



Careers in Mental Health: Exploring the Many Paths to a Rewarding Life of Helping Others



A recent study by Mental Health America indicates that the need for qualified mental health professionals has never been more urgent, reporting that more than half of American adults and six out of 10 young people with mental health issues are not receiving treatment.

This presents an opportunity for dedicated, qualified, and caring individuals to make a difference in their communities by pursuing a career in mental health.

The New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) operates the largest state mental health system in the nation, with 22 psychiatric centers, 90 clinics, two world-class research insti-

tutes and oversees community based mental health services for a state of more than 19 million people.

Ask just about any mental health professional why they went into the field and they'll tell you: "I wanted to help people." To be honest, a career in mental health can be challenging. But few professions offer such ability to give to others and transform lives.

In this edition of *OMH News*, we will discuss some of the many career opportunities that are available with OMH. Please contact us with your thoughts at: omhnews@omh.ny.gov.

Choices: Which Career in Mental Health is Right for You?



OMH offers career opportunities to qualified individuals in diverse occupational areas. It has a continuing need for psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, psychologists, social workers, and direct care staff to work with adults, children and youth, and forensic populations in a variety of inpatient and community settings.

Here are some of the occupations found in our psychiatric hospitals, along with a brief description of the services they provide and the training and education required for the jobs.

Psychiatrists

Psychiatrists are essential to providing mental health services to the people OMH serves. They provide comprehensive and recovery oriented psychiatric treatment services built on principles of effective, measurable, and accountable care.

As medical doctors, psychiatrists are responsible for ensuring that all services are integrated to promote mental and physical health and recovery. Since psychopharmacology has become an integral component of modern mental health treatment, psychiatrists serve as primary prescribers.

Qualifications for appointment include a license or limited permit to practice medicine in New York State and completion of a residency training program. OMH welcomes candidates with board certification in general psychiatry as well as the subspecialties of child and adolescent or forensic psychiatry.

Medical Doctors

Medical doctors are licensed physicians who diagnose and treat injuries or illnesses. They focus on the physical healthcare needs of patients by examining patients; taking medical histories; prescribing medications; and ordering, performing, and interpreting diagnostic tests.

They also counsel patients on diet, hygiene, and preventive healthcare. In OMH, medical doctors work with psychiatrists to ensure that physical and behavioral healthcare is systematic, well-coordinated, and integrated.

Qualifications for appointment include a license or limited permit to practice medicine in New York State and may require board certification or eligibility and/or experience.



Nurse Practitioners

Nurse practitioners are licensed, independent healthcare professionals who diagnose, treat, and prescribe for a patient's condition that falls within their specialty area of practice. OMH generally employs nurse practitioners who specialize in psychiatry, adult health, and family health – though other specialties, such as pediatrics, are also needed. Candidates must be licensed and currently registered as a registered professional nurse in New York State and be certified as a nurse practitioner in a specialty area recognized by the New York State Department of Education.

Registered Nurses

Registered Nurses represent the largest professional discipline at OMH facilities and are seven days per week. Registered nurses provide professional nursing services, health assessments, health teaching/counseling, and supportive or restorative care to patients in a wide variety of settings. Candidates must be licensed and currently registered as a registered professional nurse in New York State.

Psychologists

Psychologists provide professional psychological services to patients, including psychological assessments and treatment. Psychologists provide individual, group or family therapy; administer and interpret psychological tests; assist in the development of treatment plans; and may perform other specialized psychological interventions, as required. OMH primarily employs psychologists who are licensed and currently registered to practice psychology in New York State, but also employs some psychologists who possess a doctoral degree in psychology or hold a master's degree in psychology with one or more years of supervised post master's degree psychology experience.

Social Workers

Social workers assess and evaluate clients; assist in the development of treatment plans; identify resources and services, and provide direct services such as counseling, psychotherapy and case management; evaluate patient progress and modify treatment plans, when appropriate; and advocate for the patient's rights and access to services. OMH primarily employs social workers who are licensed and currently registered by New York State as a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) or Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW).



Direct Care

Mental health therapy aides, secure care treatment aides, and security hospital treatment assistants are unlicensed staff who perform a wide variety of tasks related to the care, engagement, treatment, education, socialization, rehabilitation, recovery, support, and safety of individuals diagnosed with mental illness in a variety of settings.

