



## *Conference Call Series on Topics in Health Psychology*

### *Overview: Applying to/Interviewing for a Health Psychology Clinical Internship*

**Host:** Bruce Rybarczyk is the Director of Training for the Clinical Psychology Program in the Department of Psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University. Prior to moving to VCU in 2006, Dr. Rybarczyk served on the faculty at the Rush University Health Psychology Internship program for 18 years, spending the last two years as the Director of Clinical Training at Rush. Dr. Rybarczyk interned at the Palo Alto VA Hospital and then began his work at Rush as a post-doctoral fellow. He is ABPP certified in Rehabilitation Psychology.

#### **Key Topics**

1. Tailoring your graduate work for Internship
  - Skills: develop your skills as a generalist. Experience with psychopathology is valued.
  - A health psychology practicum rotation is recommended
  - Publications: Do your publications reflect your clinical interests?
  - Assessment: cognitive, personality and neuropsychological assessment experience is required but the amount varies with the different sites.
2. How to make your application stand out: Do's and Don'ts
  - Remember that each reviewer will only take about 30 minutes on your file:
    - Personalize your introduction to each site
    - Effectively communicate the number of clinical hours you have accumulated and the various setting you have done traineeships and practicum; highlight your health psychology clinical experience.
    - Your biographical statement should capture your open enjoyable personality, your eagerness and enthusiasm for the position and selected faculty. Do not present yourself as an expert or finished product, because this is a turn off. Some self-disclosure is important. Remember to present yourself honestly.
    - Your letters of recommendation should be longer than a paragraph (more like 1-2 pages). Choose your letter writer carefully as non-academics may have less experience with letter format. Although a clinical setting

letter writer is acceptable, remember that your DCT can provide great feedback about your performance in clinical settings.

- Both your MS and PhD clinical hours are important
- Spelling and grammar errors are unacceptable.

### 3. Tips for interviews

- Be flexible, sites may change their emphasis from year to year.
- Don't be too scripted, be spontaneous, people want to see you thinking on your feet.
- You don't have to be an expert or have experience in every area – just to be able to consider the issues and give a sensible response
- Be honest and realistic about yourself and the job, be yourself, don't try to impress too much.