



DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY

Department of Psychiatry

Undergraduate Electives Catalogue

Adult Psychiatry Services

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Psychiatry - General Adult Inpatient

Overview of the service

The acute care psychiatric inpatient units are an excellent exposure to psychiatry – it is a setting where the patients with the most serious psychiatric illnesses are treated when their symptoms are most severe and require the hospital setting. Typical patients have diagnoses of schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar mania or severe depressions.

How we help

Acute care inpatient goals for the patient are to stabilize acute symptoms, diagnostic clarification may be required, further investigations into medical issues, and devising a discharge plan that often begins to address fundamental social determinants of health.

Our team

The treatment teams include a psychiatrist, nursing staff, social workers, recreational therapists, occupational therapists and support staff.

Clerk's role

The medical student can have a rich experience of psychiatry in this setting, seeing significant psychopathology and symptoms, exposure to thorough assessment and treatment planning to address patient needs in the acute care setting while actively involving patient families as much as possible. The experience often starts with observation and quickly progresses to active involvement on the team with direct patient care often with a high level of independence. The experience offers a steep but satisfying learning curve to psychiatry.

Where we are located

- 6 Lane Adult Inpatient Unit, Abbie J. Lane Building, 6th Floor, 5909 Veteran's Memorial Lane, Halifax, NS.
- 7 Lane Adult Inpatient Unit, Abbie J. Lane Building, 7th Floor, 5909 Veteran's Memorial Lane, Halifax, NS
- Short Stay Unit, Abbie J. Lane Building, 6th Floor, 5909 Veteran's Memorial Lane, Halifax, NS
- Mount Hope Adult Inpatient Unit, Nova Scotia Hospital, 300 Pleasant Street, Dartmouth, NS

Psychiatry - Acute Day Hospital

Overview of the service

The Mental Health Day Hospital provides care for patients with mental health diagnoses and helps support patient recovery through close monitoring and group therapy. The Day Hospital frequently manages patients with anxiety disorders, mood disorders (depression or bipolar disorder), trauma or stressor-related disorders, schizophrenia, or schizoaffective disorder. Typically, patients spend four weeks at the Day Hospital before being discharged to a Community Mental Health clinic or specialty service (e.g. Mood Disorders Clinic, Early Psychosis Program). Patients are frequently initiated on new medications (oral medications or long-acting injections) while at the Day Hospital or have the doses of their current medications optimized. Patients can also receive electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) or be started on Clozapine while attending the Day Hospital.

How we help

Our patient population consists of patients 19 years of age and older. Patients who are admitted to the Day Hospital have often had recent inpatient admissions and still require closer monitoring than what is typically offered by Community Mental Health clinics. The Day Hospital also frequently accepts patients from the Community Mental Health clinics who are at risk of being admitted to an inpatient unit if they do not receive more intensive care.

Our team

Psychiatrist, Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, Recreational Therapists, Administrative Support, Psychiatry Residents, Medical Students.

Clerk's role

Clerks will be involved in psychiatric assessments of Day Hospital patients, performing mental status exams, attending and discussing Day Hospital patients in morning rounds, writing assessment notes, and attending team meetings.

Where we are located

3rd Floor, Room 3118, Abbie J. Lane Building, 5909 Veteran's Memorial Lane, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 2E2

Psychiatry - Rapid Access & Stabilization Program (RASP)

Overview of the service

The Rapid Access and Consultation Program offers patients that live and work in the Central Zone timely access to psychiatry consultation and the benefit of early input from a psychiatrist for the diagnosis and management of their mental health difficulties.

Referrals from primary care providers to RASP are sent to the Mental Health and Addictions Central Intake Service and usually indicates the reason for the request for psychiatry consultation (mental health assessment, diagnostic clarification and treatment recommendations).

Patients will be able to access one-time focused psychiatry consultations (in-person or virtually depending on the patient's preference) with one of the psychiatrists in RASP clinic.