They provide a therapeutic, safe, and comfortable treatment environment to promote patient recovery; coach and encourage individuals to develop daily living skills; and help individuals participate in programs aimed at treatment, recovery, and skills development. Candidates must possess a high school diploma or G.E.D.; must meet physical, medical and agility standards; and must pass a drug screening in order to be appointed. In addition, appointment to some positions may require one or more years of experience working with a mental health population.



Peer-Delivered Services

Peer specialists are unlicensed staff who provide direct mental health services to patients by serving as a role model for hope and recovery. Peer specialists educate patients about self-help techniques; teach them effective coping strategies; assist patients in clarifying their goals for rehabilitation and recovery; and help patients to develop support systems. Candidates must have demonstrated interpersonal communications skills and the ability to empathize with, relate to and effectively work with recipients of mental health services, and two years of active participation in mental health self-help activities, peer support or peer advocacy programs, or recipient run organizations or similar experiences or programs.

Other Services

There are many other rewarding careers available in the Office of Mental Health, including, but not limited to: rehabilitation counselors, recreation therapists, occupational and physical therapists, and dietitians/nutritionists. For information on applying for these career opportunities, see the article on the next page. ^{OMH}

Employment: Finding State Job Opportunities in Mental Health



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. | **StateJobsNY**

- FOR HR PROFESSIONALS**
Manage state agency vacancy postings
- FOR PROGRAM MANAGERS**
Review internship candidate applications and post internship opportunities
- FOR STATE EMPLOYEES**
Transfer and promotional opportunities for state employees
- FOR INTERNSHIP CANDIDATES**
Apply for an internship and review current internship opportunities
- FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC**
FAQ on how to become a state employee, links to exam information and list of current jobs open to the general public

The Employment Opportunities with New York State Government website offers resources for job seekers, visit: <https://statejobsny.com>.

With a workforce of more than 14,000 people statewide, OMH offers career opportunities to qualified applicants in many diverse occupational areas. From counseling to direct care, research, or support, the mental health field provides opportunities to help to those in need.

Civil Service

- For people who are interested in working **specifically with OMH**, the agency operates psychiatric centers, satellite units, outpatient clinics and community residences in locations throughout the state. This includes **New York State Civil Service** jobs that are in inpatient and outpatient, emergency, community support, residential, and family care programs. In addition, OMH's main administrative office in Albany has a variety of administrative, support and clerical positions; and opportunities may also be available at our field offices located around the state.
- The process to apply for positions varies, depending on the specific position. For some positions, applicants may need to contact the Department of Civil Service to take an examination. Exams are given periodically or on a continuous recruitment basis, which varies according to position. Exams are either written or involve evaluations of the applicant's training and experience.
- For other positions, applicants may need to contact **OMH** or the **facility** directly. Appropriate steps are stated in each employment posting or examination announcement. For information on the Civil Service process and vacancies in New York State government, visit the Employment Opportunities with New York State Government website (see above).

Preparation

Before they apply, individuals can benefit by learning firsthand about the mental health field while they're completing their college degrees.

- **Volunteer** at a psychiatric center, hospital, or suicide hotline. This can provide experience in the field an applicant is considering and opportunities to meet the populations one would eventually work with.
- **Intern** or start a **residency** under the supervision of a licensed professional. This offers valuable hands-on training in real-world situations. Such experience is usually required to earn a license to practice. Several student internships are offered by OMH throughout the state (see the website at right).
- **Get a license.** After completing education and obtaining a documenting number of supervised hours working with clients, apply for the licensing exam.
- **Keep learning** about new treatments, medications and therapies through journals and courses to improve your knowledge and skills. Such continuing education will be required to keep a license current.

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Internship Opportunities
with New York State

Students | Agencies | Educa

For information on internships, visit the New New York Leaders website at: <https://nysinternships.cs.ny.gov/nnyl>.

What it Takes

- Most professional positions in mental health will require applicants to have good **people skills** because they are often interacting with people who may be in some degree of distress. They must be compassionate, listen well, and communicate clearly. They must be socially perceptive and pick up on clients' reactions – verbal and non-verbal – and understand the reasons behind them.
- Working in mental health requires excellent **critical thinking** and **decision making** skills, because no day is the same. It also requires a sense of curiosity, because there is often no simple solution to a problem.
- Professionals need to work well in a **team**. They work with physicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and other healthcare providers to create a treatment plan and follow it. They must be able to set aside judgment of the clients they work with and focus on helping them.
- They must be **highly organized**. Because many positions in mental health require writing reports, keeping detailed notes, passing along crucial information while maintaining client-patient confidentiality, and keeping up with numerous patients at once, professionals should have the ability to pay great attention to detail.
- They must have the ability to **handle pressure**. Working in the mental health field can take quite a personal toll, and professionals who cannot decompress can burn out.



