

Policies & Procedures

The University of Tennessee-Knoxville Psychological Clinic

For this experience, you will be working with a first-year graduate student in the Clinical Psychology Doctoral Training program, under the direct supervision of Jennifer Bolden, Ph.D., a licensed Clinical Psychologist.

The first-year graduate student is learning how to administer, score, and interpret evidence-based clinical assessments. We know that the way in which an assessment is administered to an individual is especially important for standardized assessments. Standardization establishes uniform procedures for using the assessment so that observation, administration, equipment, materials, and scoring rules will be the same for every individual to whom it is administered. The goal of this uniformity is to make the assessment's results as objective as possible so that they can be considered valid and meaningful when used to compare the assessed qualities of volunteers. Standardization attempts to control and/or minimize external factors to the greatest degree possible so that the assessment is a valid measurement tool that produces meaningful results.

In this experience, you will be asked to complete a clinical interview and a cognitive assessment. The experience will be recorded, with your permission, so that the instructor can evaluate whether the assessment was administered according to the standardization requirements.

With your permission, the session will last approximately 2 hours. You can ask to end the session at any time without any consequence or penalty. You will receive credit in your psychology class for your participation. Each hour of participation is worth 1 research credit. If you complete the entire experience, you will earn 2 research credits. If you request that we stop the recording, the graduate student will end the session and you will receive partial credit.

What you should know about this assessment:

- You must be 18 or older to complete the experience.
- You must complete the experience in the state of Tennessee.
- The graduate student will explain the assessment measures to you.
- You may ask questions at any time.
- You decide if you would like to participate in the experience.
- You may choose not to take part in the experience at any time.
- You do not have to answer every question to participate in this experience. Just let the graduate student know if you would like to skip a question.
- Your decision to participate or not participate will not be held against you.

Confidentiality, Privileged Communication, and HIPAA Requirements

Because of the clinical nature of the assignment, you should be mindful of the following information regarding confidentiality, privileged communication, and HIPAA requirements:

Psychology Licensing Law provides extremely strong privileged communication protections for conversations among a psychologist, a clinical psychology trainee, and you in the context of your established professional relationship. We strive to maintain the privacy of your confidential

communications among you, the psychology trainee, and the licensed psychologist supervising this experience.

There is a difference between privileged conversation and documentation in mental health records. Records are kept documenting your care here as required by law, professional standards, and the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). You will receive a separate document of your Notification of Patients Rights as required by HIPAA. The new HIPAA law effective 4/14/03 very clearly defines what kind of information is and is not to be included in designated mental health records. For example, HIPAA declared “psychotherapy notes” are not to be part of your designated mental health record with our psychotherapy notes defined as “notes recorded in any medium by a mental health provider documenting and analyzing the contents of a conversation during a private, group, or joint family counseling session and that are separated from the rest of the individual’s medical record.”

Because we are a training and research Clinic, our operations are governed by confidentiality, privileged communication, HIPAA requirements and some additional special provisions due to our University research and training functions (i.e., IRB approval of all research performed at the Clinic; the use of videotape equipment). Hence, at the UT Psychological Clinic, the following are considered components of your “designated mental health record” which we strive to keep in strictest confidence: your informed consent to care, all identifying paperwork you completed when you signed up for the experience, a summary of your only appointment/session, your mental status examination, and progress notes. Your “designated mental health record” does NOT include our psychotherapy notes of sessions we conduct, the actual raw data or questions of any psychological tests given by us, videotapes/recordings of your sessions here, notes of conversations between your therapist and the supervisor of the case unless such notes are specifically included in your progress notes, and any work products for the assessment courses offered by the doctoral training program in clinical psychology.

Sessions are recorded to help with the training of our doctoral students in our Clinical Psychology Training program. It is important to understand that, to achieve its training mission, all sessions are recorded because it is essential that supervisors and other students in training be able to observe the work being done at the Clinic. Supervisors must have access to session content so that they can advise student therapists on the most effective ways to deliver treatment and conduct valid assessments. Other students in training must have access to the work of their peers, so that they can learn by observing and thereby develop their own clinical skills. Such growth will allow all to deliver the highest quality services possible. Therefore, volunteers are expected to consent to all sessions being recorded for training purposes. Note that these recordings are made for training purposes only, and they are not considered part of the clinical record. Typically, recordings are deleted after they are viewed by the clinical supervisor, but occasionally, some may be saved for future training purposes. If that is done, the video file is saved on our secure video server by the clinical supervisor in a secure password-protected location that can only be accessed by authorized trainees. In addition, the file itself is not labeled with any information that could identify a client. We realize that this requirement may cause some concerns, but it is essential to our ability to provide quality care. If you do not wish to authorize us to record your work at the Clinic, we will try to provide you information about other area programs that might be able to meet your needs.

Similarly, our doctoral students review the results of actual psychological testing performed in their required courses and practicum in psychological testing. Identifying information is removed when testing is used in these educational settings so that like our use of videotapes/recordings, protected health information remains securely confidential.

It is important to understand that the trainee may share information about treatment in case conferences and other treatment team meetings. When information is shared among clinic personnel (i.e., staff, supervisors, and students), it is shared in a de-identified manner to the extent possible. However, this cannot be guaranteed, particularly when coordination of care is required. For example, this may occur in cases where therapists treating family members are part of the same supervisory team or need to consult with one another to develop treatment plans. Please note that while information may be shared among clinic personnel, it will not be shared with other family members or friends who may be seen at the clinic, unless you have explicitly consented to this in writing. As an additional safeguard, all clinic personnel sign Confidentiality Agreements that prohibit them from sharing information with anyone not involved with clinic operations.

Tennessee law requires authorization and consent for treatment, payment and healthcare operations and we will secure this consent to care before we begin working with you. There are some exceptions to confidentiality and privilege rights which might result in use and disclosure without your consent and authorization such as the reporting requirements for child abuse, suspected sexual abuse of a child, adult and domestic abuse, health oversight activities (licensing board), judicial or administrative proceedings (i.e., you have no privilege communication or confidentiality in court-ordered evaluations or if you use your mental condition as a part of a lawsuit you are pursuing), Workers Compensation claims, or a clear and imminent serious physical injury risk to yourself and/or to others. Additionally, because we are a training and research facility there are times when we may disclose your protected health information on research projects already approved by the University of Tennessee's IRB and projects you consented to participate in because it may not be practical to contact you. In all of the research projects conducted at the Clinic, careful measures are taken to protect your privacy and the risks to you are judged to be minimal and reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits of the research.

Your Informed Consent to Care:

In signing our consent to care, you acknowledge understanding all of the aforementioned policies and procedures of the Clinic, including the special training and research provisions associated with our Clinic. Additionally, psychological evaluation and care, like other things in life, offer no absolute guarantee of success and there are limitations to any form of care offered a patient/volunteer. Your signature below acknowledges your informed consent to care and your understanding and agreement to these policies and procedures as stated above.

Signature of adult patient/volunteer or parent/legal guardian of
Patient less than 18 years old

Date