

Community Youth Center of San Francisco (“CYC”)

Reviews from our current 2020-21 Group of MFT, LPCC, PsyD Trainees & Interns

My traineeship experience at CYC has been such a positive and great one. Although this year it was virtual - I still wouldn't have second guessed my choice to do my traineeship here. Here at CYC, I feel I am actually heard and I get the support I need. Dr. Woo, the supervisors, clinicians, and all the trainees are very supportive. We all not only learn from the amazing and helpful topics that Dr. Woo and the rest of the clinicians share and teach - but we also have learned a lot through each other as trainees and interns. I can honestly say out of all the places I've worked at throughout both my academic and professional career - I've never felt such immense and positive support until joining CYC. If you are looking for a site where you want to freely ask questions, feel supported professionally and personally, and you have the willingness and motivation to learn as many skills and techniques you can to potentially be the best clinician you can be, I highly recommend and suggest joining the CYC team.

Justin Hernandez, MFT Trainee, USF 21

It is such an honour for me to participate in the practicum with the Community Youth Center of San Francisco. CYC offers diverse training and abundant opportunities for trainees. I feel free to practice what I learn from the classes to the therapy sessions with my clients. The most valuable thing to me at CYC is the teamwork. At CYC, I feel I am supported by my cohort coming from various graduate programs and also from my supervisors. Dr. Woo, Dr. Li, and Anna always provide new insights to the cases, and we can learn new things from different perspectives. Having internship at CYC not only provides us an opportunity to learn new things, but also let us contribute to society and to the youths in need.

Zili “Jet” He, PsyD Intern, Sofia University

My experience at CYC has been an enlightening and fulfilling stop on my pathway to being a mental health professional. While my internship has been entirely online (telehealth) - and characterized by unique and challenging circumstances within the context of a global pandemic - I felt completely supported and was consistently provided with necessary resources. CYC is an environment that prioritizes honoring and truly understanding the cultural backgrounds of our clients, with an emphasis on the API community that targets where the needs of the community need to be met. I greatly appreciated that CYC also focuses on a strengths-based and harm-reduction-oriented approach that enables us to help our clients in a holistic and nurturing way. I had fears and doubts about what it would be like to participate in an internship during this unprecedented time, but my CYC colleagues and supervisors have equipped me with so many useful insights and tools that transcend my preconceived notions of telehealth barriers. Not only this, but CYC also prepared its interns for community mental health environments through excellent training in many theoretical approaches/techniques, skills for assessment and treatment, and all things Medi-cal. I feel confident moving forward into the next chapter of my life after the learning and growth I've experienced here.

Taylor Richards, MFT Trainee, USF

"I am excited and scared for practicum!" That's what I was thinking about back to the beginning of 2020 when my journey started. I still remember how uncomfortable I was when sitting with my first client but kept trying to remind myself to be curious. I had so much anxiety before the first session and interview, and now that the anxiety has lessened, the first session feels like such an amazing opportunity to set the frame, gain some insight into the client's world, and provide the youth with a space that is uniquely theirs. Before the first session, I reviewed different theories, prepared so many questions, and asked my supervisor for strategies. "Do you still remember the introduction and confidentiality part?" Dr. Woo asked. I said yes. "Enough", he responded, "Remember, nothing is more important than building rapport." That's also one of the most beautiful "strategies" I have learned from my supervisor Dr. Woo as well as the therapeutic relationship, systemic support, and unconditional positive regard. CYC has witnessed my journey of transformation from a student to a beginning therapist. It is an inspiration to learn from all the clinicians in CYC. I admire their care, compassion, and the seriousness with this work and they expand my awareness every week in group supervision with their beautiful insights. Unfortunately, we did everything virtually in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. But I hold so much appreciation for everyone's heart and soul that is getting us through this year. I feel so blessed that our paths merged in the wonderful CYC community!

Yue Li, MFT Trainee from China, Community Mental Health Program, California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS)

My traineeship at the Community Youth Center of San Francisco (CYC) has been a great learning experience. Dr. Woo and all other clinicians are very supportive and caring in so many ways. The work with the students, parents and Wellness Coordinators from the various schools is challenging and required me to go beyond my level of comfort. Since CYC is funded in part from Medi-Cal, clients paperwork is mandatory, and writing it all up is intensive and it forces me to apply my organizational and time management skills, which in turn will help me in the future at other practicum sites. I have been at other school-based programs and I can confidently say the individual and group support at CYC stands out from any of these other traineeships I have been at. Due to COVID-19 the traditional mode of therapy as face-to-face meetings instead became Zoom meetings. This brought its own challenges with the students, however with patience, practice and time this new process taught me new skills and made me more creative in connecting with my clients.