Gain experience by volunteering at a psychiatric center, hospital or suicide hotline.

Equal Opportunities

- OMH is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to providing equal employment opportunity, and reasonable accommodations or modifications as necessary, for persons with disabilities.
- The Governor's Programs to Hire Persons/Veterans with Disabilities are coordinated efforts to place individuals with disabilities in entry-level state jobs. No initial written or oral examinations are required for appointment. Applicants, however, submit a formal application and a medical evaluation may be necessary for program certification.
- Visit the New York State Workers with Disabilities Program at: <https://www.cs.ny.gov/dpm/b55.cfm>, for more information on specialized programs designed to help place individuals with disabilities in state jobs.

For more information on working in mental health in general and OMH specifically, contact the OMH Center for Human Resources Management at: https://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/email/compose_mail.asp?tid=PIO_facilities_admin_1.^{OMH}

The Governor's Program
to Hire **Persons
with
Disabilities**

Recruitment: OMH is Increasing Psychiatrist Salaries, Offering Loan Repayment



According to the Center for Health Workforce Studies at the State University of New York at Albany, the supply of psychiatrists in New York State during the next few years is expected to decrease by as much as 17%, while demand is projected to increase by as much as 28%.

To address this issue, and better compete with other employers, OMH is taking steps to expand its recruitment strategies. Establishing competitive salaries is a key initiative in this expansion. Offering a Psychiatrist Loan Repayment Program is another. OMH has increased psychiatrist base salaries by approximately \$20,000 throughout the state. It has also established a Psychiatrist Loan Repayment Program that provides awards of up to \$150,000 for newly recruited psychiatrists who meet eligibility requirements and commit to working at OMH facilities for five years.

For additional information about OMH, please visit our website: <https://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/employment>.

Interested psychiatrists should forward C.V.s to: omhpsychiatrist@omh.ny.gov.

Please include "Psychiatrists 2017" in the subject line.

Or mail to:

Office of Mental Health
Attn: Psychiatrists 2017
Facility Personnel Services – 7th Floor
44 Holland Avenue
Albany, NY 12229

OMH is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

A Day in the Life: A Licensed Provider Discusses Her Work Day, Her Role in Treatment, and Her Motivation



Liz Espinoza, LCSW, serves as a primary clinician and outreach and recruitment coordinator for the OnTrackNY program at Parsons Child & Family Center in Albany.

As a primary clinician in a coordinated specialty care program for First Episode Psychosis (FEP), she provides individual, group, and family therapy. She co-facilitates monthly family psychoeducation and support groups for clients and their family members. Liz also coordinates care, linking clients to primary care and other medical specialists, as well as provides case management to address clients' psychosocial needs.

In her dual role as a primary clinician and outreach and recruitment coordinator, Liz conducts eligibility evaluations for enrollment into the OnTrackNY program and does assertive community outreach to facilitate young people with first episode psychosis getting connected to specialized treatment as early as possible.

OMH News asked Liz to share some thoughts about working in one of "the helping professions."

Preparing for the Day

I start every morning with a morning meditation to set an intention for the day. The time I arrive at the clinic can vary greatly. If my day starts at the clinic, I'll be there at 9 a.m. If my day starts by meeting with a client in the community, I may arrive at noon. At least one or two days are spent, in part, in the community working with clients, on their goals, supporting families, or doing outreach for our program.

My work day is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., but it's not always constant. There have been times it has ended later, close to 8 p.m. I also rotate being on-call for clients in-crisis after hours and on weekends. The program I work in really strives to be as accessible to clients and their families as possible. We understand that they are grappling with a recently emerged psychotic disorder and can benefit from the support of the whole team.

I work within a multidisciplinary treatment team. We meet at least once per week to review the progress and challenges that any of our clients may be facing. During our team morning meeting, we go down the list of clients we serve and share updates on their progress and any challenges they may be facing.

Counseling and Care

I see clients on a weekly basis and sometimes a couple times a week. I provide individual, group, and family therapy. I recently co-facilitated the start of a new group therapy called "Social Cognition and Interaction Therapy." It is a specialized group intervention for individuals with psychotic disorders. Folks can often hear me say that my role is that of a witness to their journey on the road to self-realization or recovery.

Today started out slow, with a client not being able to complete his first supermarket trip, due to the computer system being down at the market.

