

PSYCHIATRY RESIDENCY AT MOUNT SINAI MORNINGSIDE AND MOUNT SINAI WEST

A Day In The Life



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" I feel incredibly lucky to be surrounded by such brilliant, kind, and passionate individuals, and I can't imagine undergoing my psychiatry residency training anywhere else!"

— STEPHANIE WU, PGY-1

Stephanie Wu, MD

PGY-1 - CPEP

Hi! My name is Stephanie Wu, and I'm a first-year psychiatry resident. During our first year, our class is divided into two groups: five of us are currently on our 6-month psychiatry block, while the other six are completing their 6 months in rotations on internal medicine floors, neurology consults, and outpatient medical clinics. In our 6 months of psychiatry during the PGY-1 year, we split our time between adult inpatient psychiatry units and the Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP), where I am currently rotating. In the CPEP, residents work alongside a cross-disciplinary team of attending physicians, social workers, and nurses to evaluate and treat adult and child patients in emergency settings. Although the work in CPEP is often fast-paced, I've found it to be an incredibly exciting experience. I've already grown immensely in my clinical knowledge and independence as a psychiatrist.

I live in resident housing, which is subsidized and guaranteed for all incoming residents. It's conveniently located right across the street from Mount Sinai West (one of our two hospital sites). I usually wake up at 7 am, which gives me enough time to make coffee and have breakfast before catching the 7:45 am shuttle uptown to Mount Sinai Morningside. Days in the CPEP run from 8 am to 5 pm, with the patient volume varying daily. We see patients who walk into the ED, those brought in by EMS or NYPD, and consults from the medical ED, all from a wide range of psychopathologies and socioeconomic backgrounds. The CPEP operates on shift work, so any pending tasks at the end of the day are handed over to the evening team. When we're on psychiatry, the PGY-1s have a short call in the CPEP about once a week, from 5 pm to 8 pm, along with weekend call from 8 am to 8 pm about 1-2 weekend days per month (either Saturday or Sunday). Most days after work, I have time to go to the gym, cook dinner, and spend time with my husband.

My favorite day is Thursday, when we have didactics from 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm. It's an opportunity to leave my clinical workday early, grab lunch, and meet my wonderful co-interns as we delve into the basic tenets of psychiatry. After didactics, we all take the shuttle back to Mount Sinai West and head to a local bar for our weekly happy hour. Getting to know and hang out with my co-interns, both inside and outside the hospital, has been the highlight of the program so far. I feel incredibly lucky to be surrounded by such brilliant, kind, and passionate individuals, and I can't imagine undergoing my psychiatry residency training anywhere else!



Carla Rivera Perez, MD

PGY-2 - CITPD

My name is Carla Rivera Perez and I am a second year psychiatry resident. This year, I am excited about rotating through various subspecialty settings, including CITPD (Center for Intensive Treatment of Personality Disorders), the child/adolescent inpatient unit, the detox/rehab unit, the VA inpatient unit (geriatrics), several weeks of elective rotations, and additional rotations in our MSMW inpatient units and in CPEP. This year also marks the beginning of carrying a small caseload of outpatients at OPC (Outpatient Psychiatry Clinic) one afternoon per week throughout the year. I recently started my rotation through CITPD, which I had been eagerly anticipating since I considered it a unique offering of this program. This intensive outpatient program provides specialized psychiatric and psychotherapeutic treatment for all personality disorders.

The schedule varies day-to-day, but typically, each day begins around 9:30 am with a Journal Club, supervision with Dr. Zimmerman, or a follow-up appointment for medication management. We also have weekly supervision with some of the therapists at CITPD to discuss our mutual patients. On Wednesdays, we conduct comprehensive psychiatric evaluations for potential patients referred to the program. We also participate in DBT peer groups with our patients and assist in guiding mindfulness exercises or discussing DBT topics.

Every Tuesday afternoon, I make my way from the newly opened ambulatory building in Central Harlem (the current location of CITPD and OPC) to Mount Sinai Morningside for didactics with my fellow co-residents. On Friday afternoons, I rotate through OPC, where I attend a weekly Journal Club with my co-residents and then meet with my scheduled patients for the day.

Starting in the outpatient setting early in the PGY-2 year is another unique and valuable aspect of this program. My day typically ends with my last scheduled patient, and afterward, I still have enough time to join my co-residents for happy hour or hit the gym. Overall, it has been a fantastic and unique learning experience, and I look forward to gaining more knowledge about the various treatment options for personality disorders in the outpatient setting!



