

**The Help Group's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program in Clinical Psychology  
Focusing on Autism Spectrum Disorder  
2015-2016**

**THE HELP GROUP**

**Overview of the Agency**

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Founded in 1975, The Help Group is the largest, most innovative and comprehensive nonprofit of its kind in the United States serving children with special needs related to autism spectrum disorder, learning disabilities, ADHD, developmental delays, abuse and emotional problems.

The Help Group's nine specialized day schools offer pre-K through high school programs for more than 1,500 students. Its broad range of mental health and therapy services, child abuse and residential programs extends its reach to more than 6,000 children and their families each year. With more than 950 staff members, The Help Group's state-of-the-art schools and programs are located on seven campuses in the Los Angeles area.

Recognizing that the problems of our community are complex and multifaceted, The Help Group offers a continuum of services, ranging from outpatient therapy to 24-hour residential care. In addition, the programs within The Help Group are offered individually or may be combined to address the unique needs of each child or family. This range of services affords the thousands of children, adolescents, young adults and families served by The Help Group a tremendous opportunity for continuity of care, as clients can move fluidly from one level of care to another as needed.

The programs of The Help Group receive funding from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, the Los Angeles Unified School District, and other governmental agencies.

The programs of The Help Group serve a broad spectrum of children, adolescents, and families of varied ethnicities, cultural backgrounds and socioeconomic levels. Many of the clients in each of The Help Group programs live below the poverty level. All of The Help Group's services are designed to be sensitive to cultural differences and bilingual needs. Over 60% of The Help Group's clients are from minority populations. Bilingual staff are employed across all disciplines; current staff includes Spanish-speaking psychologists, social workers, in-home counselors and paraprofessionals. All services are offered in both Spanish and English. Our professional and paraprofessional staff is given ongoing in-service training in cultural complexity.

The Help Group is located in the suburban San Fernando Valley as well as in Culver City, both half an hour from downtown Los Angeles. All seven Help Group campuses are located in the culturally and ethnically diverse metropolis of Los Angeles where cultural,

professional and recreational opportunities abound. Numerous major universities, professional schools and training institutes are in close proximity.

The Post-doctoral Fellowship program in Clinical Psychology Focusing on Autism Spectrum Disorder provides Fellows an opportunity to be immersed in the programs and activities of the agency that focus on serving clients on the autism spectrum.

### **Programs Serving The Autism Spectrum Population**

The Help Group has been serving children with autism spectrum disorder since 1975. Currently, The Help Group offers diagnostic, therapeutic, and educational services to a full range of clients within the autism spectrum who span in age from infant to young adult, with the majority being school-aged. Approximately 500 clients with autism spectrum disorder are served in the following programs:

- **Young Learners Preschool for Autism** is designed for children with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental delays. This program assesses the nature and degree of the challenges each child is confronting and fosters development in all essential areas through an interdisciplinary approach.
- **Village Glen School** for students with social and communicative disorders, including Asperger's Disorder, high-functioning autism, and nonverbal learning disabilities. The Pace Program is available for gifted students. The Beacon Program educates students with behavioral challenges.
- **The Bridgeport Vocational Education Center** provides young adults with independent living skills training and vocational opportunities.
- **Bridgeport School** integrates an academic curriculum with hands-on life skills training and vocational services for students with mild cognitive delays and challenges in the areas of social communication and/or language development.
- **Sunrise School** is dedicated to promoting communicative, behavioral, social, academic, motor, adaptive and independent living skills. These comprehensive programs enable each student to maximize their potential.
- **The Help Group's Kids Like Me Program** conducts four unique camps, each one specifically designed to address varying ages, abilities and needs of children with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental challenges. Our four camp programs create exciting opportunities for children and teens to engage, experience and explore.
- **Kids Like Me Classes, Clubs & Activities** provide opportunities to have fun, connect with others, learn new skills, make friends and enjoy a sense of belonging.

- **club I.a. TEEN** is a social club for teens ages 13 to 17 with autism spectrum disorder and other special needs. Monthly events provide opportunities for making connections and building friendships with teens that share common interests.

