

**SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH  
POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP  
IN  
FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY**



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## OVERVIEW

The South Carolina Department of Mental Health/Division of Inpatient Services offers a unique opportunity for psychology fellows to develop both breadth and depth of knowledge and skill related to forensic psychological practice, particularly in the area of criminal forensic evaluation alongside the Forensic Psychiatry Fellowship with the University of South Carolina. The American Board of Forensic Psychology accepted the postdoctoral fellowship program for their Five-Year Experience Waiver as of July 2018.

We offer extensive evaluation, diagnostic, and forensic experience through performing a variety of evaluations in our Forensic Evaluation Services Department to include competency to stand trial, criminal responsibility, capacity to conform conduct, and Sexually Violent Predator evaluations.

We offer didactic and training experiences through a yearlong combination of practical experience coupled with educational (e.g., forensic readings) and training seminars (e.g., landmark cases) under the supervision of our training director, licensed forensic practitioners, and our forensic psychiatry fellows and training staff.

## TRAINING GOALS

The fellowship is designed to prepare psychologists to function as specialists in the area of criminal forensic assessment. At the end of the yearlong training program, it is expected fellows will have:

- Knowledge of the basic principles of the legal system, legal doctrines relevant for forensic evaluations, as well as the core legal cases relevant to Forensic Psychology.
- Knowledge of forensic psychological evaluation methods, including specialized assessment instruments used in forensic psychological practice.
- Knowledge of, and practice consistent with, the Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychologists and the Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct for Psychologists.
- Consumption of and adherence to research affecting forensic practice to include awareness of current controversies in the field of forensic psychology.
- Knowledge of rules, procedures, and techniques related to expert witness testimony and the ability to provide expert testimony, to include the standards for admissibility of expert testimony in federal and state courts.
- Attainment of advanced skill in providing forensic psychological services sufficient to practice on an independent basis.
- Eligibility for state licensure for the independent practice of psychology.
- Eligibility for board certification in Forensic Psychology by the American Board of Professional Psychology.

## TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The fellowship is divided into two six-month rotations, each providing extensive exposure to criminal forensic evaluation.

### ***Forensic Evaluation Services Rotation –***

This rotation focuses on conducting forensic evaluations related to competency to stand trial and criminal responsibility and capacity to conform conduct to the requirements of the law. This department receives referrals for the entire state allowing exposure to evaluating males, females, and juveniles\* with a wide range of legal and diagnostic issues. More often than not, referrals contain requests for both types of evaluations, providing considerable experience answering both psycholegal questions.

Fellows will have the opportunity to conduct several evaluations per week as well as observe and/or assist with expert opinion and court testimony as available. These evaluations may also contain the assessment of malingering/effort and/or intelligence testing as needed.

When available, the opportunity to reevaluate a defendant after a period of competency restoration will be provided, as the restoration period is 60 days in South Carolina. Additionally, while not the primary exposure on this rotation, experience with juvenile competency evaluations can be accommodated should the fellow have an interest in that area.

### ***Sexually Violent Predator Rotation –***

Sexually Violent Predator (SVP) is a legal term used to describe a unique subgroup of sexual offenders, held civilly after their period of incarceration has ended, until deemed safe to be at large and not likely to sexually recidivate upon release. These offenders are housed in mental health facilities for long-term control, care, and treatment. This rotation provides the opportunity to conduct two types of evaluations with this population.

- Precommitment Evaluations:
  - Prior to their commitment, individuals meeting a particular threshold are evaluated to determine if they meet criteria for commitment under the SVP Act. These evaluations assess the presence of a “mental abnormality” and the degree to which it affects a person's emotional or volitional capacity that predisposes them to commit sexually violent offenses. Fellows will conduct these evaluations and observe and/or assist with court testimony related to their findings when appropriate. Evaluations consist of extensive diagnostic and risk assessment discussion.

- Annual Review Evaluations:
  - Once committed, SVPs are evaluated annually to determine whether there is “probable cause to believe the resident’s mental abnormality or personality disorder has so changed that the person is safe to be at large and, if released, is not likely to commit acts of sexual violence.” Fellows will have the opportunity to conduct these evaluations and provide court testimony as required. These evaluations consist of actuarial and dynamic risk assessment discussion.