Tony Beayno, MD

PGY-3 - OPC

My name is Tony Beayno, and I am a third-year resident. Our third year is entirely spent in the OPC (Outpatient Psychiatry Clinic), a crucial time for honing clinical skills in psychiatry. It's a period to explore your interviewing style, build long-term relationships with patients, craft psychopharmacologic assessments, and develop psychotherapeutic techniques. This year also challenges us to think "outside the box" to assist patients in their psychosocial situations.

One aspect I appreciate about this year is the greater control over my schedule. As a resident, you're expected to see outpatients and allocate time for weekly caseload supervision, psychodynamic therapy supervision, CBT supervision, child psychiatry supervision, and staff meetings. Though it sounds overwhelming, being the "king" of your own schedule offers the opportunity to organize time productively and personally.

My week starts on Monday with didactics, featuring a half-day of classes. Afterward, around noon, I head to my office (yes, you'll have your own!) to check voicemails left by patients over the weekend. The rest of the day is spent seeing patients. On other weekdays, I start my day at 9 am. I like arriving early to enjoy some coffee and relaxing piano music before diving into patient appointments.

On average, I see five follow-up patients per day and perform a new patient evaluation, known as an "intake", once a week. These intakes are followed by an hour of supervision with a clinic attending to craft a personalized treatment plan. It's an excellent opportunity to meet patients for the first time, gather necessary information, and immediately begin caring for them with a multidisciplinary approach. Additionally, I have a half-day a week for elective time, which I dedicate to conducting research on LGBTQ+ mental health considerations, an area of psychiatry I'm passionate about.

The outpatient psychiatric clinic exposes me to an incredibly diverse patient population, primarily from marginalized and underserved backgrounds. Often, I find myself as the patient's advocate, helping them regain control of their lives, providing necessary tools for meaningful living, and connecting them with community services to optimize their care. This formative year teaches you how to be an effective psychiatrist, to be comfortable with the uncertainty and sometimes the discomfort of not knowing everything about a patient's progress, and to look forward to their next visit, asking them: "So... how are you doing today?"



“The challenges and rewards of being a psychiatry resident in New York City make for a truly unique and fulfilling journey.”

– VICTOR MENSAH, PGY-3

Victor Mensah, MD

PGY-3 - OPC

I'm Victor Mensah, a 30-year-old psychiatry resident in my third year of residency at Mount Sinai Morningside and West here in NYC. My day kicks off around 7:00 AM when the familiar rumble of the C train over the Manhattan Bridge gently wakes me up. The city's bustling energy fills my apartment with a mix of sirens, conversations, and the occasional melodies of street musicians. By 8 AM, you'll usually find me at my go-to rice noodle spot on East Broadway, grabbing my daily dose of sustenance. The commute to work takes about 45 minutes, and I'm either diving into lectures or tending to my desk by 9 AM, after tackling voicemails and returning calls.

Inside the clinic, it's a different world. I strive to create a peaceful atmosphere as I listen to my patients' stories, helping them navigate life's complexities and working to improve their mental health. The first patient typically arrives at 10 AM, setting the tone for the day. I see around 5-6 patients daily, offering a range of care, but let's keep the specifics for another time, as each patient's experience is unique. By 4 PM, I'm tying up any loose ends, making calls, and ensuring my notes are in order. One day a week, I stay late to accommodate pediatric patients and those with 9-5 jobs who need after-hours appointments. Thursdays at 4 PM are reserved for something special—a Peer support group for young adults at the clinic dealing with first-break psychosis. We dive into topics like love, belonging, and self-actualization, creating a space beyond their illnesses.

That daily rumble of the C train is just one part of the rich tapestry of experiences in this diverse and dynamic city. Each day brings opportunities for learning, personal growth, and making a difference in the lives of the patients I have the privilege to serve. The challenges and rewards of being a psychiatry resident in New York City make for a truly unique and fulfilling journey.

Beyond my clinical work, I mentor medical students from underrepresented backgrounds, helping them achieve their dreams of becoming doctors. It's a privilege to share my experiences, offer guidance, and provide support to students who, like me, have overcome unique challenges on their paths to medicine. I recently collaborated with students from the North East Regional Alliance (NERA) on a research project examining the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns on the mental health of students in Newark, New Jersey. We're preparing to present our findings at this year's American Psychiatric Association (APA) conference in New York. It's an exciting endeavor, and I hope to see you there as we strive to raise awareness about Young Adult mental health challenges faced during the pandemic.