All patients attending RASP are also offered an opportunity to enroll in the Text4Support program which is a text messaging program that is free and is based on principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

In all cases, a summary of the psychiatric assessment is shared with the primary care practitioner, and the primary care practitioner remains responsible for the patient and for implementing the recommendations.

In some cases, the attending RASP Psychiatrist may transfer the patient to another service within the Mental Health and Addiction Program (MHAP) if they feel further ongoing specialist care is required.

How we help

The Rapid Access and Stabilization Program provides rapid psychiatry assessment of patients that need timely psychiatric input. We assess patients who live and work in the Nova Scotia Central Zone. We get referrals from primary care practitioners in the Central Zone.

Our team

RASP is a team of psychiatrists, researchers and administrative staff. The team has a Clinical/Academic Lead (a psychiatrist) who looks after the clinical and academic needs of the team.

Clerk's role

Medical students aim to develop adequate knowledge and skills in gathering and processing crucial information that the patient needs. RASP aims to assist and support medical students in gathering this information.

Where we are located

4th Floor, Abbie J. Lane Building, 5909 Veteran's Memorial Lane, Halifax, NS

Psychiatry – Community Mental Health

Overview of the service

There are four separate Community Mental Health (CMH) clinics in HRM that provide services for adults who are experiencing mental health problems or mental illness. Each clinic is staffed by a multidisciplinary health team with care providers trained in different disciplines. Staff collaborate to provide care through team meetings, case review and joint appointments with patients. Some of the more common illnesses we treat are: Anxiety Disorders, Mood Disorders, Psychotic Disorders, Adjustment Disorders, Personality Disorders and Concurrent Disorders (both mental illness and addiction issues). Learners from several different disciplines receive training and supervision at the Clinics.

How we help

At the CMH clinics, we see general adult outpatients with the disorders listed above. We provide psychiatric consultations for primary care providers as well as ongoing multi-disciplinary pharmacological and non-pharmacological care of patients of the Clinic. Pharmacological care may include administration of long-acting intramuscular antipsychotic medications. Treatment with clozapine is closely monitored. Non-pharmacological treatments include a range of psychotherapies that may be delivered individually or in groups. Other non-pharmacological treatments may include functional assessments, linking patients to helpful community programs, and advocacy. We work with community partners such as family physicians, Department of Community Services, Continuing Care and other community agencies, as needed.

Our team

Psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, occupational therapists, social workers, health care managers, and reception/clinic staff, residents and other learners.

Clerk's role

Students will get a chance to work with several different care providers from various health care professions. Typically, students will be involved in various ways including observing/performing interviews, performing mental status exams, dictating notes, attending team meetings, and home visits with clinicians. Educational experiences will vary.

Where we are located

- Bayer's Road Community Mental Health, 7071 Bayer's Road,
- Cobequid Community Health Centre, 40 Freer Lane, Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia
- Cole Harbour Community Mental Health 2nd floor, 842 Portland St, Dartmouth, NS.
- Dartmouth Community Mental Health, 60 Highfield Park Drive, Dartmouth

Psychiatry - Consultation-Liaison Service

Overview of the service

Specializing in the interface between medicine and psychiatry in a hospital setting. Consultation-Liaison psychiatry has areas of overlap with other distinct disciplines including [psychosomatic medicine](#), [health psychology](#) and [neuropsychiatry](#). The role of the consultation-liaison psychiatrist is to see patients currently admitted as medical/surgical inpatients at the request of the treating medical or surgical consultant or team. This is known as a 'consult' and constitutes the consultation facet of the role. The other "liaison" involves the advocacy, management and professional competencies of the CanMeds roles. It can involve team education, family support, administrative and policy components of a complex system of care.

How we help

The Consultation Liaison service provides consultations to the Halifax Infirmary (HI), Victoria General Hospital (VGH), Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre (NSRC) and Dartmouth General Hospital (DGH) sites.

