



TWO-YEAR POST-GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP IN COUPLES THERAPY

The Couples Clinic is offering 2-year Post-Graduate Fellowships in Couples Therapy, beginning this Summer. The Fellowships are designed to produce highly trained and competent therapists specializing in relationships. Fellows will have the opportunity to fulfill the supervision and clinical contact hour requirements for full licensure in the state of Illinois.

- January 15, 2026: The reviewing of applications begins. Applications will continue being received until all fellowship positions are filled.
- February 15, 2026: First fellowship offers are made.
- July 1, 2026: Fellowships begin.

1. Description of the Fellowship Site

- The Couples Clinic and Research Institute in Geneva, Illinois is the home of an innovative team of therapists and researchers who have generated methods that are known and used by couples therapists around the world (thecouplesclinic.com/our-story). Each year, therapists come to Geneva to learn Pragmatic/Experiential Therapy for Couples. They work hard while also enjoying all that Geneva has to offer (Geneva is rated by World Atlas as one of the [15 most beautiful towns](#) in America.)

2. Fellowship Candidate Selection Philosophy

- We believe that your personal qualities are much more important than your experience. We do not expect you to have any experience in couples therapy. We are looking for therapists who have a passion for relationship therapy and have a strong enough personality to hold the therapy room. We also are looking for individuals who are able to challenge and support clients at the same time.

3. Model of Couples Therapy

- We are the creators of Pragmatic/Experiential Therapy for Couples (PET-C). Detailed in our books, *Emotional Intelligence in Couples Therapy: Advances from Neurobiology and the Science of Intimate Relationships*, and *Developing Habits for Relationship Success*, our approach has been described by Oprah as “completely counterintuitive and wonderfully effective,” and the editor of the *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* called it “a tour-de-force of scientific wisdom and sophistication.” Step-by-step, you will become masterful in implementing this highly integrative and comprehensive treatment model for couples.

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4. Training and Supervision

- Supervision is most intensive in the beginning, then gradually tapers off as you become more experienced with couples.
- In the first 6 months, you'll receive 4 ¼ hours of individual supervision and 2 ½ hours of group supervision each week.
- In months 7-12, you'll receive 3 ¼ hours of individual supervision each week, and 2 ½ hours of group supervision (1 hour during the summer months).
- In months 13-24, you'll receive 2 hours of individual supervision and 2 ½ hours of group supervision each week (1 hour during the summer months).
- Throughout the Fellowship, your supervisor will:
 1. Listen to audio-recordings of your sessions, giving you moment-by-moment suggestions about how you can increase your effectiveness.
 2. Guide you through (and give you feedback on) training exercises that help you...
 - Identify key choice points in sessions, when moving one direction vs. another can make a big difference.
 - Learn to use words and phrases that get your client's attention and help them realize concrete changes they need to make.
 - Develop the ability to give clients critical feedback without them feeling criticized.
 - Examine the automatic reactions you have during sessions, understand where these automatic tendencies come from, and engage in practices that can re-wire them when needed.
 - Understand the highly integrative nature of PET-C, and how it is similar and different to other couples therapy approaches.
 3. Teach you how to become adept at helping partners...
 - Become willing to drop the upper hand and put themselves on a level playing field with their mates.
 - Understand and assume responsibility for their mutual contributions to the depleted condition of their relationship.
 - Experience genuine regret and remorse for the pain that they have caused each other.
 - Come to grips with their perpetual differences, cut their losses, and get on the same page with a game plan for how to manage these differences more successfully in the future.
 - Rewire the way their nervous systems react in emotionally charged situations.
 - Navigate spontaneous disagreements better – replacing criticism, defensiveness, and dismissiveness with more effective ways of getting their needs met.



- Avoid rabbit holes that lead to repetitive arguments.
- Create relational safety, allowing partners to open their hearts to each other, enabling feelings of warmth, tenderness, affection, playfulness, sexual interest and the desire for loving connection to emerge.
- 4. Help you become skilled and efficient with the electronic medical records system and the fee monitoring and collection process,
- 5. Help you learn how and when to use our vast collection of tools, exercises, protocols and audio recordings clients can use between sessions to increase the impact of your interventions.
- Throughout the program you will have access to Dr. Atkinson's abundant collection of teaching videos that give step-by-step guidance on how to facilitate every single aspect of the therapy process. Your supervisor will be expert on pointing you to the right video at the right time.