Both evaluations will provide training on structured and semi-structured interview methodologies as well as exposure to the scoring and interpretation of actuarial risk assessment measures (e.g., the Static-99R and 2002R), dynamic risk assessment, and the assessment of psychopathy (e.g., the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised). Other measures (e.g., personality assessment, intelligence testing, malingering) may also be incorporated when needed.

#### *Didactics and Other Trainings*

Extensive psycholegal education and training is provided throughout the year, nearly all of which is in concert with the forensic psychiatry fellowship. Each training area is designed to comply with the standards and expectations of the American Board of Forensic Psychology covering case law, ethics, and socio-cultural/ethnic factors related to performing forensic assessments.

- **General Topics in Forensic Psychology** meets weekly and covers a wide variety of topics related to forensic psycholegal practice, to include ethics.
- **Landmark Case Seminar** meets weekly and covers more than 100 of the major landmark cases in mental health law, to include cases unique/relevant to South Carolina.
- **Fundamentals of the Legal System Seminar** meets weekly and covers topics related to the legal system, to include the juvenile system, and covers standards for admissibility of expert testimony in federal and state courts.
- **Evaluators Seminar** meets quarterly and covers topics related to the various nuances involved in forensic report writing and answering psycholegal questions in written and verbal means (e.g., testimony).

### *Additional Trainings*

- **Grand Rounds** – are frequently offered on Fridays and cover a wide variety of topics related to the assessment and treatment of mental health issues. Fellows will have the opportunity to present a topic of choice at a grand rounds during the training year.
- **Mock Trial** – several mock trial experiences will be held during the second rotation providing the opportunity for voir dire, direct, and cross-examination.

### *Supervision*

All aspects of the fellowship are designed to provide the required number of supervised experience to meet licensure requirements in South Carolina as well as the expectations of the American Board of Forensic Psychology. All experiences are under the supervision of the training director and licensed forensic practitioners. In addition to the evaluations and various seminars, fellows will receive two-and-one-half hours per week of individual supervision with the primary supervisor and at least two hours per week of group supervision with qualified supervisor(s).

### **Required Texts:\***

- Doren, D. M. (2002). *Evaluating sex offenders: A manual for civil commitments and beyond*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Melton, G. B., Petrila, J., Poythress, N. G., Slobogin, C., Otto, R. K., Mossman, D., & Condie, L. O. (2018). *Psychological evaluations for the courts: A handbook for mental health professionals and lawyers* (4th ed.). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Otto, R. K., & Weiner, I. B. (Eds.). (2013). *Handbook of psychology: Forensic psychology* (Vol. 11). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Packer, I. K. (2009). *Best practices in forensic mental health assessment: Evaluation of criminal responsibility*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Rosner, R. (2003). *Principles and practice of forensic psychiatry* (2nd ed.). London, England: CRC Press.
- Witt, P. H., & Conroy, M. A. (2009). *Best practices in forensic mental health assessment: Evaluation of sexually violent predators*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Zapf, P. A., & Roesch, R. (2009). *Best practices in forensic mental health assessment: Evaluation of competence to stand trial*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.

*\*The required texts/readings will be available/provided to fellows during the fellowship.*

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Two postdoctoral positions are available. Fellows will be employees of the South Carolina Department of Mental Health Inpatient Services in the Forensic Evaluation Services department. The stipend for the 12-month appointment for 2020-2021 is \$47,700. In addition, fellows will accrue vacation and sick leave hours each month and have the opportunity to enroll in State retirement, health, vision, and dental insurance plans.

Those interested in applying should provide the following:

- A letter of interest detailing why you want to train at our program and what you hope to gain from the rotations/trainings offered. The letter should also speak to your long-term goals as a forensic psychologist.
- A current curriculum vitae.
- Three letters of recommendation, one of which should be from a current supervisor.
- An original copy of your graduate school transcript(s).
- Two recent sample reports (ideally within the past 12 months) and a cover statement as to why you chose to submit these two samples. As much as possible, the submitted reports should reflect your own independent work, rather than a report heavily edited by a supervisor.

If you have not yet received your degree, you should submit a letter from your graduate school's Director of Clinical Training or dissertation chair discussing the progress on your dissertation and progress towards the completion of your degree requirements.

