



WILLIAM JAMES
COLLEGE

WELCOME COUNSELING M.A. STUDENTS

PRESENTED BY

MELISSA KOEN, M.S., LMHC

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF FIELD EDUCATION

FIELD EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

MISSION

We strive to be a preeminent school of psychology that integrates **rigorous academic instruction** with **extensive field education** and close attention to **professional development**. We assume an ongoing **social responsibility** to create programs to educate specialists of many disciplines to meet the evolving mental health needs of society.



CORE VALUES

Experiential Education

Integrate rigorous academic instruction with broad and general clinical experience.

Social Responsibility

Educate providers to meet a diverse society's evolving mental health needs, including cultural sensitivity and language training. Promote access to mental health care for all persons.

Personal Growth

Foster a supportive and challenging learning environment that focuses on personal and professional development.



SECTION 1: TIMELINE AND EXPECTATIONS

- We recommend that you begin your field site search as soon as possible after you submit your deposit. A Field Education Survey will be included in your welcome packet for you to complete and submit to the Counseling Department's Field Education office.
- We work with students from March through mid-summer to help each trainee secure a field training site. You will receive instructions about how to schedule an individual phone appointment of approximately 30 minutes with your field education advisor to learn about practicum training site options.
- We require the submission of an updated resume and sample cover letter. These will be reviewed and returned to you. Once these materials are approved, you may begin applying to sites.



SECTION 2: FIRST YEAR PRACTICUM

Components of the First Year Practicum

- Timing and Variations
- Direct Service
- Supervision
- Additional Learning Opportunities
- Location

FIRST YEAR PRACTICUM (CONT.)

Timing and Variations – Part 1

- Minimum of 32 weeks for 12-16 hours per week (including two weeks of vacation)
- Approximately 2 days per week
- 360 hours minimum for the practicum
- Generally at the field site from early-September until May or June



FIRST YEAR PRACTICUM (CONT.)

Timing and Variations – Part 2

- Two weeks pre-approved and pre-scheduled vacation at most sites
- Note: School settings generally have different policies.
- Note: Site vacations do not generally match the college calendar.

FIRST YEAR PRACTICUM (CONT.)

Direct Service

25-50% of your time on-site will include:

- Milieu time with clients
- Intake and assessments
- Co-leading groups
- Individual and group work
- Consultation with families and collaterals

Remaining time on-site will include indirect/support hours.

FIRST YEAR PRACTICUM (CONT.)

Supervision

- Our students are supervised at their training sites by independently licensed mental health counselors (LMHCs), social workers (LICSWs), marriage and family therapists (LMFTs), psychologists, and psychiatrists.
- In addition to the license, the supervisor must have three years of full-time or equivalent part-time post-licensure clinical mental health counseling experience.



FIRST YEAR PRACTICUM (CONT.)

Additional Learning Opportunities

Training at the practicum level varies by site and may include:

- Shadowing
- Case conferences
- Additional supervisory experiences
- Clinical meetings



FIRST YEAR PRACTICUM (CONT.)

Location

- We have training relationships with approximately 75 training sites.
- The sites are located within 90 minutes of the Newton Campus.
- **A car is required for travel to your field placement.**

SECTION 3: RESUME

General Considerations

- Your resume should include information that is key to securing your first field placement.
- It should include only relevant academic, work, and volunteer experience.
- **For those with more relevant experience**, highlight the key features of your experience that prospective field sites may find most relevant to your placement.

RESUME (CONT.)

General Considerations

- **For those with less experience**, think in terms of what you have done during college, at part-time jobs, during summers, and during your volunteer experiences that may overlap with the mission and work of the field site.



RESUME (CONT.)

General Considerations

•Your resume should not include:

- Specific undergraduate courses unless relevant
- Grade point average
- High school academic record or experiences

RESUME (CONT.)

Formatting Guidelines:

- 1) Length:** For most incoming students who are recent graduates of college or have only had one or two positions, a one-page resume is appropriate. Students who graduated several years ago or have more experience should plan on having a two-page resume.
- 2) Font Size and Type:** Font should be no smaller than 12 point. Use clean, easy-to-read fonts like Times New Roman, Calibri, or Garamond.



RESUME (CONT.)

- 3) **Margins:** Use one-inch margins all around.

- 4) **Name in header:** If your resume is two pages, your name and page number should be on the second page. In the event that the pages get separated, this ensures that they can be reunited.