### **Professional Development Opportunities**

As a leader in the service of clients with autism spectrum disorder, The Help Group provides a wide range of professional development opportunities to the community through major conferences and seminars, as well as a bi-annual newsletter featuring internationally recognized experts in the fields of Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder. Some examples of The Help Group's professional development and research activities include:

The Help Group Summit, a yearly national conference bringing together experts in the field of neurodevelopmental psychology and focusing on the latest research and the best practices in autism spectrum disorder, learning disabilities, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Advance LA offers an annual conference for parents and professionals on a variety of topics to meet the growing need to support teens and young adults during their transition to independence.

Helpletter, a professional newsletter published biannually as a public service to heighten awareness of issues related to children with special needs.

For more information regarding all of the Help Group's programs, please check our website: [www.thehelpgroup.org](http://www.thehelpgroup.org)

## **Core Training Faculty**

Dr. Karen Enyedy is the Chief Psychologist for The Help Group and Director of Training and oversees the Post-Doctoral Fellowship and the APA-accredited Doctoral Internship. Dr. Enyedy is a member of the California Psychology Association's Division II (Education and Training) Board of Directors, a member of the APPIC Internship Selection Committee, and is former Co-Chair of the Southern California Association of Psychology Training Programs. Dr. Enyedy meets with the Post-Doctoral Fellows weekly to supervise clinical work, to discuss professional identity issues, and/or to supervise them on skills related to clinical and administrative supervision.

Dr. Philip Levin is the Director of The Help Group-UCLA Neuropsychology Program. He provides supervision and consultation to the post-doctoral fellow on aspects of assessments and on research endeavors.

Dr. Alexandra Rudd-Barnard is a Clinical Neuropsychologist and supervises the post-doctoral fellow on assessment cases and supervises the post-doc on their supervision of practicum students in testing.

Dr. Ilene Bell, the agency's Director of Professional Development, supervises the Post-Doctoral Fellow on professional development and meets with the fellow quarterly to discuss the fellow's feedback of the program, training needs, and other professional topics.

## **Goals and Competencies of the Postdoctoral Fellowship**

**Goal 1: Assessment:** Post-Doctoral Fellows will develop advanced knowledge and skill levels in performing diagnostic and psychological assessments on young children (2-5), school-aged children, and adolescents suspected of having an autism spectrum disorder.

### **Competencies:**

- a. Possesses a clear understanding of the DSM-V criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder and how to use diagnostic tools and clinical judgment for accurate differential diagnosis.
- b. Considers individual and cultural differences when developing assessment battery, writing assessment reports, and making differential diagnoses.
- c. Reliably administers and scores standardized developmental, cognitive, adaptive, behavioral and social measures for young children (2-5) as well as school-aged/adolescent children.
- d. Writes reports which are thorough, well-written and easy for parents/educators to understand. Diagnosis and intervention suggestions are clearly supported by factors mentioned in report (e.g. are not "generic").
- e. Gives oral feedback to parents in a supportive, calming and empathic manner.

**Goal 2: Intervention:** Post-Doctoral Fellows will acquire knowledge and advanced skill in utilizing empirically supported psychotherapy techniques for young children, school-aged children, and adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder in school-based and/or outpatient settings.

**Competencies:**

- a. Is well-versed in the current literature on aspects of ASD which would affect clinical intervention strategies (e.g. theory of mind, executive functioning and central coherence deficits).
- b. Possesses advanced knowledge of the particular client strengths and weaknesses found across the autism spectrum which may impact educational learning, family life, independent living and relationship building.
- c. Establishes and maintains a working alliance with parents/caregivers.
- d. Incorporates intervention strategies into practice (ABA, PRT, play therapy, CBT, art/music, etc).
- e. Possesses theoretical understanding of how each intervention strategy is targeted at ameliorating characteristics of ASD. Ability to apply this knowledge to each individual case to support use of particular intervention strategies.
- f. Writes measurable, objective goals that address core deficits in the individual client.
- g. Works within and leads a multidisciplinary team (e.g., teachers, speech therapists, psychiatrists).
- h. Possesses awareness of and sensitivity to issues of individual, cultural, ethnic diversity and how they may impact treatment.
- i. Can independently assess and intervene in behavioral emergencies, including implementing a plan of action.

