

A Day in the Life of Our Residents



Harshit Sharma, PGY-1

Hi! My name is Harshit Sharma, and I am a first-year psychiatry resident. During our first year of residency, our class is divided into two groups—five of us are currently on our 6-month psychiatry block, and my other five classmates are finishing their 6 months of rotations in internal medicine, neurology, and primary care. In our 6 months of psychiatry rotations as PGY-1s, we gain exposure to adult inpatient psychiatry and emergency adult and child psychiatry.

I am currently rotating in the Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP), where residents work with a cross-disciplinary team of attending physicians, social workers, and nurses to evaluate and treat patients in an emergency, time-limited setting. While CPEP work is often fast-paced, I have found it to be the most exciting and stimulating experience so far.

I live in resident housing which is right across the street from Mount Sinai West (one of our two hospital sites). The housing is subsidized and guaranteed to all incoming residents, which is a blessing in the complicated and expensive real estate landscape of New York City. I wake up at 7 am, which gives me enough time to read the morning *New York Times* briefing and grab breakfast from a food cart on my 2-minute walk to work. Days in the CPEP run from 8 am to 5 pm, with variable patient volume each day. Being situated in the boiling pot that is midtown Manhattan, we get to see patients across a vast spectrum of psychopathology and socioeconomic backgrounds. I receive immense support and supervision from the attending psychiatrists, who are readily available to debrief after challenging encounters, provide feedback on the interview and assessment, and answer any questions that may arise during the day. The CPEP is essentially shift work; any tasks that are pending at the end of the day are signed out to the evening team. We have a short call about once a week, from 5 pm to 8 pm. As PGY-1s on psychiatry, we also work 1-2 weekend days per month (either Saturday or Sunday).

My favorite day of the week is Thursday, when we have didactics from 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm. I am able to leave my clinical workday early to grab lunch and meet my wonderful co-interns as we learn about the basic tenets of psychiatry. I enjoy the small-group learning style of our didactic sessions, and the once-a-month mindfulness hour is a welcome break from our otherwise fast-paced lives.

The schedule as a resident is very reasonable. It allows for plenty of time to explore New York City, spend time with loved ones, and pursue other interests and hobbies. Having moved to NYC from India for residency, I am in awe of all the exciting opportunities the city has to offer, both personally and professionally. In the span of one particular week, I attended the IPS (Mental Health Services) conference in the city, watched a free live taping of a late-night TV show, and experienced Ethiopian food for the first time. Overall, everyone in the program has been incredibly warm and welcoming. Even though I am only a few months into residency, I already feel so fortunate and grateful to be training at this amazing program.



Arifa Zaidi, PGY-2

My name is Arifa Zaidi and I am a second-year resident. This is the year we start to cultivate our outpatient identity with our longitudinal clinic half-day, and when we start to explore the wide breadth of psychiatric practice. In addition to more inpatient adult and CPEP rotations, our second-year rotations include consultation-liaison, inpatient child psychiatry, inpatient addiction psychiatry, the Center for Intensive Treatment of Personality Disorders (CITPD), and geriatrics. We also have our first chance at electives!

I am currently working at the Comprehensive Adolescent Rehabilitation and Education Service (CARES), a program that integrates a complete high school education with intensive psychological and psychiatric care. It has been a robust experience of carrying child patients while collaborating closely with clinical psychologists, psychology trainees, and social workers to address both substance use and primary psychiatric issues. I've been taking advantage of the ample multidisciplinary supervision by attendings and other clinicians to truly see patients holistically and to develop psychotherapy skills.

My day starts at 7 am so I have time to pray, make myself breakfast, and, since I live on the Upper West Side, take a nice walk to work. Rounds start at 9 am, where teachers, psychologists, and psychiatrists give relevant updates, after which we usually have a patient that joins us to "process" a recent issue. We then break into smaller treatment teams to discuss our lists, new patients, or to get supervision. Throughout the day we have "milieu" shifts so students can take a 5-minute break from class if needed and have a short therapeutic encounter. Otherwise, we spend our time in individual patient sessions, coordinating with family, co-leading groups, and writing notes. Once a week, we have a half-day of didactics and started process group this year so our class is really getting to know each other. My non-call days are often done by 5 pm!