Then I worked with a young lady, a teenager, who says she "hates therapy." She's slowly developing her willingness and motivation to make changes in her life to graduate from high school. Today, after an hour session, she left smiling with her mother.

When clients are able to share their thoughts, feelings, fears and still attempt new skills and activities, I consider those moments progress. My schedule has definitely gotten busier as our program census has grown. We can serve up to 35 clients as a program and we try to have a small client-to-staff ratio. It's getting there.



Liz Espinoza, LCSW

"When clients are able to share their thoughts, feelings, fears and still attempt new skills and activities, I consider those moments progress."

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Monday through Wednesday seems to be jam-packed, where clients are seen and much of the community work is completed.

Thankfully, insurance paperwork is not part of my job, but it does impact my work on occasion. Specifically, when our program enrolls a new participant, we need to ensure that their health insurance information is entered into our electronic health record so that our agency's billing department can access it.

Also, not all of the clients whom we see have health insurance when they are first enrolled, and I help them to acquire coverage.

Your Own Support System

On our team, I regularly coordinate with the other providers. Our team has a team leader, a psychiatrist, nurse, and supported education and employment specialist. Coordination of care is key to much of the work we do. This is true of our lives outside the clinic, as well.

Think about it, what helps you get through your day, week, and month? It's getting things done for your well-being including, but not limited to, making appointments for health-related reasons, scheduling time with friends and family, and connecting with others who are part of your support system.

In the helping professions, workers are too often underappreciated and struggle with self-care. This can translate into folks losing hope or patience for the very clients we are privileged to serve. Part of my job is to support and help strengthen a person's sense of hope for themselves and their future. This can be hard to do if I am struggling with my own sense of purpose and worth.

Family and support are crucial for my well being. If something in that department is off the night before it may impact my energy level during the next work day. That said, I make it a priority to connect with my parents several times a week via phone, talk, and or spend time with friends and colleagues on a monthly basis, and practice gratitude for the strong support system I am fortunate to have.

Gratitude and Hope

By the end of the day, at 7 p.m., I had a mother and daughter agreeing to improving communication and safety, even though in the past safety was a serious concern. It means so much when a client is willing to trust that the safe space they have created as a result of the work we do may help them navigate a challenge they are facing.

Tough days come and go. I rejoice in the gems that my clients and colleagues share when they have reached a goal or overcome a significant challenge. Those are the rewards that we too often do not highlight or share in our morning meetings or in our weekly productivity reports. Yet these gems are what keeps me keeping hope alive for the clients I serve.

To those who are interested in a career in mental health, I say: never let gratitude and hope escape your spirit. This is the foundation of all the relationships we build and that I try to build with the people I encounter at work and in life! ^{OMH}



"I rejoice in the gems that my clients and colleagues share when they have reached a goal or overcome a significant challenge."



For information on Parsons Child & Family Center, visit: <http://www.parsonscenter.org>.



For information about OnTrackNY, visit: <http://www.ontrackny.org>.

Peer Specialists: 'You Never Know How You're Going to Make an Impact on Someone's Life'



Peer specialists are individuals who draw from their own experience to provide support for clients in recovery. They play an integral role in the recovery process, having “been there before and lived through it.” They listen, solve problems, teach valuable coping skills, and provide an example for clients to show that no situation is ever without hope, and that recovery is indeed possible.

Three OMH peer specialists recently shared their thoughts on the challenges and rewards of their profession.

Stacie O'Shea: Empowering Others

“My role in a person's recovery is to empower them, to help them get better,” said Stacie O'Shea. “I want to sit next to someone who needs help and tell them that they're not alone. I want the individual to see that they can be more than what they are. To understand that they're not diagnoses, but human beings.”

O'Shea was receiving mental health services at a clinic when she learned about the peer specialist program. “I honestly didn't know anything about being a peer specialist at first,” she said. “I thought: 'I can tell my story and help people? Is this really a job?' If my personal experiences could help someone I wanted to be able to make that difference.”

O'Shea's family didn't understand her condition, which made the experience even more difficult. “The hardest thing for me was to understand what a mental illness is, and how to live a productive life with it,” she said. “I had to teach myself and I had to want to get better. Many times, I just didn't know what to do and dealt with my issues in a negative way, such as drinking. I was losing jobs because I was drinking all the time. The day after was the worst. The cycle was drink to feel good or ignore the real problem, and the next day wake up feeling guilty and depressed. This went on for a few years. I struggled to function in society every day because my past haunted me.”

