

The 2020-2021 Pediatric Psychology Virtual Application Cycle: Trainee Preferences, Outcomes, & Future Directions

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The COVID-19 pandemic presented many challenges to trainees over the last year, including [changes in clinical experiences and training opportunities](#), transition to remote learning, and disrupted research activities. However, for many trainees, this also resulted in significant adjustments to the interview process, including those for graduate level training programs, internship, and post-doctoral positions. This interview cycle represents a first of its kind wide-spread switch to this virtual interviewing format. As such, the Society of Pediatric Psychology (SPP) Student Advisory Board sought to survey trainees to further understand their interview experience during COVID-19 and to inform future interview cycles. The electronic survey was approved for distribution on the division listserv by the SPP Board of Directors. Recruitment ran from the beginning to the middle of May 2021. We received 76 responses from trainees interviewing across graduate-level ($n = 16$), internship ($n = 38$), and post-doctoral positions ($n = 22$) in the 2020-2021 application cycle. Eighty-nine percent of trainees identified as female ($n = 68$) and 87% identified as White/European American. Thirty-two percent of trainees reported some disability or health condition. Approximately half of trainees were married or partnered ($n = 41$; 54%). See Table 1 below for demographic breakdown by interview type. Trainees were primarily from clinical psychology PhD programs and, of those who had applied for internship, were primarily in their 4th or 5th year at application. Almost all trainees had at least one clinical rotation in a pediatric psychology setting prior to application for internship. See Table 2 for full information regarding training characteristics. Overall, many trainees were satisfied with the virtual interview process, with 59% being mostly satisfied and 19% extremely satisfied. Trainees expressed some preference for virtual interviews in the future (65%), though this differed across what type of interview trainees completed (i.e., graduate program, internship, post-doctoral). Results are further presented by interview type in the following sections.

Table 1. *Pediatric Psychology Trainee Demographic Characteristics*

	All trainees ($N = 76$)	Graduate program interviewees ($n = 16$)	Internship interviewees ($n = 38$)	Post-doctoral interviewees ($n = 22$)
Age				
18-25 years	14 (18%)	14 (88%)	--	--
26-30 years	46 (61%)	2 (12%)	32 (86%)	12 (55%)
31-35 years	12 (16%)	--	4 (11%)	8 (36%)

41 years or older	3 (4%)	--	1 (3%)	2 (9%)
Gender				
Man	4 (5%)	1 (6%)	3 (8%)	--
Woman	68 (89%)	13 (81%)	33 (87%)	22 (100%)
Nonbinary/fluid queer/gender queer	4 (5%)	2 (13%)	2 (5%)	--
Racial/Ethnic Identification				
American Indian/Alaska Native	1 (1%)	1 (5%)	--	--
Asian/Asian American	8 (11%)	2 (11%)	5 (11%)	1 (4%)
Black/African American	2 (3%)	1 (5%)	1 (2%)	--
Latino/Hispanic	8 (11%)	2 (11%)	5 (11%)	1 (4%)
Middle Eastern/North African	2 (3%)	--	1 (2%)	1 (4%)
White/European American	66 (87%)	13 (68%)	32 (73%)	21 (88%)
Sexual Orientation				
Bisexual	7 (9%)	4 (25%)	3 (8%)	--
Gay	1 (1%)	--	1 (3%)	--
Lesbian	1 (1%)	--	1 (3%)	--
Straight	64 (84%)	12 (75%)	31 (82%)	21 (95%)
Prefer to self-identify	3 (4%)	--	2 (5%)	1 (5%)
Disability/chronic health condition (yes)	24 (32%)	9 (59%)	12 (32%)	3 (14%)
Married/partnered (yes)	41 (54%)	6 (38%)	24 (63%)	11 (50%)
Dependents (yes)	4 (5%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	2 (9%)
Household income				
\$0-\$15,000	2 (3%)	1 (6%)	1 (3%)	--
\$15,001-\$25,000	15 (20%)	2 (13%)	10 (26%)	3 (14%)
\$25,001-\$35,000	12 (16%)	--	8 (21%)	4 (18%)
\$35,001-\$50,000	16 (21%)	6 (38%)	5 (13%)	5 (23%)
\$50,001-\$75,000	8 (11%)	4 (25%)	3 (8%)	1 (5%)
\$75,001-\$100,000	9 (12%)	1 (6%)	6 (16%)	2 (9%)
\$100,001-\$200,000	6 (8%)	--	2 (5%)	4 (18%)
More than \$200,000	2 (3%)	1 (6%)	--	1 (5%)
Prefer not to respond	5 (7%)	--	3 (8%)	2 (9%)
Religious affiliation				
Agnostic/atheist	24 (32%)	4 (25%)	16 (43%)	4 (18%)
Buddhist	1 (1%)	--	--	1 (5%)
Christian	33 (43%)	9 (56%)	12 (32%)	12 (55%)
Hindu	1 (1%)	1 (6%)	--	--
Muslim	1 (1%)	--	1 (3%)	--
Jewish	7 (9%)	--	4 (11%)	3 (14%)
Not listed/other	4 (5%)	1 (6%)	2 (5%)	1 (5%)
Prefer not to respond	4 (5%)	1 (6%)	2 (5%)	1 (5%)