After work, I have plenty of time to meet up with friends for dinner, be involved in my mosque community and various volunteer opportunities, go see the opera or ballet at Lincoln Center, or see advanced screenings of movies with a (not famous) friend I've made in the Screen Actors Guild. The call schedule gets lighter every year in a palpable way. This year has been great in that I am building valuable insight and have time that allows me to think deeply about my cases while also living a full life outside of work. I'm feeling myself grow as a clinician and as a person, which is exactly what I hoped for in residency.



Jihan Ryu, PGY-3

Hi, my name is Jihan Ryu and I am a PGY-3 resident. Our third year is a full immersion in the experience of clinical outpatient psychiatry. It is a chance to further develop our one-on-one patient care skills while taking advantage of supervision and didactic exploration of psychotherapeutic theories and psychopharmacology. We also staff our psychiatric emergency room with attendings for two weeks of nights over the course of the year.

I have a strong interest in both research and patient care, so my week begins on Monday with the day devoted to my long-term research into the use of machine learning to identify linguistic features associated with alliance building or rupture in a therapeutic dyad. For the rest of the week, my day begins at 8 am. I live next to the

Mount Sinai West hospital and usually enjoy a cup of coffee in my apartment to review my schedule before hopping on a hospital jitney to get to my clinic in Morningside Heights. I start seeing patients around 9 am, and on average see 5 follow-up patients per day. On intake days, I do a psychiatric evaluation on a new patient referred to the clinic to hone my diagnostic assessment skills and collaborate with patients on determining the appropriate treatment services for their care. On Friday, I co-lead a Dialectical Behavioral Therapy group with our staff psychologist. After work, I enjoy life with my colleagues and boyfriend in the city. The west side of Manhattan is a stimulating part of the city, with its easy access to parks and the waterfront, restaurants from Harlem to Hell's Kitchen for the most recalcitrant foodies, and year-round rotating shows and exhibits for the culturally inclined. During off-hours, I often catch screenings at Film at Lincoln Center nearby, hop on the train to go downtown, or sometimes moonlight in the addiction unit at Mount Sinai West.

One of the most exciting aspects of the work for me is the eclectic mix of people that make up our patient panel and the stories they bring. Our patients are as wide-ranging and diverse as the NYC neighborhoods they are drawn from. I take care of psychopharmacology and psychotherapy patients, college-aged to geriatric, well-to-do to the most under-served, and address a variety of other social determinants that affect mental health. I have long-term psychodynamic and cognitive-behavioral therapy cases with weekly supervision for each modality to expand my understanding of the patients, as well as a half-day child clinic every week to see children, teenagers, and their families, and receive additional supervision by child psychiatrists. In all of this, my co-residents, who have become the dearest of friends and support in this whirlwind of residency, are easily the best part of the training program. Through the passion we share for the work, we learn from each other. This is a residency that encourages collegiality, and I am so grateful that I have chosen the community here to become a well-rounded psychiatrist.



Lauren Cottrell, PGY-4

Hi! My name is Lauren Cottrell, and I am a fourth-year resident here at Mount Sinai St. Luke's. Last year, I found passion and a great deal of personal satisfaction working at our Outpatient Psychiatry Clinic (OPC), so this year I became "outpatient senior" resident. I am interested in working with those who have serious or complex behavioral health needs, and my training here has provided an excellent opportunity to do this work through a caring, person-centered lens. My days are mostly spent working from my office on 114th Street. Here I see patients, help with administrative duties, and have the privilege of teaching our amazing class of third-year residents.

