



Rehabilitation Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship *at Shepherd Center*

2027 – 2029

CRPPTP Member Program



Shepherd Center

Dear Prospective Applicant:

We are pleased to invite you to apply for our Postdoctoral Fellowship in Rehabilitation Psychology at Shepherd Center. Following years of program development and institutional support, we are committed to providing exceptional, state-of-the-art training in rehabilitation psychology.

As one of the nation's premier rehabilitation hospitals, Shepherd Center offers a highly collaborative training environment. Our fellowship follows the Baltimore Conference Guidelines for postdoctoral training in rehabilitation psychology and is designed to support your healthy professional development, licensure, and board certification in Rehabilitation Psychology. We welcome fellows into a diverse, interdisciplinary community of students, trainees, residents, and fellows.

We have one fellowship position available for 2027-2029. The program includes structured didactics such as Neurorehabilitation Seminar, Diversity Seminar, Professional Development, and Clinical Case Conference. Many training experiences are shared with our Clinical Neuropsychology Fellows and other trainees. Fellows receive at least two hours of individual and/or group supervision weekly and are expected to actively contribute to the learning environment. Consistent with our scientist-practitioner model, fellows also have opportunities to collaborate on faculty research and pursue independent scholarly projects.

The fellowship's primary clinical focus is training with individuals with spinal cord injury and newly acquired spinal cord diseases with potential dual presentation of cognitive changes. Additional training opportunities may include acquired brain injury, multiple sclerosis, acute and chronic pain, neuromedical/surgical conditions, complex concussion, and military veterans and first responders through our SHARE Military Initiative. External rotations may also be available based on interest and availability.

After reviewing this brochure, please contact us with any questions. Interviews will be conducted virtually. We look forward to meeting applicants who are excited to help shape the future of rehabilitation psychology training at Shepherd Center.



Sincerely,

Punam Rahman, Psy.D., ABPP-RP

Director of Training

404-350-7318

Punam.Rahman@shepherd.org



"My favorite part about working at Shepherd Center is the opportunity and support for growth. I completed my fellowship here, as did many of our staff. I was always supported in my individual career interests, inside and outside of Shepherd Center, and that helped me grow as a professional."

***- Laurie N. Baker, Ph.D., ABPP, Director of Psychology
(Clinical Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Fellow, 2009-2011)***

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Mission

The Shepherd Center Rehabilitation Psychology Fellowship provides postdoctoral training that conforms to the Baltimore Conference Guidelines on Specialty Education and Training in Rehabilitation Psychology.

Our two-year fellowship program also develops and educates the fellow in competencies necessary for state licensure, specialty practice in rehabilitation psychology, and board certification by the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) in Rehabilitation Psychology.

The fellow will function as a member of the interdisciplinary treatment teams and provide individual, family, and group treatment interventions as well as consultation services.

About Shepherd Center

Shepherd Center, located in Atlanta, Georgia, is a private, not-for-profit hospital specializing in medical treatment, research, and rehabilitation for people with spinal cord injury, brain injury, multiple sclerosis, spine, chronic pain, and other neurological conditions. Shepherd Center's mission is to help people with a temporary or permanent disability caused by injury or disease, rebuild their lives with hope, independence, and dignity, advocating for their full inclusion in all aspects of community life while promoting safety and injury prevention.

Founded in 1975, Shepherd Center is consistently ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* among the top 10 rehabilitation hospitals in the nation. In its more than four decades, Shepherd Center has grown from a six-bed rehabilitation unit to a world-renowned, 175-bed hospital that treats more than 740 inpatients, nearly 280-day program patients, and more than 7,100 outpatients each year in more than 46,000 visits. For the 2026 fiscal year, we served 902 patients through our inpatient programs.

Our patient population includes adolescents, adults, and older adults. Shepherd Center is accredited by both The Joint Commission and the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation (CARF).

Shepherd Center is a TBI Models site as well as is also the largest of 14 SCI Model Systems of Care. Patients travel from across the nation – and even the globe – to Shepherd Center for its innovative brand of neurorehabilitation. [Learn more at shepherd.org/about](https://shepherd.org/about).



