

## Illustrating Life at Mount Sinai as a Psychiatry Resident PGY-1



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### My Background

I'm Eve and I was born and raised in Manhattan (not far from Sinai) and spent my childhood years mostly as a city kid with intermittent trips to visit family in the (relative) countryside of Long Island and the more rural vistas of the Adirondacks. I loved animals and rode horses in Central Park (believe it or not); I had hamsters and cats as city living allowed at the time. I thought about medicine a little, mostly because I enjoyed science and liked working with people. For college, I went to Yale and skipped over science in order to study the Humanities, spending a lot of time reading and writing. Afterwards, I ventured out and moved to California, to work for a Writing Program at the newest University of California branch. I thought a lot about life in academia, but a childhood interest in medicine continued to beckon. I liked the hands-on aspect of being a physician, the practical application of science-based knowledge, and was drawn to the idea of taking care of others. Eventually, I decided to go for it. I moved back to New York City and enrolled in post-baccalaureate courses at Columbia University. For medical school, I headed to Jefferson in Philly and thanks to a couple of mentors, discovered psychiatry. I saw how psychiatry

can radically change lives, and I liked that psychiatry employs a kind of learned discretion, in addition to scientific and clinical knowledge. On a more personal level, I felt that psychiatry offers a window into others (in a way similar to reading a great book), and so on many levels, it felt like a natural fit for me.

## Why I Chose Mount Sinai

Looking back on the application process, I was in a little bit of denial about wanting to come back to New York City, so I didn't really target NYC programs. My then-boyfriend (now husband) is also from NYC, and we couples matched but were very open during the interview season. This is to say that we interviewed far and wide and I ended up getting a sense of many different programs across the country. In the end, Sinai felt like the right place for me for a variety of reasons, not just because it enabled me to come home. From the start of the interview day, there was a relaxed, open feeling that I felt was unique compared to interview days at other programs. Dr. New and Dr. Simon did the introduction, which is somewhat unique; a lot of program directors don't take that kind of time. They spoke about their visions for the program, their interests in psychiatry, and even about themselves. It was refreshing, and I got the sense that Sinai was a place where psychiatry training is evolving and flexible, reflective of the kind of changes that are happening within the field as we gain further understanding of the brain. I liked that residents do six-months of outpatient psychiatry during their second year, which is definitely not the norm and that residents are encouraged to find and develop areas of interest within psychiatry. I also liked that the program was not centered on either psychodynamics or neuroscience, but that all realms of psychiatry were incorporated and emphasized in training and that faculty interest and research reflected this fact. Plus, I had heard along the interview trail that Sinai residents are very happy and very well trained. Overall, my impression was that the program was innovative in the best kind of way—adaptive to the changing times, reactive to faculty and resident input, and enabling of residents to have unique training experiences without sacrificing rigor.

## My Schedule and Life as a First-Year Resident

The PGY-1 year is broken down into six months total of psychiatry and six months of medicine and neurology. This is relatively common for psychiatry interns. So far, I've been on an inpatient psychiatric unit at Sinai, done two weeks of night float, and worked in the psychiatry ED. Inpatient months have longer hours, but there's still time for life; the interns have done a good job of meeting for Happy Hour on Fridays, and we're cohering as a group. I've had free weekends to get out of the city and also to enjoy the city, and I've had weeknights free to go to a play or to my niece and nephew's birthday parties. This year is challenging in part because you wear a lot of hats rotating through different departments, but it's a good year to solidify knowledge in medicine and neurology, as well as get your feet wet in psychiatry and get to know your fellow interns. The psychiatry chiefs and upper years have been a great source of support, giving relevant documents, doling out clinical knowledge, and helping interns navigate the hospital. There are two hours of intern didactics a week, in addition to case conferences, and there are other interesting lectures that can be attended depending on your rotation and general business on that day. So far, it's been a great and challenging year!