

# STARTTS Student Clinic, inspiring a new generation of professionals.

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NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors

STARTTS The NSW Service for The Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors

## Introduction

The NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) has been actively involved in the provision of university student placements and professional internships for many years through its Student Clinic. STARTTS provides clinical placement opportunities for students currently engaged in, though not exclusively, the following disciplines: Forensic Psychology, Social Work, Counselling, Art therapy, Post-graduate programs of Masters in Psychology (Clinical), Doctor of Clinical Psychology and/or other relevant Masters Programs in Psychology or who are currently completing a Psychology Registration Program.

## Background

The Clinic started as a strategy to improve the knowledge and experience of social and behavioural sciences students looking to work in the area of torture and refugee trauma. Also, the clinic was designed as an opportunity to increase the number of professionals in the field who are specialised in working with refugee communities.

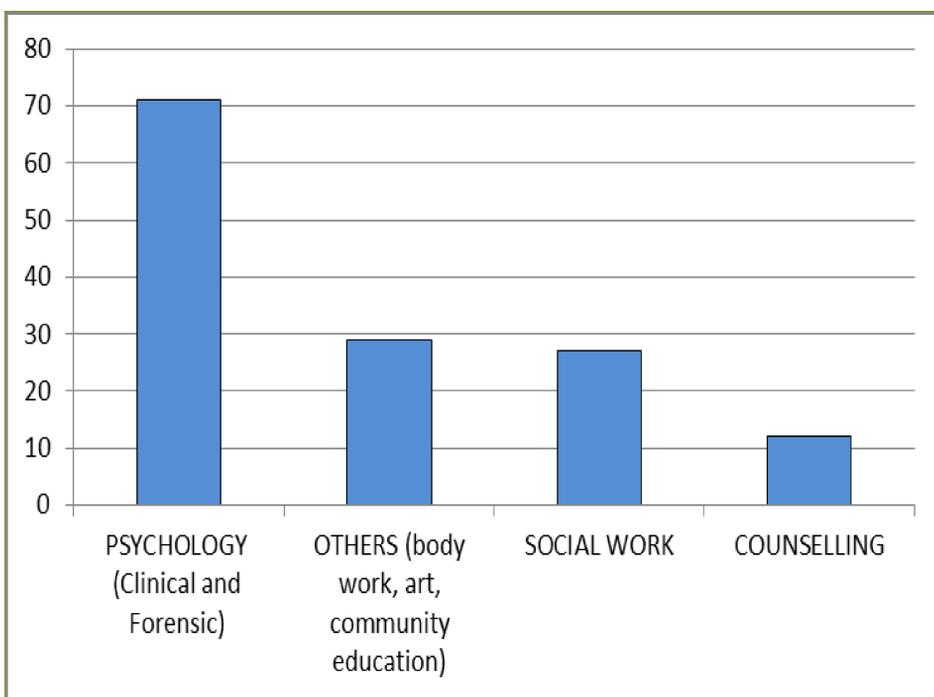


Fig. 1 Disciplines of study

## Methodology

Once their application is approved and they are admitted in the clinic, students have very similar duties to those of counsellors and psychologists at STARTTS.

Placements at STARTTS give interns the opportunity to provide individual therapy to clients as well as group interventions where appropriate. Shorter internships (ie. less than six months duration) are usually exclusively focused on client assessments and facilitation of psychoeducation groups and community development projects. Those participating in longer internships may also have the opportunity to engage in longer term therapy with clients. Opportunities also exist to become involved in clinical research projects where appropriate. Regular supervision by experienced Clinical Psychologists and Psychologists at STARTTS is provided, following a comprehensive induction and training program. At the end of their placements, students evaluate their experience and provide feedback.

## Results

Approximately 150 students have participated in the Student Clinic since its inception in 2003.

Students have gained knowledge and skills working within a multidisciplinary team of experienced professionals.

Participants in the Student Clinic have the opportunity to provide assessments and psychotherapeutic interventions to refugee clients who come from diverse backgrounds.

Students are able to assist newly arrived and others who have been in Australia for many years but are experiencing difficulties in relation to their experiences of trauma.

Approximately 200 students have visited STARTTS and attended clinical meetings where real cases are discussed.

Of our current clinical staff, 22 completed their student placements at STARTTS.



Fig. 2 Evaluation of placements

## Conclusions

- While interns gain the opportunity to work with an experienced team of professionals in a multidisciplinary treatment setting, they also bring their own skills, experiences, perspectives and enthusiasm, making a significant contribution to STARTTS.
- The clinic has mutual benefits for students, the organisation and clients, whilst at the same time increasing the number of professionals who are skilled and confident in the provision of services in the field of refugee trauma and health.

*“Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the student clinic at STARTTS, it was invaluable to my knowledge and confidence in working with refugees and asylum seekers”*

Student testimony