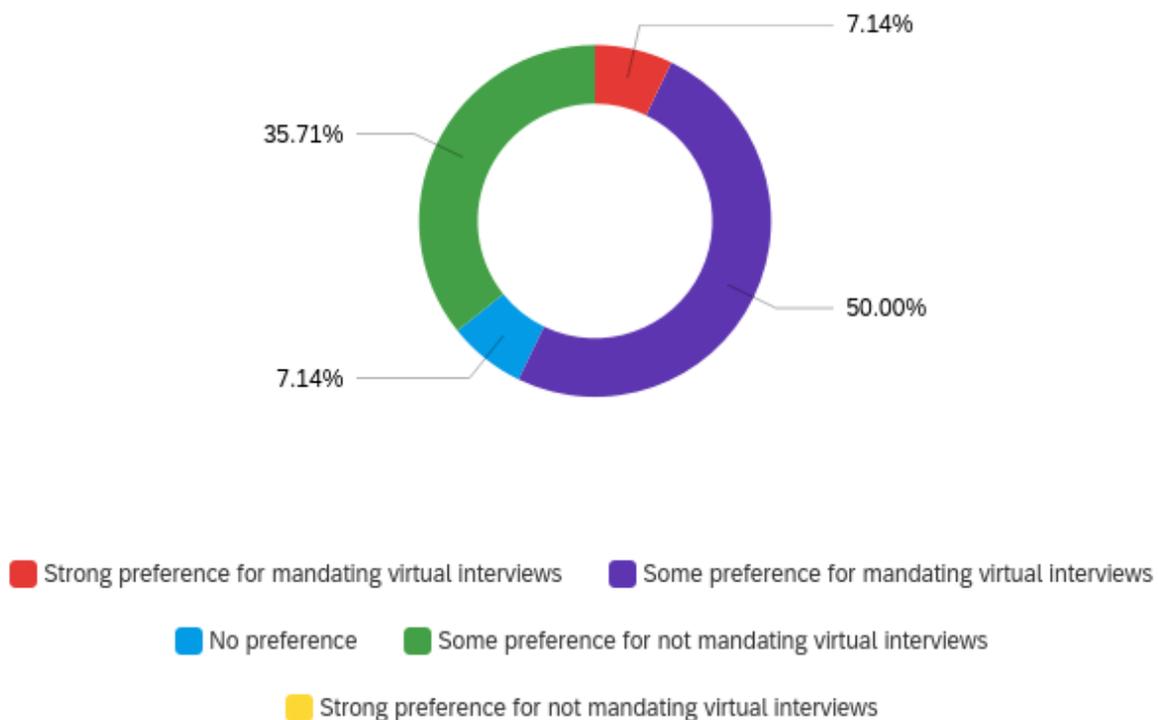
Table 2. *Pediatric Psychology Trainee Doctoral Training Characteristics*