Materials can be emailed to the Postdoctoral Training Director at [rozanna.tross@scdmh.org](mailto:rozanna.tross@scdmh.org) or mailed to 7901 Farrow Road, Building 6 Columbia, SC 29203. Questions related to the fellowship should also be directed to Dr. Tross at the above email address.

**Applications are due 12/15/20 and interviewing will begin 01/19/21.  
The fellowship begins 09/01/21.**

## SELECTION CRITERIA

The South Carolina Department of Mental Health is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, color, ethnicity, national origin, disability, age, or sexual orientation.

It is preferred that prospective fellows have a Ph.D./Psy.D. in Clinical or Clinical Forensic Psychology and have completed an APA approved internship. All degree requirements are

to be completed by the start of the fellowship. Previous forensic experience is strongly preferred, though not required. We are looking for incoming fellows who have the following:

- The ability to conduct productive interviews and mental status examinations;
- The ability to administer, interpret, and score commonly used psychometric measures;
- The ability to write succinct and relevant reports that effectively incorporate extensive data sets; and
- The ability to communicate findings to audiences with varying familiarity with psychological knowledge.

### FELLOWSHIP SUPERVISORS



#### **Rozanna Tross, Psy.D.**

Dr. Tross is a chief psychologist with the department and the Training Director for the SCDMH Forensic Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Program. She received her Psy.D. in Clinical Forensic Psychology from Alliant International University in Los Angeles, completed her pre-doctoral internship at the United States Penitentiary in Hazelton, West Virginia, and completed her post-doctoral fellowship at East Central Regional Hospital in Augusta, Georgia. Dr. Tross has previously worked with Sexually Violent Predator programs in both Iowa and Massachusetts. At SCDMH, she works with the Forensic Evaluation Services Department conducting competency to stand trial, criminal responsibility/capacity to conform, and SVP evaluations. Her research interests include public policy related to the treatment, assessment, and management of sexual offenders



and best practices related to forensic assessments to include risk, paraphilias, and psychopathy.

**Kelly Gothard, Ph.D.**

Dr. Gothard is the Clinical Director for the SCDMH Forensic Evaluation Services (FES). She received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Auburn University where she focused her clinical training and research experiences on juvenile delinquency and sex offender evaluation and treatment. She completed her pre-doctoral internship at William S. Hall Psychiatric Institute/ USC Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science in 2008. She has previously worked as a psychologist for the SC Department of Juvenile Justice and in the South Carolina Sexually Violent Predator Treatment Program as the Clinical Director. In her current role as Clinical Director of FES, Dr. Gothard is responsible for overseeing the operations of the department and all forensic and SVP evaluations performed for the state of South Carolina. She also conducts competency to stand trial, criminal responsibility/capacity to conform, and SVP evaluations. Her research and public policy interests include psychopathy, sex offender evaluation and treatment, and SVP management.

**Rachel Carter, Ph.D.**

Dr. Carter is a Chief Psychologist in the SCDMH Forensic Evaluation Services. She received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of North Texas and completed her pre-doctoral internship and forensic post-doctoral fellowship at Patton State Hospital, the largest forensic hospital in the United States. She has presented at national conferences (e.g., the American Psychology-Law Society) on topics, including psychopathy and gender norm conformity, the validity of the Comprehensive Assessment of Psychopathic Personality – Institutional Rating Scale (CAPP-IRS), and juveniles' understanding of the Miranda Rights. She specializes in forensic assessment and has conducted disability evaluations, juvenile predisposition evaluations, sex offender risk assessments, and violence risk assessments. Dr. Carter currently conducts competency to stand trial, criminal responsibility/capacity to conform, and SVP evaluations.

**Marie Gehle, Psy.D.**

Dr. Gehle is a Chief Psychologist in the SCDMH Forensic Evaluation Services. She received her Psy.D in Clinical Psychology from Xavier University, completed her pre-doctoral internship at Western State Hospital in Tacoma Washington, and completed her post-doctoral fellowship at East Central Regional Hospital in Augusta Georgia. During her tenure at SCDMH, Dr. Gehle has conducted SVP evaluations and supervised SVP treatment; currently she primarily conducts pre-commitment SVP evaluations. She also holds an academic position as an Assistant Professor, Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science, University of South Carolina School of Medicine.

