tenure prior to the date set forth in the training agreement.

Step 1: The psychology trainee who is considering early termination of the training year will first discuss this issue with the Training Director(s). The goal will be to clarify reasons for the decision and develop a plan to improve the problems and to create options that allow for the successful completion of the program.

Step 2: In the event that resignation appears to be the only viable solution, the trainee will meet with the training director(s) and other relevant staff members (which may include clinical supervisors), in order to discuss the matter of resignation and create a timeline for ending. Issues of patient care will be given priority consideration in developing a timeline for resignation.

Step 3: Should it be a practicum student or intern requesting premature termination from their training experiences, the Director of Training from their home doctoral program is to be consulted regarding this request.

Step 4: After meeting with the CHOC Director of Training(s) (and, for practicum students and interns, speaking with their doctoral program's Director of Training), the trainee will submit a written letter of resignation to the CHOC Director of Training(s).

Step 5: Should it be a practicum student or intern, after officially resigning, a letter will be written by CHOC's Director of Training to the doctoral program's Director of Training outlining the problems, the attempts at resolution, and the trainee's decision to terminate their current position.

Step 6: The trainee will be expected to complete all charting responsibilities and to follow standard termination procedures for CHOC prior to leaving the site.

Step 7: Psychology trainees will only receive credit for the hours of training completed up to the point of the resignation.

Appeals Procedure:

If a Psychology trainee is dissatisfied with any decisions regarding the trainee, the following procedures will be utilized:

Step 1: The Psychology trainees will discuss the matter with the training director(s). If the problem is with a decision made by the training director(s), the trainee may discuss the matter with the Chief Psychologist. If the problem is with a decision made by the Chief Psychologist, the trainee may discuss the issue with the Chief Medical Officer.

Step 2: If the matter is not satisfactorily settled in Step 1, the psychology trainee may appeal in writing to the Chief Psychologist as well as speak to the Chief Psychologist in person within 10 working days from unsatisfactory resolution with the training director(s). The appeal shall include all pertinent facts and the remedy requested by the trainee. The Chief Psychologist will provide a written letter of decision in the manner within 10 working days of receipt of the letter and speak with the trainee if they wish to have a face to face meeting. They may talk to relevant parties to gather additional information.

Step 3: If the decision of the Chief Psychologist is not acceptable to the trainee, they may appeal in writing to the Chief Medical Officer within 10 working days from receiving the written decision letter from the Chief Psychologist.

Step 4: The Chief Medical Officer will render a decision within 10 working days which in all events shall be final and binding on all parties.

Each step must be completed within 10 working days.

Grievance Procedure:

While we certainly hope there are no problems with the training program, we recognize those can occur. Individuals in training can use the following procedure to resolve these issues. These would include difficulties or problems other than evaluation related (e.g., poor/inadequate supervision, unavailability of supervisor(s), workload issues, personality clashes, other staff conflicts) during their training program, a trainee can:

Step 1: Discuss the issue directly with the staff member(s) involved.

Step 2: If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the trainee should discuss the concern with the training director(s). If the problem is with the training director(s), the trainee may discuss the matter with the Chief Psychologist. If the problem is with the Chief Psychologist, the trainee may discuss the issue with the Chief Medical Officer.

Step 3: If the matter is not satisfactorily settled in Step 2, the Psychology trainee may appeal in writing to the Chief Psychologist. The appeal shall include all pertinent facts and the remedy requested by the trainee. The Chief Psychologist will provide a written letter of her decision in the manner within 10 working days of receipt of the letter. They may talk to relevant parties to gather additional information.

Step 4: If the decision of the Chief Psychologist is not acceptable to the trainee, they may appeal in writing to the Chief Medical Officer within 10 working days from receiving the written decision letter from the Chief Psychologist.

Step 5: The Chief Medical Officer will render a decision within 10 working days which in all events shall be final and binding on all parties.

Each step must be completed within 10 working days.