	Graduate program interviewees ^a	Internship interviewees	Post-doctoral interviewees
Program terminal degree (accepted offer or completed)			
PhD	10 (100%)	29 (81%)	12 (71%)
PsyD	--	7 (19%)	5 (29%)
Program discipline (accepted offer or completed)			
Clinical psychology	9 (90%)	30 (77%)	17 (100%)
Counseling psychology	--	5 (13%)	--
School psychology	1 (10%)	4 (10%)	--
Other psychology/not listed	1 (10%)	--	--
Track/concentration of program (accepted offer or completed)			
Pediatric psychology	8 (80%)	10 (25%)	8 (38%)
Health psychology	2 (20%)	3 (8%)	2 (10%)
Child psychology	6 (60%)	11 (28%)	6 (29%)
Other/not listed	1 (10%)	1 (3%)	1 (5%)
Not applicable/generalist	1 (10%)	15 (38%)	4 (19%)
Training year when applied for internship			
Less than 4 th year	--	1 (3%)	--
4 th year	--	12 (33%)	8 (50%)
5 th year	--	21 (58%)	6 (38%)
6 th year	--	2 (6%)	2 (13%)
# clinical rotations in pediatric psychology completed prior to applying for internship			
None	--	--	2 (12%)
1-2	--	18 (50%)	8 (47%)
3-4	--	15 (42%)	6 (35%)
5-6	--	3 (8%)	--
6+	--	--	1 (6%)
Training program distance from nearest children's hospital			
Less than 15 minutes	--	14 (39%)	8 (47%)
15-30 minutes	--	10 (28%)	5 (29%)
30-45 minutes	--	5 (14%)	2 (12%)
45-60 minutes	--	2 (6%)	1 (6%)
1-2 hours	--	3 (8%)	1 (6%)
Over 2 hours	--	2 (6%)	--

^an = 10 graduate program applicants received or accepted offers to graduate programs and are represented here.

Graduate School Interviews

Of the pediatric psychology trainees who interviewed during the 2020-2021 cycle and completed the survey, most applied to clinical psychology programs. Overall, applicants to pediatric psychology graduate programs were mostly satisfied with the virtual interview format. Common themes regarding applicants' dislikes about the virtual format was difficulty getting a feel for the faculty, students, and community given the 5-6 year time-commitment, as well as increased stress related to technology and background noises in applicants' remote locations (see Table 3). Regarding preferences for future interview cycles, applicants reported mixed preference for future interview formats, with approximately half reporting "Strong" or "Some" preference for in-person interviews and the other half reporting "Some" or "Strong" preference for virtual interviews.



Most applicants to graduate programs in pediatric psychology reported "Some Preference" for required virtual interview formats in future years. All graduate school applicants reported they would feel "Extremely Concerned", "Mostly Concerned", or "Somewhat Concerned" that a site would view them negatively if they chose to interview virtually when in-person interviews were also offered.

Table 3. *Virtual Interviewing & Impact on Quality of Life Variables: Graduate Applicants*

To what extent did the virtual format... where 1 = not at all, 5 = substantially (n = 14)	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Reduce financial burden	1.00	5.00	4.5	5.00	1.09
Reduce stress	1.00	5.00	2.86	3.00	1.10
Improve quality of life	1.00	5.00	2.93	3.00	1.14
Improve accessibility	2.00	5.00	4.07	4.00	1.07
Hinder your ability to connect with faculty members at the site	2.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	0.96
Hinder your ability to connect with trainees at the site	2.00	5.00	3.21	3.00	1.05
Hinder your ability to "get a feel" for the program culture	2.00	5.00	3.15	3.00	0.80
Hinder your ability to "get a feel" for the site	1.00	5.00	3.28	3.50	1.20
Hinder your ability to "get a feel" for the city	2.00	5.00	4.14	4.00	1.03

Most trainees preferred virtual interview days that are four to six hours long (71%) and are limited to either one or two days. The majority stated the optimal start time for virtual interviews was 8:00am-10:00am EST (45%) or 10:00am-12:00pm EST (45%). The optimal number of faculty interviews was three (36% of respondents) or four (40% of respondents). When asked about the optimal ratio of faculty members to students for interviews, respondents expressed a preference for one faculty member to one trainee (58%) or two faculty members to one trainee (33%). Trainees preferred either 30 minute (34%) or 45 minute (38%) interviews with faculty.

