

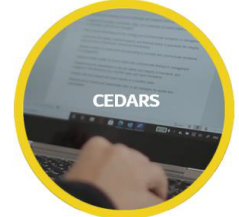
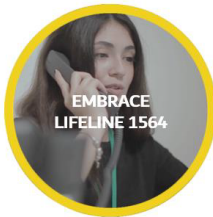


## TRAINING IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY AT EMBRACE MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

## About Embrace

Embrace is a non-profit, non-governmental, social entrepreneurial organization dedicated to mental health. Registered in 2013, through its various programs, Embrace focuses on prevention, crisis-management, awareness, service provision, and professional training.

Embrace operates the official National Helpline for Emotional Support and Suicide Prevention (Embrace Lifeline 1564) with more than 85 operators running an almost 24/7 call-center. Its outreach arm, raises awareness and builds capacity for thousands of people and organizations across Lebanese territories. Additionally, Embrace's focus on data-analytics produces comprehensive insights about mental health in general, and suicide in particular through CEDARS (Capturing and Expanding Data Analytics and Research on Suicide). Through its most recent service, the Embrace Mental Health Center (EMHC) provides psychological services and clinical training.



*"My journey at Embrace was an enriching one. It is an integrative program motivated to provide the highest quality care to patients that seek treatment. This program allowed me to learn by example from expert clinicians, through hands-on experience with patients as well as formal learning environment with weekly didactic sessions. Through this comprehensive approach to learning through multiple modalities, I was able to leave my training year feeling confident that I could provide a safe and complete care for my patients. I am forever grateful for this experience."*

**Farah Merdas**

*"My experience at Embrace provided me with all the essential theoretical and interpersonal skills to grow as a professional and individual. It also provided me with many opportunities to meet and learn from different professionals in the field of Psychology. I believe Embrace has helped me build a solid and invaluable base for my continuing education journey."*

**Hadi Abilmona**



## The Embrace Mental Health Center

The Embrace Mental Health Center (EMHC) was initially established on August 17, 2020 as part of the response to the August 4, 2020 explosion that hit Beirut, Lebanon. While initially staffed by volunteer psychologists and psychiatrists, the clinic rapidly expanded into a fully-fledged multidisciplinary clinic that houses psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and support staff.

In October 2020, and in collaboration with the Psychology Department at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and at the Haigazian University (HU), the center became a training site for psychologists who want to engage in rigorous training in clinical psychology and psychotherapy. This endeavor meet the mission of providing mental health services to the community while building capacity for future generations of mental health professionals





## **EMHC MISSION STATEMENT**

In line with Embrace's vision to be the "leading mental health organization in Lebanon and the region", EMHC has a two-fold mission of providing free and high-quality multidisciplinary mental health services to the community and building the capacity of future mental health professionals in Lebanon through a rigorous clinical training program for MA and PhD trainees.

## **EMHC APPROACH TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PROVISION**

EMHC uses a person-centered, community-based, multidisciplinary model, to provide evidence-based mental health services for its beneficiaries. EMHC employs various specialists who can tend to the psychological, medical, and social aspects of the beneficiaries concerned, and therefore understand, assess and treat the beneficiaries holistically within their context, using approaches that have shown scientific evidence of efficacy. This approach also allows for the treatment flow to be person-centered, as the different service providers collaborate to bring the best service to the beneficiary.

## **EMHC LICENSING AND ACCREDITATION**

Despite the fact that Lebanon does not have a licensing and accreditation system for training sites in clinical psychology, the EMHC is staffed by psychologists and psychiatrists, who are licensed under the Lebanese law. The psychologists-in-training are supervised by licensed, senior psychologists or psychiatrists.



## ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS

Trainees applying to the Clinical Training Program need to meet the below requirements:

-Have successfully completed the first year of an MA/MS program or doctoral program in Clinical Psychology, Counseling Psychology, or other Mental Health related degrees (recognized by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education as being eligible for licensure in Clinical Psychology) from an accredited university.