**Goal 3: Program Development and Evaluation:** Post-Doctoral Fellows will develop new, innovative programs within The Help Group's school-based and/or outpatient settings, and/or develop protocols for training professionals on how to screen, diagnose, and intervene with clients with ASD.

**Competencies:**

- a. Conducts a needs assessment to inform program development.
- b. Designs, markets, and implements a program and/or training protocol within the agency and/or within the community.
- c. Develops a research or program evaluation project from beginning to end which can be completed within one year.
- d. Provides consultation to program administrators regarding program effectiveness, and makes recommendations for changes within programs.

**Goal 4: Public Speaking:** Post-Doctoral Fellows will develop professional speaking and writing skills.

**Competencies:**

- a. Identifies training needs within and outside the agency and develops and presents in-service trainings.
- b. Synthesizes information on a particular area of ASD into a paper for publication or presentation at a national or local conference.
- c. Develops a format and style of presentation that is geared to a particular audience (e.g., parents, professionals, students).
- d. Produces articles and/or papers that are clearly and cogently written.
- e. Demonstrates skill at maintaining audience interest and involvement.
- f. Portrays professional demeanor during speaking engagements.

**Goal 5: Ethical and Legal Considerations:** Post-Doctoral Fellows will demonstrate knowledge of the legal and ethical principles that guide the practice of psychology.

**Competencies:**

- a. Is familiar with the legal and ethical guidelines in California, and the APA ethics code.
- b. Understands and conforms to all mental health reporting laws.
- c. Understands the boundaries and limits of confidentiality.
- d. Critically thinks through own and other's ethical dilemmas.
- e. Demonstrates awareness of when it would be prudent to consult and who would be an appropriate consultant.

**Goal 6: Professionalism:** Post-Doctoral Fellows will develop a clear professional identity as a psychologist with advanced knowledge of Autism Spectrum Disorder and will be prepared for independent practice.

**Competencies:**

- a. Appropriately accesses and uses supervision.
- b. Provides effective supervision and consultation to others (including teachers, mental health professionals, and other staff members).
- c. Completes paperwork in a timely manner.
- d. Maintains awareness of own strengths and weaknesses.
- e. Ability to work collegially with fellow professionals.
- f. Integrates into and understands the broader Help Group community.

**Postdoctoral Program Activities**

The Help Group training staff is dedicated to working with the postdoctoral fellow to tailor a program that will meet his/her specific professional interests and needs and that

capitalizes on the ideas, initiative and creativity of each fellow. Early in the training year, the fellow, in consultation with his/her supervisors, will prepare a learning plan outlining individualized training goals and the specific activities that will help them attain these goals. The fellow's initial self-assessment will aid in the creation of this plan. The fellow's subsequent self-assessment along with the supervisor's mid-year assessment in February will provide information at the mid-year mark for further refining the learning plan. At the end of the year the fellow will evaluate his/her growth through self-assessment and the supervisor will do likewise through the end-year evaluation. Similarly, as part of the program's ongoing self-study, post-doctoral fellows are asked to formally evaluate the program at mid-year and end-year. Due process/grievance procedures are clearly outlined in the Post-Doctoral Handbook and reviewed with the fellows at the onset of the training year.

Activities to meet the fellow's training goals will include the items with an asterisk, and may include any or all of the other activities:

1. Direct Service: Individual\*, family\* and group therapy, case management\*, multidisciplinary teamwork\*, and crisis intervention\* with six to eight clients with an autism spectrum disorder.
2. Intake evaluations: Conduct intake evaluations to determine appropriateness of clients for one of the Help Group Schools and present evaluation findings to the Admissions Committee.
3. Diagnostic Testing and Assessment\*: Assess infants through adults who are suspected of having an Autism Spectrum Disorder.
4. Program Development and Evaluation\*: Enhance current programs (e.g., pre-school, summer camp, assessment program) or create new programs for clients with an autism spectrum disorder (e.g. after school day program).
5. Applied Research: Participate in applied research on autism spectrum disorder
6. Supervision: Supervise Trainees and/or teachers and paraprofessionals\*; participate in supervision group for educational staff.
7. In-service trainings\*: Prepare and present in-service trainings for agency staff
8. Public Speaking\*: Presentations in forums for parents, educators, professionals, and other related service providers in the community.
9. Contributions to the field of neurodevelopmental disorders: publish papers and/or present at professional conferences.
10. Grant writing: assess needs of agency and write grants for agency programs.
11. Progress toward Licensure: Sit for the EPPP\*; Complete all required courses required for licensure in the State of California\*.