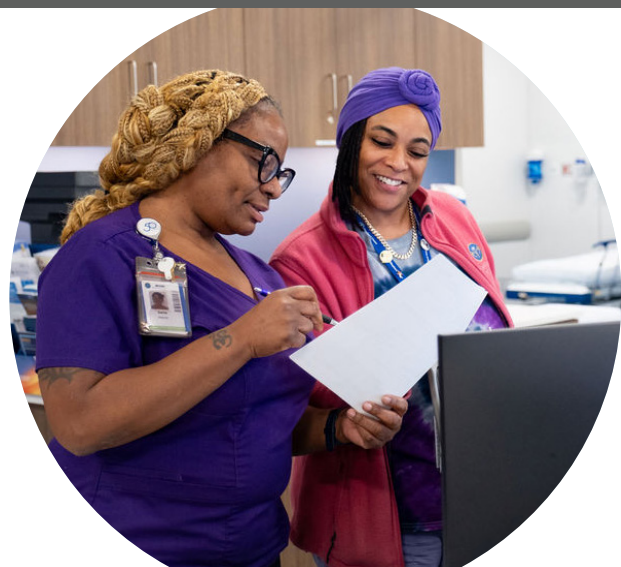
“My favorite part about working at Shepherd Center is that I love being a member of a team of smart, creative, and passionate people! I love being able to teach and learn from others. I love feeling like my contributions can help make a difference in patients’ lives and those of their family members.”

-Jill Koval, Ph.D., ABPP, Department of Psychology

The fellow will be trained and evaluated in the foundational and functional rehabilitation psychology competencies adopted by the ABRP board in 2019.

Foundational Competencies	Functional Competencies (Assessment & Intervention)	Functional Competencies: Consultation	Functional Competencies: Advocacy	Functional Competencies: Consumer Protection
Specialty Identification Professionalism Reflection Practice/ Self-Assessment/ Self-Care Scientific Knowledge and Methods Relationships Ethical and Legal Principles/Standard/ Statues and Policy Individual and Cultural Diversity Interdisciplinary Systems Evidence-Based Practice	General Principles Sensory-Perceptual, Motor Language, and Cognitive Function Adjustment to Disability: Individual Adjustment to Disability: Family Sexuality Substance Abuse Pain Vocational/ Educational Issues Behavior Management	Peer Community and Organization	Client/Patient Disability Issues	Federal Legislative Statues State Legislative Statues Community Health and Safety Resources

Shepherd Center provides ample opportunities to develop and apply these competencies, particularly given the interdisciplinary team models and focus on patient- and family-centered care. The balance between assessment, intervention, and consultation is particularly crucial in our setting and offered to the fellow to ensure they are developing into a strong professional who advocates for themselves and their discipline in interdisciplinary settings and on the local, regional, and national levels.





Former Fellow Spotlight



Hannah Long, Psy.D.

Dr. Long graduated from Bradley University with a bachelor's degree in psychology before obtaining her master's in biomedical sciences and her Psy.D. from Midwestern University in Downers Grove, IL. She completed her internship in health psychology at the Medical College of Georgia/Charlie Norwood Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Augusta, Georgia. During her internship, she worked with a wide variety of patients, including spinal cord injuries. During this clinical rotation, Dr. Long discovered her interest in rehabilitation psychology.

"My favorite part about training at Shepherd is being an integral part of the treatment team. Sitting at the table during a team meeting has allowed me to work interdisciplinary and advocate for my patients' and families' needs."

Clinical Experience

Clinical service requirements vary depending upon the specific clinical rotation and supervisor. In general, the fellow maintains a clinical caseload consistent with Baltimore Guidelines and State of Georgia requirements for postdoctoral training necessary for licensure and board certification.

Each year, fellows participate in a minimum of 60% clinical activity, including assessment, intervention, and consultation duties. During year two of the fellowship, the fellow is expected to function more independently within their clinical work. The fellow's specific interests and training goals are considered while structuring rotations. The fellow will complete rotations in both inpatient and outpatient settings with clinical responsibilities appropriate to the rotation.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11	12	
Year 1: Inpatient SCI/D Unit		September to February: Onboarding and Introduction to Rehab Psychology Fellowship with Punam Rahman, Psy.D., ABPP 5 th Floor SCI						March Mandatory Inpatient ABI with Michelle Jackson, Ph.D., ABPP-CN 5 th Floor SCI/CRU			April to July: Lauren Thomas, Psy.D. Comprehensive Rehabilitation Unit 5 th Floor SCI/ Comprehensive Rehabilitation Unit (CRU)			August Minor	
		Research Integration with Katie Harris, Psy.D.													