She started out as an employment specialist and job coach. Through this position, she found out about the peer specialist program. After seven months, she was promoted to a rehabilitation counselor. Since then, she has completed training in applying for Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance, job coaching, and Trauma Informed Instruction. She is currently working to earn her peer certification.

Now, O'Shea has two interns. “I tell them that every day in this field is different. When you go to work you never know what's going to happen,” she said. “That's what I love. You never know how you're going to make an impact on someone's life. Sometimes just listening, playing cards, laughing, or reading the newspaper to someone can make their day. The biggest thing I believe is taking the time to understand and get to know someone. Making judgments or listening to someone else's opinion may not be accurate. You may be able to help someone just by who you are.”

Although O'Shea still struggles with anxiety and panic attacks, she continues to direct her energy into her recovery. “It can be hard to leave your work at work, but you have to learn to do so,” O'Shea said. “As in any field, you can become burnt out. But in mental health, there are so many job opportunities for you to continue to empower people.”

Her children are her inspiration. “They make me want to be the best that I can be,” she said. “Once, I had children I didn't have a choice in my head, but to be the best mother I can be. If my children want to go to the circus, then I work on being able to get myself to the circus without the anxiety. I want to be able to enjoy life so I have to overcome this illness. I have learned coping skills that help me function in society. I want to continue to tell my story to help others be able to do the same. I have so much passion for helping others and making them feel they can do it to. I had someone who believed in me and wouldn't let me give up. I want to be this person for others.”

Susan Sotack: Sharing Lived Experience

Susan Sotack grew up with mentally ill parents. Her father had a violent psychotic break when she was six that affected her for many years. “I probably developed bi-polar disorder in my pre-teen years, but was not diagnosed until my mid-30s. It was then, in response to a several life stresses, that my symptoms became much more extreme and caused me to lose everything – my family, my job, my housing. I eventually became a crack addict and lost my freedom a number of times.”



*Stacie O'Shea
and her daughter*

Sotack became involved in peer services through a sheltered work program. She had worked in human services before and was interested in returning to the field. After working as a mental health therapy aide and rehabilitation counselor, Sotack has been a peer advocate at Rochester Psychiatric Center since entering a transitional work program in May 1999. She was hired under a contract to provide peer services the next year and then became an OMH employee in 2001. Now she heads the Peer Discipline Team and co-supervises a staff of nine peers. She said her knowledge comes from her own treatment and the individual therapy and group treatment she's participated in, the training she's taken as a peer and as a staff member, numerous self-help books she's read, and from completing the courses in the Peer Academy.

"As I became more involved and was able to develop the peer program, I saw how important peer support can be to a person who is currently struggling," she said. "I help encourage recovery and growth through the avenue of my discipline – sharing lived experience. I'm here to help clients in a variety of ways based. I help people understand the experience of mental illness, treatment and recovery. Hopefully, they can participate more fully in their recovery."

Sotack facilitates several groups based on lived experience, as well as conducting one-on-one conversations with people in treatment. "I help patients find their voice in care and treatment and help them prepare for and participate in treatment meetings," Sotack said. She helps them develop wellness recovery action plans and integrate into the community. "I help them to think about how to make their life more satisfying – not just about treatment compliance."

"Behaviors you see may be mental illness – and possibly addiction – and not the person themselves," Sotack said. "Try to find the person that is being swallowed up by the illness. See that stabilization and treatment are not the same as recovery and human growth. Having value, purpose and passions feed recovery and without it, recovery may starve and die."

Stephen Nawotniak: Not Merely Coping, but Living!

In 2002, Stephen Nawotniak graduated Buffalo State College with a master's degree in hand for teaching but discovered that managing a classroom presented him with, as he described: "too many triggers." That August, he was hospitalized with severe depression and diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

"When learned about my diagnosis, I was scared," Nawotniak said. "I felt that I now was now burdened with this stigma, and that I had to figure out how to continue to live my life with this thing."

Nawotniak felt as though he was on his own. "When you're diagnosed, no one gives you a list of names and telephone numbers of people who have lived through it. There's no one around to tell you you're going to be okay." He made a pledge to himself that he would learn to live with his condition, not merely cope with it.

While working through the Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities program, Nawotniak earned his license in Occupational Therapy and learned about the peer specialist program. Today he's the Director of Peer Advocacy at Buffalo Psychiatric Center. Now he's using the many of the same skills he uses as an occupational therapist, but is working with one-on-one and in groups and experiencing the reward of seeing his peers and patients make progress.