#### **Supervision and Training Activities:**

1. Individual supervision, minimum 2 hours/week.
2. Group supervision on clinical cases, minimum 1 hour per week.
3. Individual or group supervision on supervision and professional development, minimum 1 hour per week.
4. Attendance at weekly clinical staff meetings.
5. Attendance at The Help Group's Annual Summit.

6. Attendance at The Help Group's Adance.LA Annual Conference.
7. Participation in agency in-service trainings.
8. Attendance in courses relating to Autism at UCLA.
9. Attendance at Didactic Seminars, including, but not limited to: Diagnostic and Treatment Considerations for Children with autism spectrum disorder; Behavioral Interventions with children with autism spectrum disorder; Diagnosis of Pediatric Disorders.

**Qualifications:**

1. Completed all doctoral degree requirements (Ph.D. or Psy.D.) from an APA accredited graduate school.
2. Has attended an APA-accredited Internship or an APPIC-member internship where the focus is working with children and families.
3. Has some experience working with clients with an autism spectrum disorder.
4. Has experience conducting psychological testing with children.
5. Has experience working in a milieu environment or in a multidisciplinary team.
6. Has a significant interest in working with clients with an autism spectrum disorder and plans on specializing in this field.

**The following would be preferred (this is not in any particular order):**

1. Has some experience with program development/program evaluation.
2. Has some experience in applied research. Has done research on autism spectrum disorder, or has working knowledge of the literature in at least one area (e.g. theory of mind).
3. Has some experience with providing supervision.
4. Has good working knowledge of cognitive-behavioral therapy, and ability (or desire to learn) to apply this theoretical model to clients with ASD.
5. Strong understanding of behavior modification, particularly operant conditioning procedures.

**Logistics of the Training Year:**

1. The postdoctoral program typically begins the third week in August and runs for a full calendar year. (If this interferes with a current doctoral internship the start date may be open to negotiation.)
2. The stipend for the year is \$30,000.00, with an additional \$3,000.00 for fully bilingual Spanish-speaking fellows.
3. In addition, the following benefits are available:
  - health and dental benefits chosen from among different plans, requiring different contributions and beginning approximately October 1;
  - 80 hours of vacation;
  - nine holidays, when the agency is closed;
  - up to 64 hours of time devoted to professional development activities.
4. Fellows are provided with an office, computer and printer, voice mail, and email.
5. Fellows will provide the majority of services at the Sherman Oaks campus, but will also have the option of working at the Culver City and/or Van Nuys campuses, depending on the training needs of the fellow.



6. The postdoctoral hours meet the requirements for Supervised Professional Experience (SPE) in California. Fellows working full-time for the entire calendar year will accumulate 2000 hours of SPE.

**Application:**

The application includes the following:

1. Cover letter addressing your future career goals as well as what you are interested in learning and doing in your post-doctoral year as it relates to Autism Spectrum Disorder.
2. CV
3. 3 letters of recommendation (one of which must come from your internship program - either the primary supervisor or internship director).

All materials should be mailed to: Dr. Karen Enyedy, c/o The Help Group, 13130 Burbank Blvd., Sherman Oaks, CA 91401. The deadline for submission of these materials is 5:00 PM California time February 13, 2015.

After reviewing the application materials, a decision will be made regarding conducting in-person interviews. Subsequent to the interview, graduate and undergraduate transcripts will need to be submitted.

Please note that applicant acceptance is pending fingerprint clearance from the Department of Justice and the FBI, pre-employment physical, and verification of your legal right to work in the United States. Additionally, fellows are required to have a car for transport to the varying Help Group sites.

Please note that this description of the postdoctoral program is subject to change.