Our team

The service is a core rotation for senior psychiatry residents. Other learners include Neurology and Physical Medicine residents, Palliative Care fellows and medical students for core and elective rotations. The "team" can vary in size but typically consists of two or three resident level learners and one or two clinical clerks.

Clerk's role

The focus of the medical student experience is to develop skills in assessment, organization and synthesis of information and succinct summary presentation. The service aims to develop independence and autonomy of practice in a supervised environment. The exposure is to a patient group with a variety of brain based disorders often in the context of medical co-morbidity and psychosocial complexity.

Where we are located

Abbie J. Lane Building, 7th Floor, 5909 Veteran's Memorial Lane, Halifax, NS.

Psychiatry - Early Psychosis

Overview of the service

The Nova Scotia Early Psychosis Program (NSEPP) is a specialized, community focused mental health program for young people between the ages of 15-35 years old who are experiencing a first episode of psychosis and for their families. Components include clinical consultation and treatment, research, and education for professionals, patients, families and the community.

How we help

The program provides comprehensive psychiatric assessment, comprehensive biopsychosocial care for up to five years, psychoeducation and supportive programs for patients and their families, liaison with appropriate community members to optimize recovery, consultation on diagnosis and treatment

Our team

The team consists of psychiatrists and general practitioners in psychiatry, clinical nurses, occupational therapists and social workers.

Clerk's role

Clerks will be involved in observing and performing interviews, performing mental status exams, dictating notes and attending team meetings.

Where we are located

Abbie J. Lane Memorial Building, 3rd Floor, 5909 Veterans Memorial Lane, Halifax, NS.

Psychiatry - Forensic Psychiatry

Overview of the service

Forensic Psychiatry is the branch of psychiatry that deals with the application of psychiatric knowledge to legal matters. The Provincial Forensic Psychiatry Service (PFPS) offers a number of services: the Assessment Service, where individuals are assessed on matters of fitness to stand trial and criminal responsibility; the Rehabilitation service where patients found not criminally responsible are treated with the expectation of eventual return to the community, and the Community program where patients having left the inpatient service are followed into the community. The PFPS also runs a sex offender program for the assessment and treatment of offenders convicted of sexual offences. Students will be exposed to all aspects of Forensic psychiatry and all components of the PFPS.

How we help

The East Coast Forensic Hospital (ECFH) works in partnership with the Departments of Health and Justice. The ECFH is unique within NSHA because the people it serves come strictly from the judicial system with the exception of the Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit. There are two rehabilitation units and a mentally ill offender unit where court ordered assessments are performed and treatment is provided to offenders diagnosed with mental illness.

Our team

Our team consists of psychiatrists, general practitioners in psychiatry, residents, nurses and social workers.

Clerk's role

Clerks will be involved in observing and performing interviews, performing mental status exams, dictating notes and attending team meetings.

Where we are located

East Coast Forensic Hospital, 88 Gloria McCluskey Drive, Burnside Industrial Park, Dartmouth, NS.

Psychiatry - Psychiatric Emergency Service (PES)

Overview of the service

The Psychiatric Emergency Service (PES) is a specialized psychiatric emergency service that receives referrals from the Queen Elizabeth II Emergency Department (QEII ED) as well as other emergency departments in the Central Zone of the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA), family physicians, community medical clinics and the Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team (MHMCT). The PES operates in a collaborative manner with the QEII ED to rapidly triage and assess psychiatric emergency patients and determine the most appropriate management plan and disposition.

How we help

Psychiatric emergency patients are defined by referral service as requiring a higher level of psychiatric expertise or more access to mental health resources than that referring service, and often include patients potentially requiring admission, those requiring a more specialized assessment to determine disposition or those who have not responded to attempts by that referral service to intervene.

Our team

Our team consists of a psychiatrist, residents, psychiatric nurses and emergency department staff including physicians and nurses.