- 5) **Personal Information:** Do not include personal information, such as marital status, health, children, hobbies, etc., in your resume unless you have a legitimate, professional reason for doing so.



RESUME (CONT.)

Sections:

- 1) Header/Contact Information:** use institution email address.
- 2) Education:** List, in reverse chronological order, all of the institutions you have attended since high school.
- 3) Professional/Work Experience:** Include work in the mental health field, as well as unrelated work experiences that demonstrate relevant skills and abilities.

RESUME (CONT.)

4) Volunteer and Community Service: Focus on experiences that are related to your interest in becoming a mental health professional.

5) Possible Additional Sections:

- Research Experience
- Teaching Experience
- Publications
- Presentations and Workshops
- Professional Licenses and Affiliations
- Language Skills

SECTION 4: COMMON MISTAKES SEEN ON RESUMES

1) Typos

Frequent editing of resumes often results in grammatical, punctuation, and formatting errors. Pay attention to the accuracy of dates. Do not leave evidence of “track changes.”

2) Too little information

When describing your experiences, it is important to have at least 2 bullets and preferably 3 or 4 bullets outlining your key accomplishments for each position/experience.



COMMON MISTAKES SEEN ON RESUMES (CONT.)

3) Too much information

Resumes are best at one to two pages to ensure that they be read closely. **Note:** It is often harder to write a brief resume that synthesizes, prioritizes, and conveys the most important information about you.

4) Formatting

Focus is on a clean and legible resume. Save as a pdf. Send to a friend or to another email address to be sure that the format is preserved and that “track changes” are not visible.



COMMON MISTAKES SEEN ON RESUMES (CONT.)

5) **Confidential or unnecessary personal information**

New York Times test: If you would not want to see it on the front page of the paper with your name attached, do not put it on your resume (or in your cover letter)!

6) **Avoid misunderstandings**

Focus on accuracy: dates, degrees earned, honors received

Note: Some of this information concerning resume mistakes comes from Laszlo Bock, Influencer at Google (2014)

Sample:

Rhonda Smith
425 Grand Avenue
Brookline, MA 02445
617-443-7589
rhonda_smith@williamjames.edu

EDUCATION

William James College, Newton, MA Beginning August 2017
(Formerly Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology)
Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, expected June 2019
Emphasis in Forensic and Correctional Counseling

Hamilton College, Clinton, NY May 2012
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Minor in Spanish
Honors: Dean's List

PROFESSIONAL/WORK EXPERIENCE

Waltham Community Mental Health Center, Waltham, MA May 2013 – present
Rehabilitation Specialist

- Planned, implemented, and facilitated recovery-oriented support groups to enhance rehabilitation of members.
- Assisted persons in recovery from mental illness with important tasks like finding a job, paying bills, attending doctors' appointments, and otherwise re-entering the broader community.
- Acted as a liaison to other service providers on a weekly basis.
- Supervised work tasks by providing time-limited job coaching to members to build skills like managing a cash register and to develop the self-confidence to work in the community.

Panera Bread Cafe, Needham, MA July 2012 – May 2013
Shift Supervisor

- Supervised 15-person crew of cashiers and order prep line workers for high-volume bakery-café to meet company standards for customer service and food quality.
- Participated in bi-weekly management meeting to review bakery-café operations and progress toward sales goals.
- Assisted with hiring and training of associates.
- Promoted to Shift Supervisor from cashier position after nine months.

Rhonda Smith

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VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Hamilton College, Clinton, NY Aug. 2011 – May 2012
Resident Advisor, University House System

- Advised 80 transfer and upper class students in residence hall.
- Addressed range of issues related to students' psychological, emotional, social, and academic needs.
- Created programming to promote community and resident well-being.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Clinton, NY Aug. 2010 – May 2012
Volunteer Big Brother

- Mentored and served as a role model for two adolescent boys.
- Engaged boys in recreational team sports.
- Provided mathematics tutoring.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Northeastern University, Boston, MA Sept. 2012 – May 2013
Research Assistant

- Provided research support to Gregory Jacobs, Ph.D.
- Researched topics in developmental psychology using online databases, including ERIC and [PsycInfo](#), and created annotated bibliography.
- Engaged in weekly discussion meetings, and assisted with interview scheduling, protocol development, and database maintenance.
- Participated in the development of coding manuals for field research in developmental psychology.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Intermediate reading, writing, and speaking skills in Spanish.