Year 2: SCI Day Program												
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
September to November: Alaina Hammond, Psy.D., ABPP 6th Floor MCAR Pain Clinic			December: Minor	January to April: Outpatient Rotation TBD				May to August: Return to Inpatient with Family Support Group TBD 5 th Floor SCI/CRU				
Research Integration with Katie Harris, Psy.D.												

Assessment & Intervention

Psychological care aims to facilitate individual and family adjustment to health status and address psychological issues that may affect rehabilitation progress. These may include issues related to substance use, grief and loss, psychiatric conditions, mental status changes, dual diagnosis, or pain management. Intervention competencies include formulation and execution of treatment plans, individual and family therapy, and design and implementation of family and patient educational programs.

1st Year Rotation: Fellow will also lead two inpatient adjustment groups per week, one for patients and the other for family members. With one of the groups, the fellow will potentially have the opportunity to provide tiered supervision with extern.

2nd Year Rotation: Fellow will lead the Day Program patient adjustment group “Roll With It.”

In addition, the fellow may have the opportunity to provide clinical supervision in both assessment and intervention of graduate students completing rehabilitation psychology practicum rotations under the guidance and direction of program faculty. Additionally, the fellow will be expected to present internally as well as externally during their two years of fellowship.

Clinical Experience

Below is a list of possible available supplementary and minor rotations. Of note, additional opportunities for minor rotations may be available/developed based on individual interests as well as current staffing. Some minor rotations may not be available every year, and some may require state licensure for participation. If the fellow is in satisfactory standing, they are expected to complete either two minor rotations (equivalent of one day per week for a three-month duration at rotation site) or one major rotation (equivalent of one day per week for a six-month duration at rotation site) during the second year.

Inpatient ABI Mandatory Rotation

Current Faculty:

Michelle Jackson, Ph.D., ABPP

The fellow participates in clinical, educational, and research components of the inpatient ABI program.

shepherd.org/treatment/conditions/brain-injury/

Assessment & Intervention: Fellows have a unique opportunity to observe the interdisciplinary disciplines and specialized programs within the Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Inpatient Unit. This rotation provides exposure to the interdisciplinary model that supports individuals with ABI and their families. This will be an immersive experience with opportunities for observation of treatment teams, attending education classes, and observing family/patient support groups. The fellow will gain exposure to both assessment and intervention with their supervisor (e.g., neurobehavioral exams, capacity evaluations, neurobehavioral management plans, and individual/family education and support). If available, they will also get exposure to patients in the Disorders of Consciousness (DOC) program.

Interdisciplinary Systems: The fellow will consult with rehabilitation team members and physicians and provide education regarding the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional consequences of ABI.

Outpatient Brain Injury Rotation

Current Faculty:

Kristian Nitsch, Ph.D.

The fellow participates in clinical, educational, and research components of the post-acute ABI program.

shepherd.org/treatment/services-clinics/pathways/

Assessment & Intervention: The fellow is exposed to chronic neuropsychological disorders and syndromes with the primary objective of developing a comprehensive understanding of the long-term sequelae of cognitive and emotional function following ABI. During the rotation, the fellow acquires competencies in cognitive assessment, intervention, and consultation. Assessment competencies are similar to those skills addressed during the dual rotation, focusing on capacity determination, considerations for family education, and community re-entry. Intervention competencies addressed during this rotation include individual, family, and group psychotherapy, provision of psychoeducation related to ABI and substance use, as well as design, execution, and monitoring of neurobehavioral plans. The fellow's role may include leading educational and process groups, carrying a small therapy caseload, completing cognitive evaluations, and creating behavior plans.

Interdisciplinary Systems: The fellow will consult with rehabilitation team members and physicians and provide education regarding the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional consequences of ABI.

Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (Concussion)

Current Faculty:

Katie Barros, Ph.D.

Katie McCauley, Ph.D.

Gregory Brown, Psy.D.

The fellow will gain experience working with concussion injuries in both veteran and civilian populations.

[shepherd.org/treatment/
services-clinics/
concussion-clinic/](https://shepherd.org/treatment/services-clinics/concussion-clinic/)

Assessment & Intervention: The fellow will learn about comprehensive assessment and treatment for individuals with persisting symptoms following concussion, focusing on return to play, return to learn, and return to work. Through this rotation, the fellow will gain a better understanding of concussion and contributing factors to persisting symptoms in military and civilian populations. The fellow will provide individual and group treatment and education to clients and family members, provide education for the treatment team and implement behavioral interventions as necessary. Opportunities for cognitive assessment may also be available.

