Training Guidelines for Psychology Students in Youth Obesity Programs


Objective
A multidisciplinary committee was formed by Children’s Hospital Association, formerly National Association of Children’s Hospitals and Related Institutions (NACHRI), to develop policy and practice guidelines for pediatric obesity. A psychologist subcommittee was formed to obtain expert consensus on discipline-specific issues. The absence of national training guidelines for psychologists working with obese youth (though available for physicians and dieticians) led to the development of training guidelines to build knowledge and skills in the areas of assessment and treatment.

Method
The Children’s Hospital Association Psychology Committee (15 members) reviewed the content areas of knowledge and skill that are important for the assessment/treatment of obese youth. Upon expert consensus, detailed training guidelines were created.

Results
Training guidelines for psychology trainees working with obese youth were developed within the following competency content areas: developmental issues, comorbid medical conditions, comprehensive assessment, clinical interventions, interprofessional coordinated care, ethical/legal issues, and cultural diversity issues. Content areas focus on unique information that is integral to a comprehensive understanding of pediatric obesity. For example, skills in treating binge eating and emotional eating are important when working with obese youth.

Conclusion
Training guidelines for psychology students are lacking in the educational literature. We developed training guidelines identifying competency content areas specific for pediatric obesity. This expert-consensus guideline should assist psychologists who are involved in training at the pre-doctoral and post-doctoral levels.

APA BENCHMARKS IN PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

CLINICAL ASSESSMENT
Acquire knowledge and expertise in the assessment of relevant cognitive, affective, behavioral, relational, social, and biological components of pediatric obesity.

- Assessment
- Evidence-Based Practice
- Scientific Knowledge and Methods
- Consultation

APPLICATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES TO TREATMENT
Interpret assessment data for treatment planning.

- Evidence-Based Practice
- Scientific Knowledge and Methods

PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE OF CO-MORBID MEDICAL CONDITIONS
Acquire knowledge regarding the common medical comorbidities seen in pediatric weight management programs.

- Evidence-Based Practice
- Scientific Knowledge and Methods

INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL AND COMMUNICATION
Understand the role of each discipline in an international obesity care team.

- Professional Values and Attitudes
- Reflective Practice/Self-Assessment/Self-Care
- Relationships
- Interdisciplinary Systems
- Advocacy

DEVELOPMENTAL CONCERNS
Understand the developmental components to obesity assessment and treatment.

- Evidence-Based Practice
- Scientific Knowledge and Methods

ETHICAL AND LEGAL ISSUES
Identify and address ethical issues commonly encountered in the assessment and treatment of obese youth.

- Individual and Cultural Diversity
- Ethical Legal Standards and Policy
- Reflective Practice/Self-Assessment/Self-Care

CLINICAL TREATMENT
Acquire knowledge and skill in implementing evidence-based interventions for common conditions and issues that arise in the pediatric overweight/obesity population.

- Intervention
- Evidence-Based Practice
- Scientific Knowledge and Methods

APPLICATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES TO INTERPROFESSIONAL CARE AND COMMUNICATION
Effectively facilitate professional communication and interprofessional coordination of obesity treatment.

- Professional Values and Attitudes
- Reflective Practice/Self-Assessment/Self-Care
- Relationships
- Interdisciplinary Systems
- Advocacy

Expert Consensus
1. A. D. Gulliford Hospital for Children
2. Nationwide Children's Hospital
3. Helen DeVos Children's Hospital
4. Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics
5. Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital, Inc.
6. Dell Children's Medical Center
7. University of Texas at Austin
8. Area Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Childhood Obesity
9. Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
10. The Institute of Living
11. University of Connecticut School of Medicine
12. University of Louisville School of Medicine
13. Arkansas Children's Hospital
14. University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
15. College of Medicine
16. Department of Pediatrics

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