

## **Brief History and Overview of the Clinic Diversity Committee Psychology Clinic Georgia State University**

Several factors converged in 2008 leading to the creation of the **Clinic Diversity Committee (CDC)** of the Psychology Clinic within the Clinical Psychology Program at Georgia State University (GSU). The CDC was preceded by an active clinic “outreach committee” led by the clinic co-directors and clinical psychology graduate students. The outreach committee had multiple psychoeducation and clinic marketing functions, including a primary mission of increasing the diversity of clients seen in the clinic by engaging in various outreach activities within the Atlanta community. During 2007-2008, the Association of Directors of Psychology Training Clinics (currently the Association of Psychology Training Clinic APTC) initiated a survey of the membership of ADPTC to assess the various ways clinics promote diversity awareness, sensitivity, and multiculturalism education in clinics. The survey itself included many new ideas for the outreach committee to pursue, and further energized this committee’s focus on diversity issues. Simultaneously, clinical psychology students were becoming more impassioned about diversity issues due in part to having a strong, dynamic diversity class which included community based activities to foster the development of their multicultural competence.

These co-occurring events resulted in the clinical psychology graduate students, clinic co-directors, faculty and clinic supervisors deciding to organize a student-led Clinic Diversity Committee with the primary goals of fostering multicultural education and skill development for students, faculty and supervisors, recruiting more diverse clients to the clinic, creating a welcoming and safe environment for all clients, and organizing and participating in social justice activities to support multiculturalism and promote mental health advocacy. The CDC has some overlapping but also distinct goals with the GSU Psychology Department’s diversity committee, the clinical psychology faculty committee, and the diversity committee of the department’s graduate student organization (GASP).

The initial configuration of the CDC was primarily composed of a student chairperson(s) and clinical psychology graduate students, but also included the clinic co-directors, DCT, clinic supervisors, and some clinical faculty. A primary initial goal of the CDC was to create a diversity mission statement for the clinic, distinct from the mission and goals of the departmental diversity committee. CDC participants worked together to create a statement that would help guide the functioning of the CDC as well as inform the public about this initiative. The following statement was developed:

***We, the clinicians and supervisors of the GSU Psychology Clinic, value the differences and similarities among people, and respect the multiple identities of the clients and communities with whom we work. We define diversity broadly in terms of race, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation identity, age, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, physical and mental abilities, and gender identity.***

***We make ongoing efforts to increase our awareness of different identities and worldviews through science, training and practice. Our training in diversity includes required coursework, professional development seminars, exposure to the latest research, and supervision. In practice, we work hard to assure that our assessments and interventions are culturally competent. We also have an active clinic diversity committee comprised by student clinicians and supervisors.***

<https://psychologyclinic.gsu.edu/diversity/>

Over the years, the CDC has flourished with student membership. During student interview days each year, all interviewees get to meet with members of the CDC to learn about the goals and objectives of the committee, and learn how the Psychology Clinic plays an important role in multicultural education in the program. It is believed that this annual presentation during interviews, helps interviewees learn the importance of diversity training at GSU, and thus helps to recruit diverse students. Over the years, the CDC has expanded the leadership of the committee to include multiple student officers including Chair/Co-Chairs, Communications Representative, Outreach Coordinator, Clinic Liaison, Program Liaison, Treasurer, and Advocacy Liaison.

In 2016, the CDC applied for recognition by GSU as an official student organization, resulting in the development of an organization constitution, inclusion of undergraduate members of the CDC to help with certain activities, and an annual budget provided by the university. The application for official student organization status was approved in 2016 and the CDC was chartered to begin in the 2016-17 fiscal year. The CDC now receives some modest annual funds from the university matched by fundraising efforts of the CDC to assist in promoting CDC annual objectives.

Recent examples of CDC activities that aim to exemplify the objectives of the mission are:

**The CDC has helped facilitate a welcoming atmosphere in the clinic by:**

- Improving accessibility to the clinic and clinic bathrooms by advocating for automatic door operators; removing unneeded chairs from rooms that might decrease accessibility.
- Creating a welcoming waiting room with art with multicultural themes or subjects made by diverse artists, and offering magazines reflecting diverse cultures.
- Developing an effective clinic brochure and website that clearly represent the CDC's mission statement and examples of the clinic's efforts to promote multiculturalism and diversity training.
- Regularly reviewing the clinic forms to evaluate their effectiveness in assessing demographic variables in a sensitive manner that reduce the possibility of clients experiencing stereotype threat. A subcommittee of the CDC worked for months reviewing the literature and best practices regarding how to assess identities, and completely revised the way demographics are evaluated in the clinic.
- Advocating for more gender-neutral bathrooms on campus, and developing a map of existing gender neutral bathrooms for clinic clients and for the clinic website. The CDC has partnered with other groups on campus to provide a stronger voice about the needs for such accessibility.
- Creating a protocol and a mechanism for persons calling the clinic who are Spanish-only speaking persons to learn about the clinic and other community resources.
- Generating ideas for improving clinic policies to better meet the needs of the clinic's diverse clientele.