Interdisciplinary Systems: The fellow will consult with rehabilitation team members and physicians and provide education regarding cognitive, behavioral, and emotional consequences of mild traumatic brain injury.

For the comprehensive list and bios of all faculty members and other members of the Psychology Department, please refer to:

▶▶▶▶ shepherd.org/patient-programs/specialty-programs/psychology/staff

Research Opportunities

Numerous research studies are being conducted across all programs at Shepherd Center. The fellow will be expected to contribute to research throughout their two years of training and identify individual research interests. Ample support is available for training and mentorship in research methodologies, statistical approaches, and guidance with writing and submitting publications, posters, or talks to represent the fellow's work and Shepherd Center. The Shepherd Center Noble Learning Resource Center (NLRC) is an excellent resource available to families, staff, and fellows with a librarian on staff to assist with literature searches and obtaining articles. Shepherd Center research department consultations are available by appointment, as needed. Access to SPSS and REDCap for database management is also available. Interdisciplinary research is highly encouraged. Regular meetings will involve project development, research article reviews/critiques, and ongoing project and database updates.

In 2022, Shepherd Center was awarded a \$500,000 three-year grant, Keeping Adolescents and Young Adults Connected (KAYAC), from Andee's Army to research, plan, develop, and implement a peer support training program and virtual resources specifically for adolescents with neurological injury or disease. Part of this grant was to foster clinical research and program evaluation opportunities for our Rehabilitation Psychology Fellows. Now called RISE (Resilience, Independence, Support & Empowerment), the program has developed and implemented training that has enabled adolescent and young adult mentors to be matched with newly injured mentees. Current efforts are focused on the continued development and implementation of virtual wellness resources on topics derived from focus groups with adolescent/young adult patients and their families.

The fellow will be involved in the creation of e-learning resources, evaluation of program effectiveness, iterative process of program improvement, and dissemination of findings. The fellow will be expected to contribute to all aspects of this program throughout their two years of training and submit to at least one peer-reviewed presentation/poster/publication under the guidance and approval of their primary supervisor. Additional research opportunities are abundant and will be supported based on the fellow's progress and interests in training.

The fellow will be expected to contribute to all aspects of this program throughout their two years of training, and submit to at least one peer-reviewed presentation/poster/publication under the guidance and approval of their primary supervisor. Additional research opportunities are abundant and will be supported based on the fellow's progress and interests in training.

Didactic Opportunities

Through didactic and experiential training, the fellow develops a strong understanding of the study and application of psychological knowledge and skills on behalf of individuals with disabilities and chronic health conditions to maximize health and welfare, independence and choice, functional abilities, and social role participation, across the lifespan. Additionally, the fellow will expand their knowledge in basic psychological principles, research methodology, psychometrics, general clinical psychology, and practice and professional issues. Please note that the Rehabilitation Psychology fellow will be attending these didactics with the two Neuropsychology fellows.

Neurorehabilitation Seminar

This is a collaborative, joint training seminar for the clinical neuropsychology fellows, rehabilitation psychology fellow, student trainees, and faculty. Fellows and faculty regularly present on foundational neurorehabilitation topics, present relevant cases, and discuss and critique neurorehabilitation psychology literature. Board certification preparation activities are also completed during this time. Fellows will present several times per training year.

Professional Development

Fellows will meet with faculty to discuss issues pertaining to healthy career development, job search and experience, and other matters of relevance to development as an independent clinician. Fellows will also meet with the training directors monthly to review professional development scenarios, discuss adjustment to fellowship, review any concerns, and provide feedback.

Diversity Seminar

The diversity seminar meets monthly and is open only to trainees. The objective of the seminar is to provide trainees with the sensitivity, awareness, knowledge, and skills for multi-culturally competent clinical care.

Neuroanatomy Courses

Marquette University

In the summer following the first year of training, the fellows have the opportunity to attend an intensive neuroanatomy course (“Neuroanatomical Dissection: Human Brain and Spinal Cord”) at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. All associated travel and course fees are covered by Shepherd Center. In the event that this course is not offered, other resources will be identified.