SECTION 5: COVER LETTERS

General Considerations

- A different letter is required for each application.
- Introduce who you are and the purpose of your letter.
- Summarize experience as a complement to the resume.
- Explain interest in specific clinical training site.
- Review what we send you and also research each site on the internet.



COVER LETTERS (CONT.)

Four Paragraph Structure (1 and 2):

Paragraph 1: Introduce who you are and the reason you are writing

- Entering student in the Counseling Department at William James College.
- Seeking first-year practicum placement for the upcoming training year.

Paragraph 2: Describe your qualifications and experience.

- Emphasize skills, experiences, and interests that are most relevant for EACH specific training site.
- Provide brief examples that quantify your accomplishments

COVER LETTERS (CONT.)

Four Paragraph Structure (3):

Paragraph 3: Explain why you are interested in this site

- Develop a relationship between you and each facility to which you are applying.
- Explain why you are a good fit for the position.
- Use your research of the organization to demonstrate that you are speaking from direct knowledge.
- State specifically what aspects of the training program are appealing.

COVER LETTERS (CONT.)

Four Paragraph Structure (4):

Paragraph 4: Close with an enthusiastic statement of your interest in the position and in being offered an interview

- Suggest a meeting time, invite further action by the reader, or indicate how you will follow up.
- If you live outside the greater metropolitan Boston area, it will be important to suggest specific days/times that you will be available to be in the Boston area.



COVER LETTERS (CONT.)

Final Thoughts

- Your cover letter needs to be accurate, clear, and concise.
- Proofreading is critical.
- Be sure to change the contact person and name of the organization in EACH cover letter.
- Pay attention to the spelling of the contact person's name.
- Use salutations appropriate to the contact person's gender and degree.

COVER LETTERS (CONT.)

Sample:

Dear Ms. O'Donnell:

As an entering student in the Counseling Department at William James College, I am seeking a first-year practicum placement for the 2018-2019 academic year.

With over two years of clinical experience as a Rehabilitation Specialist working with adults with mental health and substance abuse issues, I would bring... to the John C. Corrigan Mental Health Center. My additional experiences as a Resident Advisor at Hamilton College afforded me the opportunity to... *(Note: Describe your experiences in a manner that illustrates the strengths and attributes you would bring to the position at the John C. Corrigan Mental Health Center. Be mindful of the mission of each site to which you are applying and use examples to illustrate skills/abilities that each site would be interested in.)*

Given my strong interest in working with adults, I would be especially interested in providing clinical services under supervision at John C. Corrigan Mental Health Center because... *(Note: Describe your reasons for applying to each site, relevant skills that would benefit your work at the site, noting how you think the experience would enable you to build on your past experiences and afford you opportunities to develop, for example, assessment and intervention skills.)*

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be delighted to speak with you further about my background and areas of interest. A copy of my resume and letters of recommendation are attached. *(Note: If you live outside the metropolitan Boston area, please suggest two to three days when you could be in the Boston area within two to three weeks of sending your cover letter, resume, and letters of recommendation.)*

Sincerely,

Rhonda Smith



SECTION 6: DOCUMENT SUBMISSION

IMPORTANT: Early submission of your materials will ensure a wider selection of field training sites.

- **Submit your survey, as well as drafts of your resume and cover letter, as soon as possible to the following email address:**
 - **fpcounseling@williamjames.edu**
- Please type **WJC Incoming MA Counseling Student** in the subject line of your email.

DOCUMENT SUBMISSION (CONT.)

- Within approximately one week of receiving your resume and sample cover letter, we will send you suggested edits and comments via email.

- From there, there are two possible next steps:
 - 1) Your resume and cover letter are approved to submit to sites.
 - With this response, you will receive instructions about how to schedule an individual phone appointment of approximately 30 minutes with your field education advisor to learn about practicum training site options.



DOCUMENT SUBMISSION (CONT.)

- 2) If your resume and/or cover letter require additional rounds of edits and feedback, we will tell you that.
 - Those edits will need to be completed prior to scheduling the individual phone appointment.

SECTION 7: LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

- As part of your application to WJC, you were required to submit three letters of recommendation.
- Your recommenders were given the option of allowing you to use their letters in your field site search.
- If they authorized release, these letters will be sent to you (at the time you receive feedback on your cover letter and resume) for your use in the application process.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION (cont.)