**The CDC has helped contribute to the multicultural training of student clinicians by:**

- Choosing speakers and/or developing a panel of speakers each year to present on diversity related topics in the biweekly Clinical Program meeting, which includes all clinical students and faculty. The focus of these presentations is to highlight evidence-based methods that are effective in working with diverse clients and communities. Workshops promoted by the CDC include bi-annual “Safe Zone” training.
- Providing a space off campus for students to engage in multicultural discussions related to clinical work and personal experiences, and to provide mutual support.
- Organizing “movie nights” and book groups related to promoting and exploring diversity as it pertains to clients and clinicians.
- Developing ideas for clinician self-care, including “art night” where clinicians and supervisors make large banners for social justice marches and parades.
- Sponsoring a student to attend the National Multicultural Conference and Summit.
- Reviewing the literature relevant to measuring multicultural competence to generate new ideas for fostering clinician multicultural development in the clinic.
- Currently considering ways to offer a travel fund for diverse student applicants to the clinical program.
- Attending various workshops and discussion panels focused on improving different facets of multiculturalism such as
  - LGBTQ Workplace Inclusion Luncheon & Panel Discussion
  - Student Veterans Association Discussion Panel
  - Southeastern Ecological-Community Conference

**The CDC has supported the multicultural training of clinic supervisors and faculty by:**

- Developing an annual survey for student clinicians that was completed voluntarily and anonymously that provided aggregate and anonymous feedback to supervisors, clinic co-directors, and the DCT about their experiences within supervision regarding multiculturalism issues. The survey, which was based on the premise that there may be unintentional “missed opportunities” in supervision to discuss cultural and diversity issues because of the supervisors’ and/or students’ limited awareness of, or hesitation to discuss these issues, was used for multiple years and helped promote more sophisticated multiculturalism supervision and identify topics and speakers at clinic meetings that would best facilitate diversity awareness and skill development for students and supervisors.
- Using the data from the “Missed Opportunities” identify specific supervision needs of students. This resulted in a paid consultant working with clinical faculty and supervisors on targeted issues to improve their competence in providing multicultural supervision.
- Organizing a training experience for clinicians and supervisors entitled “Psychologists and Hate Crimes: What is our role?” to increase awareness and learning opportunities surrounding issues pertaining to a hate crime that occurred within another academic setting.
- Assisting with the planning for a paid consultant, who was an expert in diversity issues in supervision, to meet with the clinical faculty for a series of sessions.
- Holding a 3-hour continuing education workshop on diversity issues germane to training student clinicians in supervision for both on- and off-campus supervisors.

**The CDC has helped facilitate diversity research by:**

- Receiving university IRB approval and using data from the annual “Missed Opportunities” questionnaires for systematic data collection and analysis; the CDC has presented these findings at two multicultural conferences.
- Awarding a fellow GSU student the annual “Cultural Humility in Research Award” during GSU’s “Research Day,” where clinical psychology students present their research to the entire clinical program. The CDC forms the selection committee, and uses specific criteria developed by the CDC to choose the awardee.

*In line with the goals of the Clinical Program’s Research Day and the Clinical Program’s Professional Competencies, the Clinic Diversity Committee’s Cultural Humility Award aims to:*

- a. Positively reinforce students for their research productivity and scientific endeavors, and*
- b. Reward students for demonstrating an understanding of the knowledge and skills that underlie cultural humility and for their ability to apply that understanding to their research.*

The awardee is provided free registration for the Multicultural conference and/or a membership/journal subscription for a diversity-related professional society, and tickets for the Museum of Human and Civil Rights.

- Planning a diversity-related research project to be conducted in the clinic.

**The CDC has promoted social Justice and mental health advocacy by:**

- Participating annually in the **Martin Luther King Jr. Day March** and the **Atlanta Pride Celebration Parade** by walking as a group with the clinic banner, and providing clinic information (and candy and brain “stress balls”!) to large, enthusiastic crowds. CDC participants also carry signs that
  - promote suicide prevention awareness
  - advocate for removing the stigma of mental illness
  - support psychology as a Science
  - proclaim that “Black Mental Health is Power”
  - identify awareness of “Silenced Voices” and the need to support these groups
  - and that state Dr. King’s quote, “**Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.**”
- Participating with other GSU groups and providing a booth at the Atlanta Pride Festival promoting clinic and other mental health resources in Atlanta to attendees.
- Presenting mental health related topics to GSU and Atlanta community organizations with a focus on accessibility for underserved populations.
- Providing a workshop for student military veterans about mental health challenges, and the importance of de-stigmatizing mental health needs.
- Participating in the Sai Health Fair (promotes health care accessibility), Autism U., and the Dyslexia Dash.

- Developing a digital resource library of resiliency resources for clinicians regarding community-wide traumatic events, particularly those affecting underserved and other vulnerable communities (e.g., violence against the African American and LGBT communities). This library includes resources for clients as well as self-care ideas for clinicians.
- Reviewing and discussing national, state, local, and GSU-specific policies or legislation that might impact the needs of the clinic's diverse clientele, and considers effective ways to respond.
- Identifying professional development opportunities to increase clinicians' skills related to client advocacy.
- Developing an effective clinic website that clearly represent the clinic's mission to engage in social justice activities in the community.
- Developing a Facebook group to highlight social justice opportunities.
- Developing a comprehensive referral list of English/Spanish bilingual service providers to improve accessibility of services.
- Partnering with other GSU groups regarding immigration issues, DACA, and promoting our clinic as a safe space for all to seek treatment.
- Participating in the annual Center for Black Women's Wellness Health Fair, which helps promote accessible and affordable health care options for African American women.
- Collaborating with other organizations to promote Black History Month, March for Science, Georgia Psychological Association advocating for policy/research at the capitol, the International Rescue Committee, and the New Americans Celebration.
- Establishing partnerships with other GSU and local organizations to promote awareness of clinical services for university students and staff (i.e. GSU Faculty/Staff Benefits Fair; Georgia Institute of Technology Intercollegiate conference).