-Have successfully completed graduate-level courses in the below (or their equivalent)

- Adult Psychopathology
- Psychological interventions (any approach)
- Ethics in Psychology

## APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Embrace accepts applications from trainees who have completed their MA/MS/PhD as well as students enrolled in universities with whom Embrace has established an existing partnership to receive trainees for training. To check if your university has an existing collaboration with Embrace, kindly reach out to your university's Coordinator/Director of the Graduate Training Program.

Interested trainees are required to send the following:

- CV
  - A Cover letter where they describe their clinical experience and their clinical approach so far
  - One recommendation letter from a supervisor or professor that describes their competence and character 'letter'
  - A transcript of records for the completed M.A. coursework
  - A transcript of records for the B.A. degree.
- (Unofficial copies may be accepted at the time of application. If you are accepted into the program you will then be expected to provide us with official copies).

All documents can be sent to [ghinaismail@embracelebanon.org](mailto:ghinaismail@embracelebanon.org) by May 23, 2023, with the title "Application for Clinical Training". Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed by end of May and acceptance letters will be sent by June.

## TRAINEE SELECTION

All application materials will be thoroughly reviewed by a committee. To guide this process, members of the selection committee will rate applicants based on several criteria including the quality of their letter of reflection, their academic qualifications, any relevant experience, and the strength of the recommendation letter. Following this assessment, members of the selection committee will recommend whether to grant the applicant an interview. Applicants invited for an interview will meet with at least one of the clinical supervisors, and the Director of the Clinical Training Program. The interview includes structured questions that assess skills, intentions, and behavioral competencies deemed essential for psychotherapists. From time to time, the selection committee may request that applicants undergo additional screening.



## PROGRAM GOALS

The overall goal of the clinical training program at EMHC is to train competent, ethical, and reflective psychologists and equip them with the knowledge, skills, and behavioral competencies fundamental to the practice of professional psychology. As such, the training year represents a time to consolidate and expand upon clinical skills and knowledge as well as to gain first-hand experiences that support professional development consistent with roles and standards of practice in health service psychology.

The program provides graduate psychology trainees with extensive field experience under direct on-site supervision and intensive didactic training to produce entry level psychologists who:

- 1- Are confident and competent in applying theories and methods of effective, evidence-based psychotherapeutic intervention.
- 2- Are aware and sensitive to cultural diversity and health disparities as they relate to practice in a diverse society.
- 3- Efficiently function as a member of an interdisciplinary team that integrates behavioral and mental health as a part of beneficiary care.
- 4- Understand and demonstrate independent ability to critically evaluate research and scholarly activities in order to apply current knowledge of research in the clinical setting.
- 5- Are effective communicators and demonstrate competence in interpersonal skills, with beneficiaries and team members alike.
- 6- Are knowledgeable and thoughtful of professional values, conduct, and ethics as they relate to practice.
- 7- Possess competency in psychological assessments.
- 8- Are knowledgeable in supervision models, able to provide effective supervision to less advanced peers.



# EVALUATION OF PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Trainees will be evaluated based on the learning outcomes outlined by the APA in the *APA Competency Benchmarks for Professional Psychology*.

These include six broad clusters: Professionalism, Relational, Application, Science, Education, and Systems, which subsume 16 core competencies, which are in turn measured through *behavioral indicators* (anchors). All benchmarks and competencies will be assessed twice throughout the training program- once in November or after having completed 2 months in program and once at the end of the Training year to assess readiness to practice independently

<i>APA Benchmarks Clusters and Core Competencies</i>	
<b>Professionalism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Professional Values and Attitudes</li> <li>● Individual and Cultural Diversity</li> <li>● Ethical, Legal Standards and Policy</li> <li>● Reflective Practice/Self-Assessment/Self-Care</li> </ul>
<b>Relational</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Relationships with Others</li> </ul>
<b>Science</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Scientific Knowledge and Methods</li> <li>● Research/Evaluation</li> </ul>
<b>Application</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Evidence-based Practice</li> <li>● Assessment</li> <li>● Intervention</li> <li>● Consultation</li> </ul>
<b>Education*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teaching</li> <li>● Supervision</li> </ul>
<b>Systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interdisciplinary Systems</li> <li>● Management/Administration</li> <li>● Advocacy</li> </ul>

\*The education benchmark will only be assessed when relevant/applicable

## STRUCTURE OF PROGRAM

The program is modeled after a number of guidelines published by the American Psychological Association (APA) and adapted to the local resources and capacities. It aims to meet and exceed the minimum training requirements set by the Lebanese Law 8, regarding hours of observation and training for psychologists seeking licensure in Lebanon.