- If your recommenders did not authorize release, our school is prohibited from sending the letters to you.
- In this case, you will need to secure letters of recommendation yourself.

SECTION 8: INDIVIDUAL APPOINTMENT

TIMING: Individual appointments should be scheduled approximately three to four weeks before you are able to be in the Boston area to interview for practicum placement.

During the individual phone appointment, we will talk about:

- Your professional interests, hopes, and expectations for your first field placement.
- How to look at individual site descriptions so that you can write cover letters individually-tailored to each site.



INDIVIDUAL APPOINTMENT (CONT.)

Chosen sites for application will be sites that are:

- Approved for training by the College and currently available for application

- Aligned with your areas identified in the Field Education Survey
 - Interests
 - Geography
 - Previous clinical experience
 - Education
 - Program of study



INDIVIDUAL APPOINTMENT (CONT.)

You may only apply to sites that have been approved by your field education advisor.

- You may request that specific sites not currently approved be reviewed by the College for appropriateness for training.
- We will ask you to provide the name of the site, a professional contact person, and his/her email and phone number so that we may explore this opportunity as soon as possible on your behalf.

INDIVIDUAL APPOINTMENT (CONT.)

Job-as-Placement

- You may request that a paid mental health position with appropriate supervision be considered as a **job-as-placement** for your first year of training.
- Please contact us about this option and we will send the necessary information on how best to proceed with this possible training opportunity.

SECTION 9: APPLICATION PREPARATION & SUBMISSION

Preparation:

- **Available site list on MyCampus**
- Read through each site description very carefully.
- Pay special attention to the application procedure section.
- Check to see if there are specific skills that may be required or preferred by the training site.
- For example: Selected sites may require previous clinical experience to apply.
- We will work together to choose sites that match your experience and training goals.



APPLICATION PREPARATION & SUBMISSION (CONT.)

Preparation (cont.):

- Read how the site describes its services, programs, orientation, etc.
- Visit the site's website and "google" the site to learn more about their mission and range of programs, and to get a better sense of where you are applying.
- Look at the goals of the practicum and see how these may align with your own interests and learning needs.

APPLICATION PREPARATION & SUBMISSION (CONT.)

Submission:

- It is most important that you finalize your cover letters as soon as possible.
- **Please plan to submit your applications to the training sites within ONE WEEK of receiving site information.**
- If you find that you are unable to do so, please be in touch with us as soon as possible to make alternative plans for the timing of your site search.

SECTION 10: THE INTERVIEW

Preparation:

Research each field site

- Learn as much as possible about each field site prior to the interview.
- Read the information provided by the College.
- Review each agency's website.
- If available online, read the biography for each person who will interview you.

THE INTERVIEW (CONT.)

Location:

Know where the interview is

- Learn how to get to the site.
- Estimate how much time it will take to travel to the site.
- Inquire about whether or not there is parking available.
- Bring quarters if there is only metered parking.
- Allow time for security checks.



THE INTERVIEW (CONT.)

Interviewer:

Know who you are interviewing with

- Will you be interviewing with one person or several people?
- Will you have one interview or will you be meeting with different people separately?
- Inquire about the answers to these questions when you schedule the interview.
- Obtain the names, including correct spellings, and titles of those you will be interviewing with in advance.
- Write these names down, so you have them for reference on the interview day.

THE INTERVIEW (CONT.)

Personal Statement:

Prepare a 1-2 minute statement that captures the most important information your interviewer needs to know about you, including the following:

- Educational History
- Professional/Work Experience – note work in the mental health field, as well as unrelated work experiences that played a role in your decision to pursue graduate work in mental health counseling
- Volunteer/Community Services – focus on experiences that are related to your interest in the site.
- Noteworthy Skills/Accomplishments



THE INTERVIEW (CONT.)

Standard Questions:

- Why are you applying for this position?
- What about this position interests you?
- What strengths will you bring to this position?
- Tell us about your prior experience working as part of a team.
- Describe a difficult boss or work situation and how you handled it.
- Describe a situation in which you experienced a difference of opinion with a co-worker and how you handled this.

THE INTERVIEW (CONT.)

Challenging Questions:

- Consider whether there are questions you would prefer not to be asked and prepare responses!
 - Why did it take you 6 years to complete your B.A.?
 - I see that there is a two-year gap on your resume where you were not in school or working. What were you doing during that time?
- For any potential issues like this, prepare an honest, yet positive response. In the end, it is your response that will matter. Focus on responding in an open manner that assures the interviewer that whatever was raised is no longer an issue.