My day starts around 7:30 am, when my 9-month-old daughter wakes me up with a gentle request for attention. We play together and get ready for our day until around 8:30 am, when I say goodbye and start my walk to work. I live on the Upper West Side and particularly enjoy listening to music and picking up the occasional Absolute Bagel on my way to the office. I see 2-3 patients in the morning and spend time catching up on emails and paperwork. Morning highlights include Grand Rounds, PEER supervision (for those interested in treating young people with psychosis), and psychodynamic supervision, where I discuss my psychotherapy caseload with an amazing, insightful supervisor. In the afternoons, I get to practice my own supervision skills with third-year residents who are seeing new intakes to the clinic. Before my day is over, I usually see 1-3 more patients, spend some time coordinating with the other clinicians in our office, and work on a group research project to measure the prevalence of "adverse childhood experiences" at our clinic. This will hopefully continue to benefit patients long after I have left

by improving our approach to trauma-informed care. I look forward all week to Wednesday afternoon didactics and process group with my fellow fourth-year residents.

I usually leave the office around 5 pm to spend time with my husband and our daughter. We try to cook dinner together and catch the sunset (and our favorite family of raccoons) in Riverside Park. On weekends, we meet up with friends for some important downtime. Sometimes we luck out with a great show or museum, other times we just hang out in the park or at a friend's apartment. I think what I enjoy the most about this year is the freedom to follow my own passions, the fun of continuing to work in talented interdisciplinary teams, and feeling that my contributions to our program are valued. While I'm looking forward to graduation, I will really miss the family that has welcomed me here.



Richard Hempel, PGY-4 and Chief Resident

Hello! My name is Richard Hempel and I am a fourth-year resident at Mount Sinai St. Luke's and West. Serving as one of the two elected Chief Residents, the Outpatient Senior Resident, and taking part in both the research and Global Mental Health tracks, my schedule this year has been varied and exciting. As I write this, I am sitting in a coffee shop in Belmopan, Belize, where the Global Mental Health track has taken me. This Tuesday has been somewhat different than my typical ones back in the United States. I was up at 7 am and picked up by a local cab at 7:30 am to arrive at the Western Regional Hospital at 8 am. Western Regional Hospital contains the only acute psychiatric inpatient unit in the country with 4 beds

for approximately 380,000 people. There are only a handful of psychiatrists in the country, and prior to December 2019 none of them were Belizean. In an effort to expand the psychiatric services for the county, the Health Ministry trains groups of psychiatric nurse practitioners (PNP) who then spread out into the community. This morning, I met with the two PNPs for inpatient rounds and case reviews. I was accompanied by the attending mentor for the trip, Dr. Glenn Martin, who is also the Senior Associate Dean for human subject research at Mount Sinai. Around noon, we had lunch prepared by the mother of one of the PNPs who owns a catering business in Belmopan and has previously cooked for Queen Elizabeth! We spent the rest of the afternoon in informal didactics and patient interviews. We returned to our house around 4:15 pm after driving by the U.S. embassy. We then made the short walk to the local coffee shop where we have been catching up on emails, and planning for tomorrow's didactics and weekend excursions.

My typical Tuesdays start in Long Island City, where I live with my wife. I take the 7 train over to Mount Sinai West, where I have psychodynamic supervision in the morning, before heading to Mount Sinai St. Luke's for 2-3 hours of research time, followed by an afternoon of clinical care. My research block on Tuesdays is usually focused on data analysis, but occasionally I will meet with Dr. Dolores Malaspina, a leading expert in psychotic illnesses, over on the east side to discuss our ongoing projects. My clinical work finishes around 5 pm, and then I head to my moonlighting position at John Jay College of Criminal Justice where I see students referred for medication management and psychotherapy. The fourth year is designed around each resident's unique interests and goals. I am interested in not only advancing as a clinician-scientist but also as a leader and educator. This means I have some days that are focused on patient care, some that are focused on residency leadership and management, and some days that are focused on my research project. This year has been an amazing time to experiment with balancing clinical work, research, leadership, global work, and still get home in time for dinner with my family.