5. Expectations of Fellows

- Fellows are expected to conduct an average of 44 sessions per month during the first six months of the Fellowship, and a minimum of 40 sessions per month during months 7-24 (40 sessions per month is the *minimum* during months 7-24. Fellows are encouraged to conduct an average of 80 sessions per month).
- Fellows are expected to conduct therapy sessions during "prime time" hours: 4-10 PM weekdays; 8AM – 6 PM Saturdays and Sundays (unless some of these hours can be scheduled with clients who are available during daytime weekday hours).
- Fellows are expected to attend all training and supervision sessions as detailed in the Training and Supervision section above.
- Fellows are expected to audio-record their counseling sessions for review during supervision.
- Fellows are expected to engage in role plays facilitated by the clinical supervisors.
- Fellows are expected to be open to understanding their own relational tendencies and the etiology of those tendencies.
- Fellows are expected to read and be proficient with assigned materials prior to the beginning of the Fellowship, and during the Fellowship

6. Fellow Pay and Benefits

- The Post-Graduate Fellowship is a paid 2-year position. Your total estimated compensation package across two years for a full-time Fellowship is \$174,923.
- In the first six months, you will be classified as an *independent contractor*, and you will be paid a monthly stipend of 3333/month). You won't be expected to carry a full-time caseload. Rather, you'll be expected to average 44 sessions per month across the first 6 months. If you conduct more than the required number of sessions, you'll get a bonus



of \$42 per session. If you conduct less than the required number of sessions, you'll receive a deduction of \$42 per session.

- At month 7, you will convert from an *independent contractor* to a Couples Clinic *employee* and receive Couples Clinic benefits during the remainder of your fellowship (The Clinic will pay ½ of your Social Security and Medicare taxes and you'll be eligible to enroll in an optional 401(k) plan in which the Couples Clinic matches up to 4%. You will also have the option of enrolling in the Couples Clinic health insurance plan). You'll also shift from receiving a set stipend each month to getting paid a per-session rate which increases the more sessions you conduct. Full-time fellows who average 80 sessions per month during months 7-12 (20 sessions per week) receive a monthly pay of about \$3975.
- At month 13, your per-session compensation will increase so that if you average 80 sessions per month (20 sessions per week) during months 13-24 you'll receive about \$4135 per month.
- The bottom line is that beginning with month 7, after conducting a minimum of 40 sessions per month, *you get to decide* how much more you want to earn by choosing how full you want your caseload to be. We always have a waiting list of clients who are wanting our services, so you can add more couples any time you want them.
- In addition to pay for sessions conducted, the Fellowship training, supervision and benefits package is estimated to be worth \$77,916 over two years. See the PDF titled, "[2026-2028 Fellowship Compensation Package](#) for more detail.
- Throughout the fellowship, the Couples Clinic provides liability and malpractice insurance.
- The fellowship plan offers the possibility for Fellows to receive all clinical supervision hours and client contact hours necessary for full licensure in Illinois.
- If you perform well during the 2-year fellowship, you'll receive an invitation to join the Couples Clinic permanent team of therapists. You'll earn approximately \$70 per session. Depending on how hard you are willing to work, Full-time Couples Clinic Therapists can earn over \$100,000 per year.)

7. Qualifications of Applicants

Minimum Qualifications:

- The completion of a Master's or PhD degree in Marriage & Family Therapy, Social Work or Counseling by July 1, 2026 (special exceptions can be made for those graduating at the end of the summer 2026 semester).
- Completion of Levels 1 and 2 of the [Online Training Program in Pragmatic/Experiential Therapy for Couples](#) by the end of May, 2026.
- Interest in working for the Couples Clinic after completing the fellowship.
- An honest and sincere respect for relationships and a commitment to providing the best care possible.



Additional Preferred Qualifications (not mandatory)

- Knowledge of the major models of couples therapy
- Sex therapy training
- Sex therapy education
- Knowledge of specific trauma models
- Experience with trauma therapies

8. Application Procedures and Deadlines

Visit <https://thecouplesclinic.com/two-year-post-graduate-couples-therapy-fellowships/> for application instructions.

The Application Timeline

- January 15, 2026: The reviewing of applications begins. Applications will continue being received until all fellowship positions are filled.
- February 15, 2026: First fellowship offers are made.*
- June 1, 2026: Deadline for applicants to have completed Levels 1 and 2 of the [Online Training Program in Pragmatic/Experiential Therapy for Couples \(PET-C\)](#).
- July 1, 2026: Fellowships begin.

*Offers will be contingent upon the applicant completing of Levels 1 and 2 of the [Online Training Program in Pragmatic/Experiential Therapy for Couples](#) by the end of May, 2026 (Applicants who receive and accept fellowship offers will be reimbursed for the online trainings).