Kimberly Nguyen, PsyD trainee, Alliant University

These reviews were written by our current group of 2020-21 CYC trainees and interns in January 2021, in the middle of their academic year traineeship/practicum. All clinical and training activities have been virtual this year. If you would like to speak personally with any of them, we can give you their contact information upon request.

We fully expect to maintain this Traineeship/Internship in the 2021-22 academic year, whether it remains virtual or if become possible to return to a normal, live experience.

My CYC internship has been a great learning experience for me both personally and professionally. 2020 was an unpredictable and challenging year for all of us. CYC has provided a safe and warm atmosphere which has helped me through this difficult time. The supervisor and staff were very helpful and patient in helping me with any question I had. Dr. Woo and his team are willing to help me step-by-step since I do not have first-hand experience working with youth and families. Writing the CANS (Assessment) can be stressful, but the CYC provides detailed guidelines that help interns complete the documentation. During the weekly group supervision and individual supervision, I learned from staff and other interns' experiences and helpful advice. I highly recommended to anyone who wants to work with the API community in the bay area, as CYC has great experience working with this underserved population. I am thankful to all the staff at CYC, and I am grateful to be a part of this team.

Chaoyikui Liu, MFT Trainee, University of San Francisco

CYC makes me feel like I am in an environment of my home. CYC supervisors and staffs did not tell me what to do as a new member, instead, they have been leading the way and guiding me be responsible for my actions to take care of my job on my own terms since I joined the club on day one, that really gives me the freedom to do my job as an MFT therapist and makes me feel motivated to learn more and do well as an MFT intern. I have worked many jobs prior to becoming an MFT intern at CYC, but CYC is the one agency that the supervisors will ask me if I am willing to take on the challenges to accept a client to work with. CYC has a friendly and pleasant environment for everyone to be in there. I feel that the supervisors and the staffs are unbelievably professional and respectful. On the other hand, the environments in my prior jobs were just so unpleasant. I have been with CYC for about 10 months, and all along, I have been having this feeling that this is the place I want to work at and have a career with because CYC will help me and guide me to become a better employee and a caring MFT therapist. There is an old saying that the home is the safe harbor with love, warmth, courage, wisdom, and tranquility, CYC is like a home to me.

Tom Ye, API MFT Trainee, Golden Gate University

Overall, I am grateful to have chosen CYC as my traineeship site this year. I genuinely appreciate my individual supervisor, she is a knowledgeable warm demeanor and authentic. I feel that I learn so much from her and am consistently challenged to grow through in our check-ins. During this great social experiment that is social distancing, CYC has been very intentional about creating a traineeship program that meets the needs of the community while also helping to ensure that interns are able to meet their hours. As a LPCC trainee who has to do 280 face-to-face hours, this is of utmost importance to me and the care and attention that CYC has paid to this is not lost on me.

Not only does CYC provide their trainees with great support, but they also provide excellent and valuable experience with Medi-Cal billing. CYC has systematized the process in such a way that makes it fool-proof. Many of my peers who are also working with Medi-Cal clients in other organizations have shared that they feel like they had to fail through the documentation before learning the process. CYC takes the guesswork out of it and streamlines documentation in a way that makes sense and adheres to the strict guidelines set by government mental health billing. Overall, if you are looking for a place to grow as a clinician, and learn proper documentation, CYC is the way to go.

Gracee Anquiano, LPCC Trainee, USF 2021

I can safely say that when I thought about what my traineeship would like as I approached the end of graduate school, I did not envision that the entirety of it would be done in Zoom. It was hard for me to believe that I would be able to effectively do therapy over a computer screen and I felt that I was missing out on the "real experience" of doing therapy in person. Well, my time at CYC has proven otherwise. At CYC, I have received the guidance and mentorship in helping me apply the clinical skills I have learned in the classroom, to real life situations with clients. Individual and group supervision has provided the opportunity to consult with peers and staff when additional support is needed. Peer learning encourages and provides a multicultural lens which is imperative to good clinical practice and paves the way for a lifetime of personal and professional growth. I encourage you to consider Community Youth Center as your placement site if you are (1) Excited about working with teenagers or adolescents in your future career; (2) Uncertain if you want to work with young people (like me) and want to explore that as an option, prior to seeking employment working with that population; or (3) Looking for a traineeship that offers some monetary compensation at the end of the program because let's face it, we got loans to pay off!