The below table of pre-interview day materials or activities is sorted in descending order by the number of applicants who found the item “Extremely Helpful.”

Table 4. *Reported Usefulness of Pre-Interview Activities & Materials: Graduate Applicants*

Pre-Interview Activities (n = 14)	Not at all helpful	A little helpful	Somewhat helpful	Mostly helpful	Extremely helpful	Not applicable
Personalized interview schedule with meeting links	--	--	--	--	14	--
Name / contact information for a staff	--	--	--	1	13	1

member if experience
technical difficulties

General interview schedule	--	--	1	2	11	--
Electronic meeting invites (e.g., Outlook invites)	--	2	--	1	9	--
Access to electronic training manual, brochure, or website	--	--	2	4	8	--
Pre-recorded videos of training site	--	--	2	7	5	--
Pre-recorded videos of psychology services at site	--	--	2	7	5	--
Sent e-gift card to purchase food	--	--	2	1	3	--
Mailed site swag (e.g., pens, school supplies) or food	1	--	3	2	3	--
Open houses or informational sessions before or after the interview date	--	1	1	3	3	--
Pre-recorded videos of city	--	--	3	6	3	--
Short practice run-through of video platform with staff member	1	2	1	--	1	--
Mailed paper versions of training manuals or brochures	2	4	1	1	--	--

The following table is sorted in descending order by the number of trainees who found each of the interview day activities or approaches “Extremely Helpful.”

Table 5. *Reported Usefulness of Interview Day Activities & Materials: Graduate Applicants*

Interview Day Activities (n = 16)	Not at all helpful	A little helpful	Somewhat helpful	Mostly helpful	Extremely helpful	Not applicable
Presentation on program structure, available rotations, research opportunities	--	--	--	2	13	--

Discussion of diversity, inclusion, advocacy efforts	--	1	1	--	12	--
Meetings with current trainees	--	--	--	3	12	--
Individual interviews (1 trainee / 1 faculty member)	--	--	--	3	11	--
Meeting with potential research lab members	1	1	1	1	11	--
Overview of interview day schedule	--	--	1	4	9	--
Faculty member introductions	--	--	2	3	9	--
Pre-recorded tours of psychology services at site	--	2	2	2	7	1
Presentation on geographic location / city	--	--	3	4	7	--
Pre-recorded tours of training site	--	2	2	3	6	2
Individual interviews with the director of clinical training (DCT)	--	--	2	4	5	3
Trainee group interviews (multiple trainees)	--	2	2	3	5	3
Photos of psychology services at site	--	2	3	3	4	2
Photos of general training site	--	--	4	4	4	2
Pre-recorded videos giving overview of each rotation	--	2	1	2	4	5
Current graduate student research presentations	0	3	2	3	3	3
Faculty group interviews (1 trainee / multiple faculty members)	--	2	2	2	2	6
Unstructured time to meet with faculty members of your choosing	2	3	--	--	2	7

Applicant introductions	0	3	7	3	2	--
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The following table is sorted in descending order and reports trainees' preferences on types of breaks during the virtual interview day.