Supervision

Supervision is provided in all aspects of the fellow’s clinical, research, and teaching activities. All supervising faculty are licensed in Georgia. All fellows are assigned a primary supervisor or supervisors for each clinical rotation. Each week, the fellow will receive one to two hours of individual supervision, in addition to approximately two hours of group supervision obtained through clinical and didactic activities. Additional informal supervision regularly occurs as the fellow manages the demands of clinical services. Styles and modes of supervision vary according to setting. The fellow receives supervision on case presentations, performance in team meetings and seminars, consultative/supervisory work, writing skills, and overall professional conduct. Professional development, career planning, and interviewing skills are also addressed during supervisory sessions. By the completion of the fellowship, all fellows will have more than the requisite 1,500 hours of supervised work experience needed for licensure in Georgia and all other jurisdictions of the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards.

Diversity

Shepherd Center is deeply committed to training future rehabilitation psychologists from a culturally competent framework and fostering an environment that is highly sensitive to and appreciative of all aspects of diversity. We believe that increased self-awareness and appreciation for other viewpoints and cultures make psychologists more effective practitioners, scientists, supervisors, and teachers. For this reason, sensitivity to individual differences and cultural humility are integral aspects of our training philosophy. Our overall objective is to provide residents with the awareness, knowledge, and skills to provide clinical services across cultures and diverse settings. Training is focused on the integration of diversity-related knowledge into clinical services. A specific emphasis is placed on incorporating diversity-related concepts and knowledge into evidence-based assessment and intervention practices.



Successful completion of the training program is reflected by the following accomplishments, as delineated by the Baltimore Conference Guidelines:

- 1** The fellow will be able to provide evidence-based assessment and interventions with individuals and families experiencing problems related to physical and cognitive impairment, ability limitation, and participation restriction that focus on the individual and family functioning, including affective, cognitive, personality, and behavior functioning as well as social, educational, vocational, and recreational participation.
- 2** The fellow will participate in interprofessional collaboration and consultation at the clinical team level, the program level, and the community level to provide comprehensive and effective care for the persons with disability and to maximize rehabilitation team and program functioning.
- 3** The fellow will demonstrate sufficient scholarly activity, e.g., submission of a study or literature review for publication, presentation, submission of a grant proposal, or outcome assessment.
- 4** A formal evaluation of competency in the exit criteria one through three shall occur in the fellowship program.
- 5** The fellow is eligible for licensure in the state/province where they intend to practice.
- 6** Eligibility for board certification in Rehabilitation Psychology by the American Board of Professional Psychology.
- 7** Successful completion of the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP) Part 1 is expected by December of the second year. Fellow must complete Part 1 before end of fellowship to successfully graduate.



Specialty Training Criteria

Shepherd Center's postdoctoral fellowship program abides by the structural and programmatic standards identified in the Baltimore Conference Guidelines. Below are these assurances and how our program addresses each point.

- 1 The faculty is comprised of two or more formally designated training faculty, at least one of whom has achieved an advanced level of competence in rehabilitation psychology, such as the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) diploma, fellow status in APA, or Canadian Psychological Association (CPA), a record of clinical and research productivity in the specialty, or other evidence of professional competence and leadership in the specialty.

As of the latest update to this booklet, four board-certified clinical rehabilitation psychologists are on staff.

- 2 Training takes place at a formal, organized program, based in or affiliated with a nationally accredited or certified institution, agency, or consortium (e.g., CARF, Joint Commission) that provides direct interdisciplinary services (in an interdisciplinary model) to individuals with rehabilitation needs.

Shepherd Center is accredited by the Joint Commission and the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities.

Additionally, Shepherd Center is a designated Spinal Cord Injury Model System and Traumatic Brain Injury Model System by the NIDILRR.

Patients with spinal cord injury, brain injury, multiple sclerosis, spine and chronic pain, and other neurological conditions are treated by a large interdisciplinary team, including recreational therapy, assistive technology, peer support, and vocational counseling. Training will include at least two supervisors during any one training year. In addition to case-based supervision, the trainee will have a mentor during the entire training period who provides guidance regarding overall professional career development.

HR Benefits

- ▶ Stipends are based on the NIH-fellowship rates that calculate years of post-graduate experience.
- ▶ **Year One:** \$65,384
- ▶ **Year Two:** \$67,346
- ▶ Eligible for comprehensive health, dental, and vision insurance, as well as basic life and disability insurance.
- ▶ 24 days of paid time off per year.