Clerk's role

The clerk will participate in patient care with an interprofessional team with specialized knowledge of psychiatric emergencies. Responsibilities will include participation in patient assessment and treatment planning, collection of collateral information, collaboration with referral services and documentation of patient assessment. In addition to general learning objectives the clerk will be expected to learn about topics specific to the PES including suicide/violence risk assessment, medical clearance, psychosocial and pharmacological interventions and medico-legal issues.

Where we are located

Queen Elizabeth II Emergency Department, Halifax Infirmary, 3rd Floor, 1796 Summer Street, Halifax, NS

Psychiatry - Geriatric Psychiatry

Overview of the service

The Seniors Mental Health Services is a tertiary Geriatric Psychiatry resource for the province. Clinically, our service provides assessment, consultation, and time-limited treatment of seniors with complex presentations that cannot be adequately addressed by family physicians, geriatricians or general adult psychiatrist and their related teams. Our provincial resources include specialized outreach, outpatient, inpatient, and seniors' mental health promotion programs.

How we help

The team provides consultation, assessment, treatment, and selective follow-up of seniors with new onset psychiatric illness, psychiatric illness complicated by multiple medical problems or complex psychiatric problems, such as dementia presenting with psychiatric symptoms. The team offers several services. These include outreach (home visits and nursing home consultation), outpatient clinics, group therapy, education and training, and in-hospital care and consultation. The Mount Hope site at the Nova Scotia Hospital also has a geriatric psychiatry inpatient unit.

Our team

Multidisciplinary team that includes geriatric psychiatrists, geriatric and family medicine, nursing, social work, psychology, occupational and recreational therapy.

Clerk's role

Clerks will be involved in observing and performing interviews, performing mental status exams, dictating notes and attending team meetings.

Where we are located

- Halifax: Abbie J. Lane Building, 6th Floor, 5909 Veteran's Memorial Lane, Halifax, NS
- Dartmouth: The Nova Scotia Hospital, Mount Hope Building, 300 Pleasant Street, Dartmouth, NS

Psychiatry - Mood Disorders

Overview of the service

The Mood Disorders Clinic is a tertiary care service offering consultation and follow-up for patients with mood disorders.

How we help

We offer consultation and follow-up for patients with mood disorders.

Our team

Our team consists of psychiatrists, psychologists, and nurses.

Clerk's role

Clerks will be involved in observing and performing interviews, performing mental status exams, dictating notes, and attending team meetings.

Where we are located

Abbie J. Lane Building, 3rd Floor, Room 3088, 5909 Veteran's Memorial Lane, Halifax, NS.

Psychiatry - Sleep Disorders

Overview of the service

The Sleep Disorders Clinic and Laboratory is a tertiary care centre serving patients from Maritime Provinces. The high volume of patients ensures a rich clinical experience for the student, who will interact with all members of the team.

How we help

We help with the diagnosis and management of sleep disorders of patients who are referred by a physician. The majority of patients are seen for a one-hour consultation only. Following this appointment, a decision about the need for an overnight sleep study is made by the Sleep Lab physician.

Our team

The clinic staff consists of 4 physicians in different specialties (psychiatrist, respirologist, neurologist, and family physician) and 5 registered polysomnographic technologists.

Clerk's role

Depending on the length of the rotation, the student will have an opportunity to participate in patient consultations, interview patients under supervision, perform relevant physical examination and observe different types of sleep studies.

Where we are located

Abbie J. Lane Building, 4th Floor, 5909 Veteran's Memorial Lane, Halifax, NS

Psychiatry - Eating Disorders

Overview of the service

The Eating Disorders Service provides comprehensive treatment for all types of eating disorders using a combination of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), an intensive, group-based day program, and inpatient support. The treatment approach is tailored to address the unique needs of each patient, fostering recovery and improving quality of life.

How we help

Our program is designed to support patients in overcoming disordered eating behaviors and achieving sustainable recovery. Through evidence-based therapeutic interventions and multidisciplinary care, we address both the physical and psychological challenges associated with eating disorders.