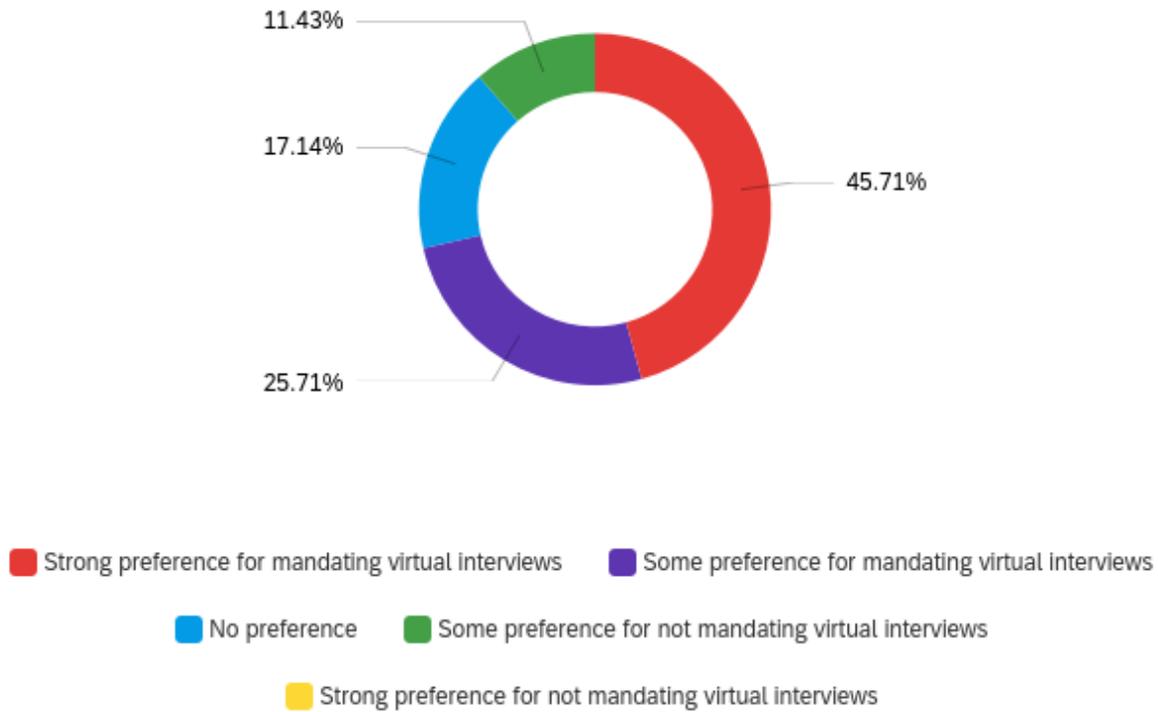
Table 6. *Interview Day Break Time Preferences: Graduate Applicants*

Types of Breaks (n = 16)	n (%)
Lunch break without any interview activity	12 (75%)
60-minute break for lunch	10 (63%)
15-minute breaks between events	9 (56%)
10-minute breaks between events	7 (44%)
Lunch break with interview activity that you can passively attend and keep your camera off	5 (31%)
30-minute breaks between events	4 (25%)
30-minute break for lunch	4 (25%)
5-minute breaks between events	3 (19%)
A minimum of 1 break per hour	3 (19%)
A minimum of 1 break every 2 hours	3 (19%)
A minimum of 1 break every 3 hours	3 (19%)
Over 30-minute breaks between events	1 (6%)
Lunch break with interview activity that requires participation and your camera on	1 (6%)

Pre-Doctoral Internship Interviews

Most pediatric psychology trainees only attended virtual interviews for pre-doctoral internships during the 2020-2021 cycle (95%; n = 36). The majority of internship applicants

were “Mostly” (57%) or “Extremely Satisfied” (22%) with the virtual interview process. Three quarters of respondents reported a “Strong Preference” (44%) or “Some Preference” (31%) for attending virtual interviews during non-pandemic years. Similarly, most had a “Strong Preference” (46%) or “Some Preference” (26%) for mandating virtual interviews moving forward.



Many applicants (63%) reported they would feel “Extremely Concerned” that a site would view them negatively if they chose to interview virtually when in-person interviews were also offered; no applicant reported feeling “Not at All Concerned.” Overall, internship applicants’ responses indicate the virtual format substantially reduced financial burdens and improved accessibility (Table 7). In contrast, this format most hindered their ability to “get a feel” for the city as shown in the below table.

Table 7. *Virtual Interviewing & Impact on Quality of Life Variables: Internship Applicants*

To what extent did the virtual format... where 1 = not at all, 5 = substantially (n = 36)	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Reduce financial burden	1.00	5.00	4.86	5.00	0.67
Reduce stress	1.00	5.00	3.81	4.00	0.97

