

embrace

# CLINICAL TRAINING PROGRAM AT THE EMBRACE MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

EMBRACE  
MENTAL  
HEALTH  
CENTER

مركز  
إمبرايس  
للصحة  
النفسية



## ABOUT EMBRACE

Embrace stands as a dedicated Lebanese organization committed to transforming the landscape of mental health in Lebanon. Its inception in 2013, initially as a modest fund linked to the Psychiatry Department of the American University of Beirut Medical Center, coincided with a time when mental illness was heavily stigmatized, often misconstrued as a manifestation of insanity. This regrettably led to those grappling with psychological challenges being unfairly labeled as feeble or deranged, frequently relegated to isolation in institutions. Many who required help remained unaware of their entitlement to essential services, compounding their struggles.

Embrace developed as a grassroots organization, committed to improving the mental wellbeing of Lebanon's community and positioning mental health as a basic right for all. Together with our partners, allies, stakeholders, and persons with lived experiences, we work towards improving the quality of people's lives through better mental health, saving lives, and advocating for the social and economic rights that impact equal rights and access to mental health.



*To ensure that mental health and access to care is positioned as a basic human right that must be met for all persons, through awareness, advocacy, and dignified mental health services across the spectrum of care.*

Mission

## 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 center that houses psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and support staff, providing direct, free of charge quality mental health care to persons experiencing a mental illness in Lebanon.

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 meets Embrace's 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 that "All persons in Lebanon pursue a better mental health and reach dignified access to care without social, personal and structural barriers", the 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 to its beneficiaries. EMHC employs various specialists who tend to the psychological, medical, and social aspects of its beneficiaries, and therefore understand, assess and treat beneficiaries holistically within their context, using approaches that have shown scientific evidence of efficacy.

## CLINICAL TRAINING PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

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.

The Clinical Training Program will be submitting its application to receive accreditation as a training site from the Lebanese Order of Psychologists in the first round of application submissions taking place in June 2024.



## 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 in Clinical Psychology 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
- Transcript of their BA and MA studies
- A 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

All documents can be sent to [ghinainmail@embracelebanon.org](mailto:ghinainmail@embracelebanon.org) by **May 1, 2024**, with the title **"Application for Clinical Training"**.

Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed by end of May and acceptance letters will be sent by June.



## SELECTION PROCESS

All application materials will be thoroughly reviewed by a committee of licensed clinical psychologists and psychiatrists. 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, university transcripts 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 and one of the Co-directors of the Embrace Mental Health Center. 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 the 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:**

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

## 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 December or after having completed 3 months in program and once at the end of the training year to assess readiness to practice independently.

### APA Benchmarks Clusters and Core Competencies

Professionalism	<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>
Relational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship with Others</li> </ul>
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scientific Knowledge and Methods</li> <li>Research/Evaluation</li> </ul>
Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence-based practice</li> <li>Assessment</li> <li>Intervention</li> <li>Consultation</li> </ul>
Education*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching</li> <li>Supervision</li> </ul>
Systems	<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 several 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.

<b>Duration of Program</b>	11 months
<b>Start date</b>	September 1
<b>End date</b>	July 30
<b>Approximate number of weekly hours</b>	17-20 hours/week
<b>Training days</b>	Monday through Friday

As detailed in the schedule, the training offers both a didactic component and a practical component. During the initial weeks, trainees observe various activities, gradually transitioning to hands-on practice. Throughout the year, trainees accumulate over 100 hours of observation and more than 400 hours of clinical interventions, exceeding the minimum training hours mandated by the Lebanese government for licensure. Additionally, trainees engage in about 92 hours of didactics.

A description of each of the activities is outlined below:

### 1. Observations of Diagnosis/Interventions

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

Trainees will observe phone-based interventions employed by trained operators of Lebanon's National Helpline for emotional support and suicide prevention (1564). These operators offer support to callers experiencing emotional distress, suicidal thoughts, bereavement due to suicide, seeking referrals, or facing an emotional crisis. The majority of callers to the helpline are young adults who report having mental illness.

# STRUCTURE OF PROGRAM

## 1. Observations of Diagnosis/Interventions

### *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.

## 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. They will also receive supervision over the calls they take by licensed clinical psychologists and supervisors of the National Lifeline.



# STRUCTURE OF PROGRAM

## ***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, including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Interpersonal Therapy, Psychodynamic Therapy, and Acceptance-Based Therapies.

## ***iv. One month inpatient hospital rotation***

Trainees will engage directly with in-patients facing severe mental illnesses, gaining firsthand exposure to diverse clinical scenarios under the supervision of experienced psychiatrists and psychologists. Through diagnostic interviews and psycho-education provision, trainees will build their skills in addressing complex mental health needs.

## **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 September or October, trainees will be required to attend a 4-day training on Active Listening and Collaborative Intervention in Suicidal Crises. This training is usually organized for helpline operators of Lebanon's National emotional support and suicide prevention helpline (1564). Other workshops and trainings will also be offered throughout the year.



# TESTIMONIES FROM OUR GRADUATING INTERNS



**NOURA AMKIEH**

...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.



**ALEX LEGG**

Starting out I was a bit nervous but the supervision is excellent and you feel very supported from the supervisors in group and individual sessions as well as from your colleagues who quickly become your family.



**SARA MAKKI**

Its a wonderful experience to interact with beneficiaries and learn from supervisors.

## Contact Information



Embrace, Non Profit Organization  
Hamra, Makdessi Street  
Beirut, Lebanon



00961-1-346226



clinic@embracelebanon.org



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



@embrace\_lebanon

# TESTIMONIES FROM OUR GRADUATING INTERNS



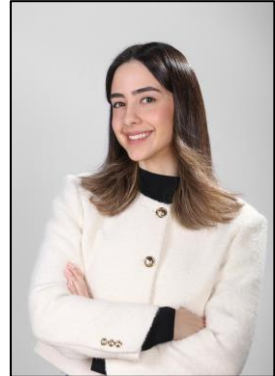
**TATIANA MAALOUF**

This training has taught me a lot, not only with sessions and patient care, but about personal and academic growth. It has enabled me to confront challenges I never imagined facing. It's shown my strengths and, more importantly, my weaknesses, guiding me to address them effectively. Isn't this precisely what a therapist should do? Indeed. Moreover, I've met people I now consider family, always connected no matter where life leads.



**LAYAL HAMZE**

It was an exceptional experience, during which I acquired extensive knowledge and built my clinical skills. This training program laid a solid foundation upon which I can continue building expertise through further experiences. The program's structure was well-designed, offering a diverse range of learning methods. I particularly appreciated the careful selection of individual supervisors, which exposed us to some of the finest professionals in the field.



**DAHLIA YAMOUT**

The training program proved to be an incredibly enriching and fulfilling journey. It provided a challenging yet supportive environment where I honed my skills to become an authentic and well-rounded clinician. The emphasis on self-growth through various forms of supervision—group, individual, and peer—was invaluable. Overall, the training program at Embrace exceeded my expectations and significantly contributed to my professional development as a psychologist.

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