

Helpful Tips for Working in AYA Health Care:

Considerations for Internship, Fellowship, and Early Career

General Tips for Getting Ready for the Application Process

Keep track of your hours and experiences:

- Record hours up to November 1 before submitting your applications. Any hours that you accrue after November 1 can be discussed as anticipated hours.
- Record 45–50-minute sessions as 1 practicum hour and be sure to report hours in the most appropriate category. Remember that practicum hours may not be documented in more than one category.
- Note patient demographic information (e.g., age, gender, race) to illustrate the range of patients you have worked with
- Work towards valuable and diverse experiences rather than a large quantity of hours.

Make connections and get to know people in the field:

- Connect with mentors and peers who have gone through the process before.
- Attend conferences and networking events.
- Join professional societies and interest groups to network with others who have similar interests.

Know yourself and your story:

- Identify your strengths and weaknesses:
 - Develop an idea of personal strengths and weaknesses both broadly and related to the unique experiences and developmental needs of AYA populations with health considerations.
 - Take time to review feedback and recommendations from supervisors.
- Determine your short-term and long-term goals:
 - Identify gaps and sufficient experiences in your training; determine what you hope to gain from future experiences with AYA health.
 - Think about short- and long-term goals that emphasize introspection and highlight your unique experiences.
 - Consider which potential sites will help you achieve your goals.

Preparing Application Materials

Essays, cover letters, CVs, and letters of recommendation:

- Keep an updated copy of your CV as well as copies of all materials listed on your CV (i.e., papers, presentations).
- Begin working on application materials early:
 - Use cover letters and essays to share who you are, what interests you have in AYA health care, what your goals are, and how each program is a fit for your goals.
 - Avoid using cover letters and essays to restate your CV. They can, however, be helpful in drawing connections between your experiences, accomplishments, future training goals, and fit with each program.
 - Ask supervisors and mentors in the field for feedback to improve the content of your application materials.
- Ask for letters of recommendation (LOR):
 - Ask supervisors who can speak to your unique strengths within the area of AYA health
 - Ask for LORs early to provide ample time for the letter to be written. While mentioning LORs as soon as possible is helpful, formally ask mentors at least three months before the application deadline.
 - When approaching a potential letter writer, provide brief information about the types of sites you will be applying to and inquire if they are able to write a *strong* letter on your behalf.
 - Share a copy of your CV and site deadlines with confirmed letter writers. Ask if they would like to set up a time to meet and discuss your individual experiences and training goals.

Prepare a list of sites to apply to:

- Refer to internship and job boards as well as professional listservs to develop an idea of what positions are available.
 - **Internship listings** including those provided by the [American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#) as well as the [AYA Interest Groups with APA's Division 54 \(Society of Pediatric Psychology\)](#) and [Division 38 \(Society for Health Psychology\)](#) may be helpful in searching for potential internship and postdoc sites.
 - **Job boards** including those provided by the [APA](#), [APA's Division 38](#) and the [Society of Behavioral Medicine \(SBM\)](#) may be helpful in searching for early career positions.
 - **Listsers** (i.e., [APA Early Career Listserv](#)) provide support and resources for early career psychologists.
- Keep a spreadsheet of requirements and important information for each position so that it is easily accessible throughout the application process. For example, it may be helpful to keep track of the following:
 - Application deadlines
 - Rotations of interest
 - Strengths and weaknesses of the program
 - Annual or monthly income
 - Estimated hours that will be accrued
 - Possible collaborators
 - Additional professional opportunities (e.g., providing supervision)
 - Your overall rating of the program

Consider a budget for applications (if applicable):

- Applications for internship can become expensive. Keeping track of the application fee for each site and knowing your budget can be helpful when putting together a final list of applications.
- Consider if you will need to travel to interview for positions and, if so, who will be responsible for the costs of your travel.

The Interview Process

Have materials ready before the interview:

- Bring copies of your CV and business cards if you have.
- Review site-specific information and materials before attending.
- Be familiar with the individuals with whom you'll be interviewing (e.g., their areas of practice, potential opportunities for learning and/or collaboration).

Keep notes on sites based on how the interview went:

- Soon after the interview, take note of your gut feelings and of the things that you liked or disliked about each site. Identify any strengths or weaknesses of the site as well as opportunities to gain experiences and supervision within areas of interest (e.g., AYA populations). This may help with the ranking and decision process.

Prepare answers to commonly asked questions:

- Topics of discussion to prepare for interviews include:
 - A clinical case. It will be helpful to prepare a challenging or complex case that highlights your skill set and strengths as a clinician. Areas to prepare include the presenting concern, case conceptualization, treatment planning and implementation, challenges, and treatment outcomes. Tailoring your clinical case and presenting concern to the nature of the placement is encouraged.
 - Your clinical, assessment, and research experience. Be prepared to discuss your strengths, weaknesses, progress, and goals in each of these domains.
 - Your areas of weakness broadly. Reflect on areas of weakness that you have noticed or may anticipate in your upcoming training. Be honest in your response and be prepared to discuss why these may be areas of weakness as well as goals to improve in these domains.
 - Your professional and training goals. Be prepared to discuss what you hope to gain from the specific position and why the program is a good fit for you and your professional goals.
 - Supervisory experiences. Reflect on positive and negative experiences with supervision to discuss during interviews. For example, how did you overcome challenging supervisory experiences? What are you looking for in a supervisor? Highlight any experiences you have as a supervisor, and if you are looking for opportunities to strengthen supervisory skills and to supervise trainees within the program/placement.
 - Be prepared to discuss individual differences and the importance of culture within the clinical and research domains.

For internship and postdoc interviews, ask important questions about the outlined training experience:

- Ask questions that highlight your interest in the site and in the field. Some examples include:
 - Are there supervision or didactic training opportunities specifically in AYA health?
 - Are there different rotations offering AYA care and if so with what health presentations?
 - Are there opportunities for professional guidance and development in areas like advocacy and policy?

Resources

Internship and Post-Doc:

[Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies \(ABCT\) - Internship Process](#)

[APA - Doctoral Internship Search Tool](#)

[APA - Steps to the Internship Match](#)

[Internship and Post-Doc Training Sites with AYA Opportunities](#)

[Internships in Psychology: APAGS Workbook for Writing Successful Applications and Finding the Right Fit](#)

[Society for the Advancement of Psychotherapy \(SAP\) - Mastering the Internship Application Process](#)

Early Career:

[APA - Early Career Psychologists, Get Involved](#)

[APA – Job Search Tool](#)

[APA Society for Health Psychology – Career Opportunities Center](#)

[Association of Psychologists in Academic Health Centers \(APAHC\) - Early Career Boot Camp](#)

[Society for Behavioral Medicine \(SBM\) - Resources for Students and Early Career Professionals](#)