### **Christopher Gillen, Ph.D.**

Dr. Gillen is a Staff Psychologist in the SCDMH Forensic Evaluation Services. He received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Southern Mississippi and completed his pre-doctoral internship at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in August, 2018. He completed his Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Forensic Psychology at Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center (SRSTC) and Mendota Mental Health Institute (MMHI) in September, 2019. Following completion of his fellowship, Dr. Gillen accepted a position as a Staff Psychologist with the SCDMH Forensic Evaluation Services. He is currently a licensed psychologist in the state of Wisconsin.

### **Samantha Horsley, Ph.D., ABPP**

Dr. Horsley is a Chief Psychologist in the SCDMH Forensic Evaluation Services. She received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Sam Houston State University, completed her pre-doctoral internship at the US Medical Center for Federal Prisoners, and completed her post-doctoral fellowship at Texas Tech University/Lubbock Regional MHMR. She also is board certified in forensic psychology. In South Carolina, Dr. Horsley first worked in the SCDMH Forensic Evaluation Services performing competency to stand trial and criminal responsibility/capacity to conform evaluations. She then worked at the SC Department of Juvenile Justice conducting post-adjudicatory, psychosexual, and pre-waiver evaluations and supervising a team of community evaluators. Dr. Horsley returned to the Forensic Evaluation Services in 2018 and currently conducts competency to stand trial, criminal responsibility/capacity to conform, and SVP evaluations. Dr. Horsley also holds an academic position as a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science at the University of South Carolina, which enables her to provide supervision and didactic training to fellows completing the Department's forensic psychiatry fellowship.

### **Michelle A. Jones, J.D., Ph.D.**

Dr. Jones is a Chief Psychologist in the SCDMH Forensic Evaluation Services. She received her J.D. from Harvard Law School and practiced law in Washington, D.C. for a number of years. She later received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from The University of Alabama and completed her pre-doctoral internship at Patton State Hospital. Dr. Jones came to SCDMH after her internship and currently conducts competency to stand trial, criminal responsibility/capacity to conform, and SVP evaluations. Her research and public policy interests include legal decision-making, the validation and use of malingering/response style measures in forensic assessments, psychopathy, and SVP evaluation best practices.

### **Stephanie Le, M.D.**

Dr. Le is a Chief Psychiatrist in the SCDMH Forensic Evaluation Services. She received her M.D. from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine. She completed her General Psychiatry residency at Prisma Health (formerly Palmetto Health)/USC, then a Forensic Psychiatry Fellowship at Prisma Health/USC. She is board certified in General Psychiatry and board eligible for Forensic Psychiatry. Dr. Le came to SCDMH after

serving as the director of inpatient services at the South Carolina Department of Corrections and currently conducts competency to stand trial, criminal responsibility/capacity to conform, and SVP evaluations. She sees all of the NGRI clients in the state of South Carolina as part of the NGRI Outreach Clinic to monitor for compliance with their court orders and evaluates their psychiatric stability. She manages a caseload of severely and persistently mentally ill clients at the Columbia Area Mental Health Center in the division of Adult Intensive Services. Her research pertains to Geriatric Polypharmacy and her public policy interests include ways in which services can be appropriately provided to the severely mentally ill in a safe and humane way. She currently serves as an executive board member of the South Carolina Psychiatric Association and is a member of the South Carolina Medical Association Interspecialty Council.

**Jeffrey M. Washelesky, Psy.D.**

Dr. Washelesky is a Staff Psychologist in the SCDMH Forensic Evaluation Services. He received his Psy.D. in Clinical Forensic Psychology from the Chicago School of Professional Psychology and completed his pre-doctoral internship at Oregon State Hospital in August, 2018. On internship, he worked as a unit psychologist on maximum security competency restoration and guilty except insane (GEI) admission units. He also completed a number of forensic evaluations and violence risk assessments. He completed his Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Forensic Psychology at SCDMH Forensic Evaluation Services, graduating in August 2019, and has remained on as Staff Psychologist conducting competency to stand trial, criminal responsibility/capacity to conform, and SVP evaluations.