Marcus Ghiasi, MFT Intern, University of San Francisco

As a third-year doctoral (PsyD) practicum student engaging with a school-based site for the first time I was admittedly nervous to transition to a virtual platform. However, within my first few months training at Community Youth Center my anxieties had disappeared. Even in the pandemic, the site has received regular referrals, and I have been lucky to maintain a full caseload of 10 clients, with the opportunity to set my limit and seek more if I choose. My clients have largely presented with a diverse range of presenting problems inclusive of adjustment disorder, anxiety, depression, and grief and, due to the flexibility allowed, I am able to meet them during times that are considerate of both their school schedule and mine.

Not only am I still able to gain valuable telehealth experience with both clients and parents, but I have also been introduced to an interprofessional cohort that provide both nuanced observations and general support. While the team is made primarily of MFT, and LPCCs, from the beginning, the team fostered a sense of collaboration. In no way was there exclusion or competition coming from a different program. The sense of support also extends to supervision.

Dr. Woo is a compassionate and passionate individual, with a wide knowledge of different interventions - all of which have allowed me to grow as a clinician. Despite my inexperience in this setting, Dr. Woo was able to quickly and efficiently connect me with the Wellness coordinators of my assigned school, and also provide me with appropriate resources for further learning. These include not only book recommendations, but weekly didactics that always make space for personal reflection. Given that the primary population served are adolescent Asian American and Pacific Islanders, we are also encouraged to develop our knowledge of cross-cultural differences and advised on how to incorporate these considerations into our practice.

Initially, my draw to the site also included being able to perform a series of assessments. As expected, the ability to conduct said assessments have now been impacted due to shelter-in-place. Nevertheless, each clinician at this site is still given the opportunity to consult and gather information for a comprehensive Child Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment report,

with further chances to do so on a needs-basis. Ultimately, I find these assessments to have provided me the opportunity to independently practice my conceptualization skills, and treatment-planning while also receiving very detailed feedback from both Dr. Woo, and Dr.Li. While I have not yet completed my training year, my current experiences have been largely positive, and I would recommend this site for anyone interested in this population.

Julienne Fresnedi, Psy.D. Intern, University of San Francisco

My time here at CYC has been amazing to say the least. I was very worried I wasn't going to learn as much as I can and have experiences I've only heard about from other trainees and interns. With everything going virtual, it made me question whether or not I really wanted this. But after meeting with all the CYC supervisors, I found nothing but support and encouragement. I was also worried I was not going to get enough training during this time, but Dr. Woo and the other supervisors have been doing a superb job utilizing our weekly meetings to educate us.

I found another plus to participating in this traineeship with CYC: I was able to have a wide range of clients. While I had hoped to be stationed at one middle school, I was given the opportunity to provide therapy to children as young as 8, and as old as 19. It gave me the opportunity to experience giving therapy to a different client I had not considered in the past. If we were providing therapy in person, I would have been placed only in one school and not given the choice to explore the ways of providing therapy to other age groups. I am forever grateful I landed in CYC.

Melissa Yow, MFT Trainee, University of San Francisco

I am a MFT trainee from USF. Having no experience with working with youths I was a little bit worried about how well I would do and adapt, especially in the "online therapy" format. To my surprise, Dr. Woo and the supervisors have been very helpful and supportive in this endeavor. Dr. Woo and the other supervisors have been there every step of the way, guiding me through difficult/ stressful situations, and helping me find my inner therapist. I have found that through my traineeship with CYC I have not only grown as a professional but as a person as well. I will definitely attribute any of my future successes in this field to my time and growth here at CYC.

Nicholas Koo, MFT Intern, University of San Francisco

The Community Youth Center ("CYC") is a community-based nonprofit agency with an excellent reputation for working with at-risk youth. CYC's first priority is to serve Asian Pacific Islander (API) youth in San Francisco, but youth of all races, groups and LGBTQ are also served. CYC has been providing expert, practical clinical training for trainees and interns working with teens and their families since the 1980's.

TO APPLY: Send resume and cover letter to Dr. Bradford Woo, Community Youth Center, 1038 Post Street, San Francisco, CA 94109. Email: bradfordw@cycsf.org. Telephone: (415) 681-4957. Our website is www.cycsf.org.