He compared the role of a peer specialist to that of a captain on a sports team. "Clinicians are like the coaches – they teach skills and analyze the team's progress. Peers are like the captains – they're on the field with the players, but they share their wisdom and provide an example for others to follow. Peers have shown they have the courage to identify themselves as having a diagnosis and the determination to live with it. Like a team captain, they can counsel informally – just talking with a client about dealing with a rough day without needing a full therapy session."

Nawotniak continues to work to demystify mental illness and challenge stigma. He is author of the award-winning *Mubu the Morph* series of books designed for children and parents. The books teach children how to recognize their emotions, encourages them to speak with their parents and teachers about them, and offers suggestions for coping and moving out of depression by engaging in meaningful activities. In the same spirit as his writings, Nawotniak has made the book available for community disability organizations to use for fundraisers.

"Sharing wisdom is an important role for a peer specialist and the books are another way for me to do that," Nawotniak said. "It lets people know that it's okay, and normal, to have challenges. But there are also skills and tools available to help them live a full life."^{OMH}



Susan Sotack



Stephen Nawotniak and "Mubu"

Research: Exploring Opportunities to Improve Treatment



“One of the greatest aspects about being a researcher is knowing that your work can benefit society,” said Dr. Jeremy Kidd, Chief Resident of Psychiatry at New York Presbyterian, Columbia University-New York State Psychiatric Institute.

Mental health researchers play an important role in finding better options for treatment that directly influence clinical practice. They study the causes of psychiatric disorders; how disorders affect specific populations – examining associated demographic, environmental, and social factors; and the effect of various forms of treatment.

As a result of decades of dedicated research, millions of people with depression, schizophrenia, and anxiety disorders are living productive lives. “It’s exciting to think that our work can lead to more effective treatment and prevention of mental illness.”

Questions Raised in Practice

Kidd said that many of his research projects are the result of questions raised during clinical practice. “Sometimes a colleague asks for guidance because they’re at a loss for helping a patient or we haven’t yet developed a means for addressing an issue.”

Research gives Kidd an opportunity to collaborate with mentors to investigate these questions and then apply findings in the clinical setting to further assess their applicability. Such a situation led to the development of Kidd’s focus on substance use education research.

His work has also been inspired by his own efforts as an advocate to reduce stigma for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning populations.

One study examined the use of mental health service among sexual minority adolescent girls, who are often at high risk for suicidal behavior. Reviewing survey data from a sample of Boston high school students, Kidd and his colleagues determined that sexual minority girls were significantly more likely than heterosexual girls to report suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, self-harm, and depressive symptoms.

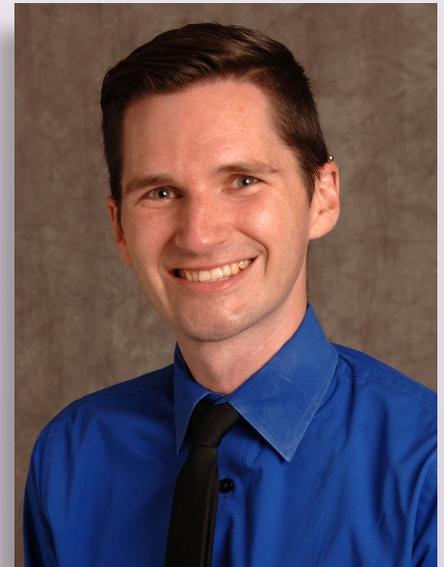
They also found these girls were more likely to report access mental health services. Such findings can then be used to develop treatment services for this at-risk population.

Looking for Opportunities

Being a researcher requires critical thinking, problem solving, and sharp observation skills. Researchers must identify trends in mental health conditions within the community, develop procedures to study the causes, gather data through observation and interaction, and develop and test theories about intervention, treatment, and prevention.

Kidd recommended that students who are interested in the research field should start by keeping their ears open around campus for opportunities. “If a lecturer or guest speaker is discussing a subject that piques your interest, students should talk to them. Researchers are excited to meet with students. Many of them have side projects that they would love to include students in and can serve as potential mentors.”

“A researcher may think that what they’re doing affects only a certain population or a specific situation,” Kidd said. “But every project contributes toward moving society forward.” OMH



Jeremy Kidd, MD, MPH

New York State
Psychiatric Institute

For more information on research opportunities at NYSPI, visit: <http://nyspi.org/nyspi/research>.