## AFFILIATED FACULTY

### **Richard L. Frierson, M.D.**

Dr. Frierson is Professor of Psychiatry and Vice Chair for Education in the Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine. He also is the Program Director for the USC School of Medicine Forensic Psychiatry Fellowship, which partners with the SCDMH Forensic Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Program on didactic and training opportunities. Dr. Frierson received his medical degree from the University of South Carolina and completed his residency and a forensic psychiatry fellowship at the William S. Hall Psychiatric Institute. He is the current President of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law (AAPL), the past President of the South Carolina Psychiatric Association, and a Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association. He is board certified in psychiatry and forensic psychiatry and has received numerous awards, including the AAPL 2016 Seymour Pollack Distinguished Achievement Award. Dr. Frierson also has authored numerous publications on a variety of psychiatry/law topics.

### **Kaustubh G. Joshi, M.D.**

Dr. Joshi is Associate Professor of Neuropsychiatry & Behavioral Science at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine. He is also the Assistant Program Director for the USC School of Medicine Forensic Psychiatry Fellowship, which partners with the SCDMH Forensic Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Program on didactic and training opportunities. Dr. Joshi received his medical degree from UMDNJ – New Jersey Medical School, completed his residency at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, and completed his fellowship at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine. He is board certified in psychiatry and forensic psychiatry and has authored numerous publications on a variety of psychiatry/law topics.

## FELLOWSHIP ALUMNI

### **Kelsey Laxton, Ph.D.**

Dr. Laxton received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology with an emphasis in forensic psychology from Sam Houston State University. She completed her pre-doctoral internship on the Inpatient Forensic Track at the Federal Correctional Complex in Butner, North Carolina. Currently, she is a clinical psychologist at the Federal Correctional Institution - Williamsburg in Salters, South Carolina. She hopes to continue working in forensic psychology by conducting SVP evaluations as well.

**Jeffrey M. Washelesky, Psy.D.**

Dr. Washelesky received his Psy.D. in Clinical Forensic Psychology from the Chicago School of Professional Psychology and completed his pre-doctoral internship at Oregon State Hospital. Currently, he is a Staff Psychologist with the SCDMH's Forensic Evaluation Services. He is licensed in South Carolina and is awaiting licensure in Oregon.

**COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA**

The city of Columbia, locally referred to as “Cola” or “Soda City,” is located approximately 13 miles northwest of the geographic center of South Carolina, and is the primary city of the Midlands region of the state. It lies at the union of the Saluda River and the Broad River, which merge at Columbia to form the Congaree River. Columbia is home to the University of South Carolina and Fort Jackson, the largest United States Army installation for Basic Combat Training.

Columbia combines the gracious living of its past with the excitement of the New South. It is a city where steel and glass structures rub shoulders with stately homes and turn-of-the-century warehouses that now serve as modern offices; where the friendly nature of its residents is matched only by its welcoming climate. One of the first planned cities in America, Columbia is a community that's easy to get to know, easy to love.

Columbia is a beautiful and affordable place to live. It offers one-of-a kind architecture, natural scenic beauty, amazing dining options, shopping and everything in between. Home prices in Columbia are well below the national average and those who aren't ready to buy will find no shortage of rental homes or apartment complexes.

Columbia enjoys a typical Southern, subtropical climate with short, mild winters that make snowfall a treat every few years. Located in the center of the state, Columbia is equally close to the mountains and the beach. Historic Charleston and the island resorts of Hilton Head and Kiawah are about a two-hour drive; Myrtle Beach and the beaches of the Grand Strand are approximately three hours away, as are the Blue Ridge Mountains. Interstates 20, 26 and 77 converge here, and Interstates 85 and 95 are nearby, putting most East Coast and many Midwest cities within a day's drive.

Cultural activities abound, and you will find both big-city variety and quaint, local offerings. Columbia is the place to be for sports (football, baseball, basketball, golf) and is ideal for outdoors enthusiasts, so rollerblading, biking and running can be enjoyed comfortably year-round. There are also adult league teams for disc golf, bowling, softball, tennis, soccer, flag football, basketball, corn hole, mini-golf, kickball, and volleyball.

Columbia's three major rivers serve as a natural playground for young and old alike. Walking trails and parks line the banks of the Saluda, Broad and Congaree Rivers downtown, and the gentle flow of their waters offers numerous opportunities to float, paddle, boat and fish. Nearby Lake Murray, with its 612-mile shoreline, provides access to a recreational paradise where you can walk across the dam, cast a line, rent a boat, or just take a swim. There is hiking at the Congaree National Park or any of the 47 state parks. Another favorite destination is the Riverbanks Zoo & Botanical Garden, among the top 20 zoos in the country.