

## Meridian Internship Information

**Meridian DBT & Psychotherapy Services** is a group private practice located in Colchester, VT. We provide outpatient group, individual, and couples' counseling to adult and adolescent clients, both in-person and virtually. We are organized like most group practices, in that each clinician-owner (Michelle Metzler, Megan Dunston, Kristina Syverson) maintains their own private practice (seeing clients, handling billing and reimbursement tasks, general business management, etc.). Collectively we have a "roommate" arrangement, in which we share costs such as office space, telephone and Internet services, and office supplies. We do not have support staff, such as an office administrator, intake coordinator, or biller. We share and/or distribute those responsibilities among ourselves.

Counselor trainees at Meridian can expect to engage in mostly individual psychotherapy, with some group practice. Trainees interested in group therapy are encouraged to run as many groups as they wish (within internship guidelines). Most groups at Meridian are Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) skills training groups, but we welcome and encourage other forms of group work.

All of our clinician-owners are trained and experienced in DBT. All Meridian clinicians (both owners and trainees) participate in a DBT consultation group weekly, to ensure adherence to the model and promote clinician growth, competence, and well-being. Trainees can also expect to participate in an intern development group with their trainee peers and 1-2 experienced clinicians, to discuss and process topics and issues specific to the trainee experience. Trainees are not expected to become DBT experts, but an interest in learning the theory and practice of this orientation is essential.

### What is DBT?

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is the treatment of choice for Borderline Personality Disorder, and has also been shown to be effective for treating depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, substance use disorders, and bulimia. Clinicians at Meridian serve a wide range of client populations and find DBT to be effective with a variety of diagnoses.

DBT therapists work with clients in individual and group settings to help them learn the coping skills needed to build rich and meaningful lives. DBT coping skills include emotion regulation, mindfulness, distress tolerance, and interpersonal effectiveness.

For more information about DBT:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJA53l91LSk>

<https://behavioraltech.org/resources/faqs/dialectical-behavior-therapy-dbt/>

<https://depts.washington.edu/uwbtrc/about-us/dialectical-behavior-therapy/>

As we are a private practice, trainees are expected to take on some responsibilities relevant to their client load. This includes note-taking and documentation (practice management software and training to use it is provided),

billing (charging a client's credit card and/or submitting an electronic insurance claim), client screening for suitability to trainee's development level and the outpatient level of care, and maintaining their own client schedule and setting appointments with their clients.

Trainees do not receive an established client load when they start their internship. This is partially due to logistical difficulties with doing so (client preferences, cumbersome nature of waitlists, trainee preferences and varying skill levels, etc.) and partially because we believe starting week one with a full client load interferes with trainee development and well-being. Trainees can expect to have a full caseload within 8-10 weeks of starting their internship.

Meridian receives far more inquiries for therapy than we can accommodate. Trainees are welcome to contact these potential clients to assess for appropriateness (or ask their supervisor to do so on their behalf). We often have referrals from our groups, clients we can no longer meet with due to scheduling, etc. Trainees are encouraged to do their own marketing if they have specific client populations they would like to work with. Supervisors are always available to help establish a caseload.

Given the above responsibilities, trainees who are a good fit for a private practice internship at Meridian are those who are interested in and motivated to learn more about running a private practice, those who have adequate to excellent organizational skills, those who can engage in work tasks independently (with appropriate training and guidance), those who value and can participate in direct communication, and those who are intrinsically motivated to take charge of their education and able and willing to articulate their needs and preferences. Meridian would not be a good fit for a trainee who would like to have clinical hours with clients as their sole responsibility and educational opportunity, trainees who prefer an independent vs. collaborative learning environment, or a trainee who struggles significantly with organization, time management, and scheduling.

To make inquiries about Meridian's internship program not addressed in this document, please contact Megan Dunston at [megan@meridiandbt.com](mailto:megan@meridiandbt.com) or Michelle Metzler at [michelle@meridiandbt.com](mailto:michelle@meridiandbt.com).