Our team

The service operates with a multidisciplinary team that includes a psychiatrist, psychologist, nurse, and dietitian. This collaborative approach ensures that patients receive comprehensive care addressing their mental, emotional, and physical health needs.

Clerk's role

As part of the team, clerks will observe clinical interactions to gain firsthand experience in working with patients with eating disorders. They will also practice conducting assessments under supervision, contributing to their clinical learning and understanding of multidisciplinary treatment approaches.

Where we are located

3rd floor of the Abbie Lane, 5909 Veteran's Memorial Lane, Halifax, NS

Psychiatry - Dual Diagnosis Program

Overview of the service

Nova Scotia Health Authority Dual Diagnosis Program provides provincial tertiary services for persons (19 years or older) living with an intellectual or developmental disability and complex mental health or challenging behaviours. Complex mental health or behavioural difficulties that primary or secondary services providers (e.g., family physician, community psychiatrist, general mental health team) have been unable to effectively address.

How we help

We also provide community-based services through our Community Outreach Assessment Support and Treatment team (COAST) and acute services on our inpatient unit, Emerald Hall located at The Nova Scotia Hospital. It is a 15-bed unit with inpatients from all across the province. Admission to our acute inpatient service is limited to individuals assessed by the COAST team.

For service delivery, we require a diagnosis of intellectual or developmental disability as defined by significant impairments in both intellectual functioning (IQ < 70) and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills that originated during the developmental period.

Our team

Our team comprises of a psychiatrist, a general practitioner in psychiatry, a family physician for the unit, psychiatric nurses, clinical psychologist, behaviour analyst, recreational therapist, social worker, occupational therapist, and developmental workers working together as an interdisciplinary team to address the complex needs of our patient population.

Clerk's role

The clerk's role will involve observing and performing assessments and managing persons with dual diagnosis while having the opportunity work in an interdisciplinary team.

Where we are located

The Nova Scotia Hospital, Mount Hope Building, 1st Floor, 300 Pleasant Street, Dartmouth, NS.

Psychiatry - Reproductive Mental Health

Overview of the service

We are a multidisciplinary mental health service located in the women's building of the IWK. We see women who are pregnant and postpartum regarding all mental health issues related to the perinatal period.

How we help

We provide assessment, consultation, education, psychotherapy, and medication management. We work collaboratively with Obstetricians, Midwives, Family Physicians, and other Mental Health Professionals.

Our team

Currently, we are comprised of one part-time psychiatrist and three social work clinicians, as well as a full-time administrative assistant.

Clerk's role

Clerks rotating through our service actively participate in new assessments of women referred to our service and discussions around treatment and management of cases. Clerks have the opportunity to observe treatment sessions and are often asked to see any inpatient consults that we receive.

Where we are located

IWK Health Centre, Women's Building, Room G2152, 5850/5980 University Avenue, Halifax, NS

Psychiatry - Connections Halifax

Overview of the service

Connections Halifax is an outpatient mental health clinic in the Central Zone, specializing in the treatment and rehabilitation of individuals with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI). This includes patients with a diagnosis of either a primary psychotic disorder, or Bipolar disorder, and significant functional deficits.

How we help

We focus on the individual as a whole, through comprehensive bio-psycho-social formulation, to identify issues or difficulties that, when corrected, may enhance both mental health and functioning. The specific focus of the rehabilitation effort is according to the patient's personal values and goals.

Our team

We have a large, multi-disciplinary team comprised of Psychiatrists, Registered Nurses (RN), Social Workers (SW), Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants (OT and OTA), Recreational Therapists and Recreational Therapist Assistants (RT and RTA), as well as Administrative Support Staff.

Clerk's role

The medical clerk would be involved in reading about various patients, conducting focused assessment during Psychiatry appointments (with supervision and guidance), active discussion around treatment strategy and case management, and periodic documentation (dictations with feedback, writing co-signed orders, etc.).

Where we are located

Park Lane, 5657 Spring Garden Rd, Suite 3000, Halifax, NS