

# AMERICAN NEUROPSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

## The American Neuropsychiatric Association (ANPA) Early Career Committee's Becoming a Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry (BNNP) Fellow

Your decision to pursue subspecialty training at the interface of neurology and psychiatry is a wise one. Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry (BNNP) is a discipline rich with tradition and full of therapeutic promise.

For those senior neurology and psychiatry residents who are considering a BNNP fellowship, the application process might seem daunting and opaque. We hope to clear up the process with this document. The following is intended as a guide to help you obtain a fellowship that best suits your educational and professional interests.

### Getting Started

As the application process for BNNP fellowships is highly unstandardized, it is recommended that you begin exploring fellowship opportunities midway through your third year of residency (PGY-3). A number of programs begin accepting applications and granting interviews as early as the spring of your third year of postgraduate training. It is also worth noting that programs are free to offer fellowship spots on a “rolling” basis. All of this is to emphasize that it is in your best interest to initiate the application process as early as possible.

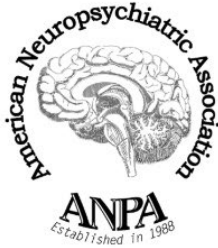
One reasonable way to begin your search is to attend the American Neuropsychiatric Association (ANPA) Annual Meeting—held every March—where opportunities to meet fellowship directors and thought leaders in the field abound. Over the course of the four-day meeting, the Early Career Committee holds a number of events and mixers. These are open to all attendees and are excellent opportunities to network and learn more about the training programs.

### Choosing Programs

For a complete, up-to-date list of “certified” BNNP fellowships, please see the [United Council for Neurologic Specialties \(UNCS\) directory](#).

Additionally, ANPA’s [“What’s New”](#) page often lists programs that are actively recruiting fellows.

As its name suggests, BNNP is a multidisciplinary subspecialty that was only recently combined from two related, but historically distinct, fields and so curricular focus can vary between fellowship programs. You are encouraged to explore these differences prior to and during your application process. This history has practical implications for fellows at different training



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programs with differences in factors such as host department, scope and breadth of clinical training, and faculty. In addition to enriching your network at ANPA, it may be helpful to seek out the wisdom of your own faculty mentors and program director(s) to make a more informed decision.

Lastly, there are the usual considerations that go into decisions of this sort, including geography, family and partner preference, and duration of training (1 vs. 2 years). For these, consider soliciting the thoughts of your support network—your partner, friends, and family.

## **The Application Process**

With rare exception, BNNP programs request three elements to the application: 1) a current CV, 2) a personal statement, and 3) three letters of support. Do not delay in getting your materials prepared. Composing your personal statement, in particular, may be a time-consuming process. Consider consulting your mentors, program directors, friends and colleagues to once-over your draft before submission.

Regarding letters of recommendation, we recommend that you request these of your program director and/or faculty mentors who can speak to your competency and interest in cognition and behavior. If possible, it is recommended that psychiatry residents get at least one letter from a neurologist and vice versa.

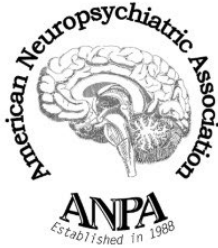
Finally, it is customary to include a brief cover letter with your application as well. You may submit your complete file via email or ground to the contact (typically the program director or coordinator) indicated on the fellowship program website.

Following submission, the wait begins. Typically, you will receive correspondence from either the program director or coordinator acknowledging receipt of your application.

## **The Interview**

After weeks-to-months of waiting, you may receive a most welcome invitation to interview at the program(s) of your choice. You are encouraged to respond to these invitations with timeliness. If you have already accepted a position elsewhere, take special care to politely decline the interviews and withdraw your application from further consideration.

As you make travel arrangements, be sure to coordinate time off with your training office. Design your itinerary in a manner that optimizes comfort and efficiency. Unless advised otherwise, traditional business attire is the accepted code of dress.



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The interview day itself perhaps represents the single best opportunity to tease out goodness of fit. Be certain to seize this opportunity—express your interests and have your questions answered. You can also expect to meet with current fellows as part of your interview day. Their perspectives and experiences can be valuable data to consider as you make your final decision.

Following your interview day, you may wish to send electronic “thank you” notes to faculty, fellows, and coordinators. If you are interested in a particular program, you may elect to express this in a carefully composed email to the Program Director and/or leave a thoughtful “old fashioned” physical thank you note.

## **Accepting a Position**

If you have the good fortune of receiving several offers, again, reply promptly and courteously. If there are programs from which you have yet to hear, you may feel unprepared to immediately commit. We recommend that you do your utmost to communicate honestly with those programs that have offered you a position and, if need be, politely request additional time to consider your options. Consider reaching out to those programs from which you are awaiting a decision to provide an update on your change in status and inquire about your standing.

Simply put, your openness, courtesy, and timeliness with communication are critical to this process.

## **Final Remarks**

We hope this has been a helpful guide. We wish you all the best and look forward to seeing you at the next ANPA Annual Meeting. Also, each of us learned from those who came before us, and this “living document” can be further enriched by your experience as you go through the process. Therefore, please share any vital thoughts you wish to be included in this guide with one of the members of the Early Career Committee.