THE INTERVIEW (CONT.)

Behavioral Questions:

- Interviewers will often ask you to provide specific examples that illustrate your strengths, as well as how you handled certain situations (e.g., give me an example of how you worked effectively as part of a team).
- In order to answer questions such as these effectively, you will need to prepare ahead.
- Identify each skill (e.g., good interpersonal skills) you would like to demonstrate and develop a brief scenario that illustrates the skill by describing what actions you took and the outcome. The scenarios can be in the form of a skill, action, outcome (SAO) formula.



THE INTERVIEW (CONT.)

Example:

- 1) Skill:** Conflict resolution skills
- 2) Action:** In my position working as a manager at a restaurant, a customer was upset because he did not feel that he received good service during his meal. I listened to the patron's concerns and spoke with the waiter. I asked the waiter to join me in a conversation with the patron in which we explained that the restaurant was under-staffed unexpectedly for the evening. I encouraged the waiter to apologize for rushing and being short with the patron. We provided the patron with a discount on his meal.
- 3) Outcome:** The patron listened to what we had to say, which helped him to calm down. He said he appreciated our taking his concerns seriously.



THE INTERVIEW (CONT.)

Strong Recommendation!

Never tell a site that they are your first choice unless you are prepared to stop the site consideration and selection process, and to accept the offer on the spot if it is offered to you!



THE INTERVIEW (CONT.)

Following the interview:

- Send a brief, well-written note.
- Electronic or by snail mail.
- As soon as possible and **definitely within 24 hours.**
- Remind the interviewer(s) of what you would bring to the training position and why you think you would be a good match.

SECTION 11: OFFER & ACCEPTANCE PROCESS

Things to Consider:

- Offers can be made at the end of an interview or by phone a few days to a week or more later.
- If you receive an offer from your first choice, you certainly may accept the offer.
- Although offers are often conveyed verbally, we recommend you request that the site offer you the position in writing and that you respond in writing (email is fine) as well.

OFFER & ACCEPTANCE PROCESS (CONT.)

Things to Consider:

- If you receive an offer from a site other than your first choice, you may reach out to your first choice and inquire about when you can expect to receive a response.
- If you receive offers from two sites within a day or two, you are **REQUIRED** not to hold more than one offer at a time.
- **Note**: Depending on the time of the site searches you may hold an offer for several days or **up to two weeks**, depending on the site's expectations.



OFFER & ACCEPTANCE PROCESS (CONT.)

Things to Consider:

Note: Once you accept an offer from a training site, your acceptance is binding and considered to be a commitment between you and the site!

OFFER & ACCEPTANCE PROCESS (CONT.)

Once Accepting an Offer:

- **Tell us that you have accepted it.**
- **DO NOT go on any other interviews.**
- You must **officially withdraw your applications** via email from all other sites to which you applied and let them know that you are no longer seeking a placement.

SECTION 12: REGISTERING FOR CLASSES

Process:

- The Department Chair or her assistant will be in touch with you to schedule a time to **complete your registration**, either by phone or in person, beginning the second week of June.
- The student should **correspond with the training site** to determine if certain days at the site are required or preferred.
- It is important that you **set up your institutional email** as soon as you receive the instructions and that you check it on a daily basis as all communications will be done through that email.



SECTION 13: BEFORE ORIENTATION

Steps to Take:

- Communicate with your site over the summer.
- Complete any necessary paperwork, including CORI forms, submitting vaccination records, etc.
- If you expect to transport clients at your site, complete the necessary forms for both your site and the College.
- Finalize your start date, time, and location.

SECTION 14: ORIENTATION

Reminders:

- Mandatory program orientation will take place from Wednesday, August 19th through Friday, August 21st at the Newton campus of William James College.
- Classes will begin the week of August 24th.
- Students may begin at their field site as early as the week of August 24th, although many will not begin until after Labor Day (September 7th, 2020).



SECTION 15: CLOSING

Final Thoughts:

- During the site search process, please remain in regular contact with us until you match with a training site. It is critical to have ongoing, close communication with the Field Education office.
- If you learn that the sites you have been offered are no longer available, please contact us immediately for additional options.
- We look forward to meeting you in August as we welcome you to William James College!



**WILLIAM JAMES
COLLEGE**

Thank You!

Questions please contact:
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617.564.9417