Brian Starkman, MD

PGY-4 AND CHIEF RESIDENT - INPATIENT SENIOR

Hi! My name is Brian Starkman, a fourth year psychiatry resident and one of the chief residents in our program. As part of our program, each fourth year resident takes on a senior role for several months, which can be on the inpatient floor, our outpatient psychiatry clinic, or at the Fordham University student clinic. The rest of the year is a mix of one month of CL and several months of elective. The Mount Sinai system offers a variety of electives, and some of the ones I've scheduled include addiction outpatient, ACT team, eating disorder clinic, interventional psychiatry, and forensic psychiatry.

Currently, I am the inpatient senior on one of our two adult inpatient units in our program. My typical day starts with my trusty alarm clock, Kyle, who happens to be my 5-year-old pup. After waking up, I get ready for work and take Kyle on a walk in my neighborhood in Central Harlem. If time allows, I go for a run in Central Park before heading to Mount Sinai West to where our inpatient unit (7G) is located. My morning duties include updating the inpatient census for rounds and assigning patients to first and second-year residents, who are pre-charting on their patients. One of the great aspects of our program is that there are so many residents working together on the same unit!

At 9 am, I lead rounds, where the entire team, including residents, medical students, attendings, social workers, nurses and group therapists, discusses each patient. After rounds, I join intakes for new admissions, supervising junior residents and medical students who are leading the interviews with the attending present. The rest of the day is relatively unstructured, and I assist residents with various tasks such as seeing follow-up patients, writing notes, calling collateral, or consulting other services. Weekly activities on the unit include case conferences involving a patient on the unit and a journal club. Additionally, I have various meetings to attend during the week, such as administrative meetings as chief resident, caseload supervision, and psychodynamic supervision. I also have an afternoon of didactics with my co-residents and an afternoon with my caseload of outpatients (we keep a small subset of patients from our third year, including therapy cases). I enjoy how the week is so varied and no day looks the same! After work, I walk my dog, hang out with friends, and explore New York, often going to different neighborhoods, restaurants or shows

I am also a part of the Global Mental Health Pathway, a supplementary clinical pathway made up of third and fourth-years across different Mount Sinai programs. The pathway consists of a public health series, providing weekly supervision to a mental health worker in Liberia, supervising medical students in EHHOP (the free clinic located at Mount Sinai Hospital), conducting psychological evaluations of asylum seekers, and my own project which involves revising the mental health policy and law with locals in Grenada. Through this pathway, I've gained valuable insights into both global and community psychiatry.



Adriana Bruges-Boude, MD

PGY-4 - RESEARCH ELECTIVE

Hola! My name is Adriana Bruges-Boude and I am a fourth-year resident. This year I have more time to explore electives and expand my interests. As a senior resident this year, I will be working with students requiring psychiatric care at Fordham University for six months. Currently I am on a research elective this month to focus on my research project. Some of my other upcoming electives include interventional psychiatry (ie ECT, TMS, DBS) and reproductive psychiatry at The Motherhood Center.

A typical day for me starts around 8 am when I head to the gym to work out. I bike back in time to begin my research meeting with my supervisor Dr. McClure. My project involves administering semi-structured SCID-5 interviews to pregnant and postpartum women from the Gen-CSF cohort study in order to study the possible mental health effects of COVID-19 in a pregnant population. Afterwards I either interview research participants or work on other projects, including a poster that I'm presenting at the AACAP national meeting in New York. In the afternoon, I have a lab meeting where we discuss new research ideas and topics we can explore with the collected data. On Wednesday afternoons, I get to see my co-residents for didactics and process group. On Thursday afternoons, I go to the outpatient psychiatry clinic to see my caseload of patients, some of them I have known since second year! It is very nice to continue to have dedicated time for outpatient clinical care.

I am currently applying for child and adolescent fellowship for next year. This program allowed me to gain child experience from the very beginning! In the first year, I often would see children during my shifts in the psychiatric emergency room (particularly at Morningside where we have one of the only two child units in Manhattan!). In our second year, we rotate on the child and adolescent unit Babcock 5 at Morningside. In third year, we carry a small caseload of child patients (which not every program allows you to do!). Additionally, on Tuesday evenings I lead Storytime/Teen Talk on the inpatient unit, where I get to teach medical students how to lead an adolescent process group. The child experience in this program has cemented my interest in the specialty, and I'm very interested in working with the young adult population in the future.

After work, I spend my time exploring NYC, either as a tourist seeing the sights or spending time with my friends. NYC has so much to do! At the end of the day I either hang out at my place in the resident housing where I have an amazing view of the river or enjoy the sunset by the riverside. The training in my program has been a dream come true and I feel so lucky to be here!