Department Benefits

- ▶ Professional development funds are available for conference presentations and travel. Requests must be approved by the training director and department director.
- ▶ Three educational days per year to attend conferences.
- ▶ One educational day to take the EPPP. EPPP test fee reimbursement after successfully passing the exam during fellow ship range of dates.

Other benefits include free parking, access to dictation software, full access to medical library services, and numerous perks (e.g., discounts) in the community.

Metropolitan Atlanta

With a population of approximately 5.9 million, the Atlanta metropolitan area manages to be urban while retaining southern charm and hospitality. Here is why our staff loves Atlanta:

“There is a lot of diversity in terms of Atlanta residents, as many people are transplants. I really think this adds to the cultural and identity diversity that thrives in the Atlanta area, making it feel very welcoming to people from all backgrounds.”

– *Dr. Kristian Nitsch, Clinical Neuropsychologist, Shepherd Pathways*

“Atlanta has a great food scene, southern charm, and is a great hub for traveling. There is something here for everyone: from those who love being in the city as well as those who prefer a slower pace of life or being in nature. Overall, the Atlanta community is welcoming and rapidly growing with a wide range of opportunities for people with diverse backgrounds and interests..”

– *Dr. Vanessa Watorek, Clinical Neuropsychologist, Assistant Training Director, Neuropsychology Fellowship Program*

“Atlanta is travel accessible, has great festivals and activities, and I could easily afford rent close to work in great, fun neighborhood.”

– *Dr. Laurie Baker, Director, Department of Psychology, Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Fellow, 2009-2011*

“Dog-friendly, amazing food, so much greenery even in the city proper, and endless opportunities to be outside (hiking, festivals, walking the city’s beltline, Braves baseball).”

– *Dr. Michelle Jackson, Clinical Neuropsychologist, ABI Inpatient Unit, and Training Director of Neuropsychology Fellowship Program*

“The ability to be outside almost year-round!”

– *Dr. Punam Rahman, Rehabilitation Psychologist, Spinal Cord Program, and Training Director of Rehabilitation Psychology Fellowship Program*



Awards and Accreditations



Spinal Cord Injury Model System and
Traumatic Brain Injury Model System

Application Process

Eligibility

Applicant must meet the following prerequisites to be considered for our postdoctoral training program:

- 1** Completion of doctoral degree, including defense of dissertation, from a clinical or counseling psychology doctoral program accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) or the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) before the start date of the fellowship
- 2** Completion of an APA/CPA–accredited psychology internship program
- 3** In compliance with APA/CPA, all persons hired will be required to verify identity and eligibility to work in the United States and to complete the required employment eligibility verification form upon hire. Shepherd Center is unable to commit to sponsoring H-1B visas at this time.

We encourage you to apply prior to the December 16th deadline because we anticipate receiving applications in November of the year prior to the start date. Invited applicants will be interviewed virtually. *Fellows typically begin training the Tuesday after Labor Day.*

Application Checklist

Please submit materials via the APPA CAS portal appicpostdoc.cas.myliaison.com.

This is a free service for fellowship applicants. Search '[Shepherd Center](#)' and add us to your program list.

- ☐ Letter of interest, including training and clinical experiences and an explanation of your specific interests in our fellowship program.
- ☐ Curriculum Vitae.
- ☐ One de-identified case* discussing conceptualization and assessment/intervention summary, preferably one relevant to our clinical populations. **Page limitation under five pages.*
- ☐ Unofficial graduate school transcripts sent directly from the program. After formal offer and acceptance, the fellow is required to send official transcripts to the Fellowship Director.
- ☐ Three letters of recommendation from professionals familiar with your academic or clinical work, at least one of which is from a current supervisor.
- ☐ For applicants that have not completed the dissertation defense, a letter from the dissertation chairperson indicating the stage of the research project and the anticipated date of completion. Note: If the dissertation chairperson is also writing a letter as a clinical supervisor, information regarding dissertation status can be included in that letter. No applicant will be permitted to begin fellowship training if their dissertation has not been completed.

*The complete application should be received by **December 11, 2026.***



Shepherd Center

2020 Peachtree Road, NW
Atlanta, GA 30309-1465
404-352-2020 shepherd.org