The duration of the Clinical Training is approximately 11 months, from September 1 to July 30. Trainees are expected to engage in training activities on-site (and partially online) for approximately 13 to 16 hours weekly, Monday to Friday.

As detailed in the schedule, the training offers both a didactic component and a practical component. The first few weeks entail observation of various activities, followed by hands-on practice. The number of observations hours throughout the year averages at more than 100 hours, while the number of hours dedicated to clinical interventions is more than 400 hours, which are above the minimum required number of training hours required by the Lebanese government for those seeking licensure. Additionally, trainees engage in about 92 hours of didactics,

A description of each of the activities is outlined just below.

### **1. Observations of diagnosis/interventions**

#### ***i. Phone-based interventions***

Trainees will observe phone-based interventions employed by trained operators of the Embrace Helpline who support callers presenting with emotional distress, suicidal thoughts, are bereaved by suicide, are seeking referral, or have an emotional crisis. The majority of callers to the helpline are young adults who report having mental illness.

#### ***ii. Intake interviews by psychologists or psychiatrists***

Trainees will observe psychologists or psychiatrists conduct intake interviews with first-time beneficiaries/beneficiaries. This entails a full diagnostic interview with beneficiary/beneficiary and collateral, as well as screening scales/tests.

## STRUCTURE OF TRAINING

### 2. Clinical Services in Diagnosis and/or Intervention

#### *i. Individual and group psychotherapy*

Trainees will provide weekly individual face-to-face therapy sessions for around 7 beneficiaries presenting to the clinic, using a variety of therapeutic modalities influenced by the trainee's graduate training and education, the supervisor's background, and the evidence-based treatment required for the person. They will write clinical notes and reports.

#### *ii. Phone-based interventions*

After undergoing a rigorous training and observations, trainees will engage as operators in the National Helpline for Suicide Prevention and Emotional Support. The interventions will include suicide-risk assessment, crisis management, and referrals to community services.

#### *iii. Individual and Group Supervision*

Trainees will receive individual and group supervision sessions with senior psychologists to discuss current cases they are working with. Through supervision sessions, trainees will also be exposed to the theoretical orientation of the senior supervisors on site but will be which include, cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Interpersonal Therapy, Psychodynamic Therapy, and Acceptance-Based Therapies.





## STRUCTURE OF TRAINING

### 3. Didactics

#### *i. Weekly Didactic Sessions*

Trainees are required to attend weekly didactic seminars (2 hours/week) that are designed to meet the learning goals, objectives, and competencies of the training. Topic areas will include conducting psychological assessments, professional ethics, and evidence-based treatments and interventions relevant to the beneficiary populations at the Embrace Mental Health Center.

#### *ii. Training workshops*

During the September or October, trainees will be required to attend a 4-day training on Active Listening and Collaborative Intervention in Suicidal Crises typically organized for helpline operators of the national emotional support and suicide prevention helpline (Embrace Lifeline 1564). Other workshops and trainings will also be offered throughout the years.



*...The program has been the most enriching training experience I ever had. The professionals who provide us with supervision and didactics are exceptional and come from different backgrounds, so we are exposed to many approaches. Also the emotional wellbeing of the trainees is always considered, which is very important in my opinion.*

Testimonial from intern 2020-2021

## Contact Information

**Dr. Ghena Ismail, Director of Program**

**[ghinaismail@embracelebanon.org](mailto:ghinaismail@embracelebanon.org)**

**Embrace, Beirut, Hamra**

**[www.embracelebanon.org](http://www.embracelebanon.org)**