

POLICY REGARDING TRAINEES WITH DISABILITIES

Introduction

Disability as a characteristic of the psychotherapist needs to be addressed for several reasons. First, substantial evidence indicates that people without visible disabilities or physical differences regard persons who diverge from ideals of physical perfection and norms of physical acceptability with a variety of emotions which, at the very least, alter ordinary social interaction. Second, literature on psychotherapy with disabled clients and the developmental literature about people with disabilities reinforce the generally negative or ambivalent attitudes about the mental well-being and potential for productivity and intimacy of people with disabilities. As a consequence of both general acculturation and professional training in psychotherapy, professionals in charge of admissions have frequently denied competent disabled people the graduate education which is prerequisite to psychotherapy training and professional employment. Mental health practitioners who make up the training committees of psychotherapy training organizations have frequently been reluctant to accept a disabled candidate for psychotherapy training.

Once trained, many disabled clinicians have faced hurdles in obtaining employment, in advancing within their profession, in being selected as faculty members or supervisors, and even in obtaining referrals from nondisabled colleagues.

People with disabilities appear to be underrepresented in psychotherapy, both as practitioners and trainees, and the lack of supervisors with disabilities deprives supervisees of much-needed mentors and role models.

In addition, psychotherapy trainees with disabilities face significant barriers, most psychotherapy trainees reporting experiencing discrimination based on their disabilities.

Training programs should be enhanced, while disability needs to be included in the definition of diversity across all levels of professional education and training.

Mission

At ACCPI we value diversity in our community, and we accept responsibility to provide access and educational opportunities to trainees with disabilities. Our mission regarding this population is to achieve an accessible environment where otherwise qualified trainees with disabilities have equal opportunity to fully participate in all ACCPI programs and activities.

Definition

A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities (walking, standing, seeing, speaking, hearing, breathing, learning, taking care of oneself).

Rights and Responsibilities of Trainees

Every trainee with a documented disability has the right to:

- Equal access to courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities offered at ACCPI;
- Appropriate confidentiality of all information regarding a disability and the choice to whom a disability is disclosed except as required or permitted by law;
- Information, reasonably available in accessible formats.

Every trainee with a documented disability has the responsibility to:

- Meet qualifications and essential standards as determined by ACCPI for courses, programs, services, and facilities;

- Provide documentation of the disability from an appropriate professional including information about the functional limitations of the disability;
- Follow specific procedures for obtaining academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;

Rights and Responsibilities of ACCPI

ACCPI has the right to:

- Maintain essential standards for courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities;
- Request current documentation by an appropriate professional and supplied by the trainee that confirms disability status and supports the need for appropriate academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- Deny a request for academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services if documentation does not support a need for the requested service, or if the documentation is not provided in a timely manner;
- Select among equally effective academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services as judged by ACCPI with consideration for cost and/or availability;
- Deny a request for an inappropriate or unreasonable adjustment, and/or auxiliary aid or service including any that poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, imposes a fundamental alteration to a course or program, or poses an undue financial or administrative burden on ACCPI.

ACCPI has the responsibility to:

- Ensure that ACCPI courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities, when viewed in their entirety, are offered in the most integrated and appropriate settings;
- Provide information regarding policies and procedures to trainees with disabilities in accessible formats upon request;
- Evaluate trainees on the basis of their abilities and not their disabilities;
- Provide or arrange reasonable and appropriate academic adjustments, and auxiliary aids and/or services for trainees with disabilities upon request;
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication regarding trainees with disabilities, except where permitted or required by law.

Admissions

ACCPI seeks a trainee body that reflects diversity in society. Qualified persons may not, on the basis of disability, be denied admission to, enrollment in, or participation in ACCPI programs or activities, or be discriminated against in admissions or recruitment.

Financial Aid

Financial aid will be awarded to qualifying trainees to the extent permitted by national guidelines.

Confidentiality

Documentation and the nature of a trainee's disability is confidential information. This information is treated as medical documentation and handled under the same rules of confidentiality as other medical information. Information regarding disability gained from medical and/or psychological evaluation will be considered confidential and shared within the institution on a need to know basis only. Unless there is a threat to an individual's safety and/or emergency situation, consent of the trainee will be requested before releasing medical or



psychological documentation to a third party. Circumstances that may warrant such disclosure may include:

- Concerns for the student's health
- Grievance procedures
- Special financial aid considerations.

Documentation

In order to establish eligibility for services, ACCPI may require documentation that both verifies the existence of disability. The responsibility and cost of obtaining documentation is borne by the trainee. If the documentation supplied by the trainee is insufficient to establish disability, ACCPI will require the trainee to provide additional documentation at his/her expense.