Improve quality of life	1.00	5.00	3.89	4.00	0.99
Improve accessibility	1.00	5.00	4.67	5.00	0.78
Hinder your ability to connect with faculty members at the site	1.00	4.00	2.50	3.00	0.99
Hinder your ability to connect with trainees at the site	1.00	5.00	2.58	2.00	1.26
Hinder your ability to "get a feel" for the program culture	1.00	5.00	2.86	3.00	1.18
Hinder your ability to "get a feel" for the site	1.00	5.00	2.86	3.00	1.23
Hinder your ability to "get a feel" for the city	1.00	5.00	3.86	4.00	1.29

Most trainees preferred virtual interview days that are four to six hours long (63%) and are limited to a single day (82%). The majority stated the optimal start time for virtual interviews was 8:00am-10:00am EST (47%) or 10:00am-12:00pm EST (19%); however, it is worth noting that qualitative feedback suggested early start times can be a disadvantage and may disproportionately impact West Coast trainees. The optimal number of faculty interviews was three (42% of respondents) or four (32% of respondents). When asked about the optimal ratio of faculty members to students for interviews, respondents expressed a preference for one faculty member to one trainee (58%) or two faculty members to one trainee (33%). Over half of trainees (52%) preferred 30 minute interviews and 27% preferred 45 minute interviews.

Internship applicants provided feedback on the types of activities and materials they found most helpful both prior to as well as during the interview day. The below table of pre-interview day materials or activities is sorted in descending order by the number of applicants who found the item “Extremely Helpful.”

Table 8. *Reported Usefulness of Pre-Interview Activities & Materials: Internship Applicants*

Pre-Interview Activities (n = 37)	Not at all helpful	A little helpful	Somewhat helpful	Mostly helpful	Extremely helpful	Not applicable
Personalized interview schedule with meeting links	--	--	--	4	33	--
Name / contact information for a staff member if experience technical difficulties	--	1	--	3	32	1
General interview schedule	--	--	3	6	27	--

Access to electronic training manual, brochure, or website	--	--	4	7	26	--
Electronic meeting invites (e.g., Outlook invites)	2	2	3	5	25	--
Pre-recorded videos of training site	--	3	6	16	11	1
Pre-recorded videos of psychology services at site	1	2	7	11	11	5
Sent e-gift card to purchase food	--	1	1	5	10	20
Mailed site swag (e.g., pens, school supplies) or food	1	6	6	3	7	14
Open houses or informational sessions before or after the interview date	3	4	5	4	6	15
Pre-recorded videos of city	2	6	11	10	4	4
Short practice run-through of video platform with staff member	1	9	4	4	4	15
Mailed paper versions of training manuals or brochures	6	5	6	4	--	16

The following table is sorted in descending order by the number of trainees who found each of the interview day activities or approaches “Extremely Helpful.”

Table 9. *Reported Usefulness of Interview Day Activities & Materials: Internship Applicants*

Interview Day Activities (n = 35)	Not at all helpful	A little helpful	Somewhat helpful	Mostly helpful	Extremely helpful	Not applicable
Meetings with current trainees	--	1	--	2	32	--
Individual interviews (1 trainee / 1 faculty member)	--	--	--	5	29	--
Discussion of diversity, inclusion, advocacy efforts	--	--	1	6	28	--
Presentation on program structure, available	--	--	1	8	26	--

rotations, research opportunities

Overview of interview day schedule	--	1	4	9	21	--
Faculty member introductions	--	2	4	13	16	--
Pre-recorded videos giving overview of each rotation	--	2	6	8	15	4
Meetings with potential research lab members	--	--	--	4	15	16
Pre-recorded tours of training site	--	3	7	10	13	2
Presentation on geographic location / city	--	3	8	11	12	1
Individual interviews with the director of clinical training (DCT)	--	--	5	11	12	6
Pre-recorded tours of psychology services at site	--	4	6	10	11	4
Photos of psychology services at site	--	5	9	9	10	2
Photos of general training site	--	3	9	14	8	1
Faculty group interviews (1 trainee / multiple faculty members)	--	5	6	9	8	6
Unstructured time to meet with faculty members of your choosing	1	9	4	11	4	5
Trainee group interviews (multiple trainees)	3	5	9	3	2	12
Applicant introductions	3	11	12	7	2	--

Trainees reported on their preferred types of breaks during the virtual interview day. Most applicants endorsed ten-minute breaks between events (76%), lunch breaks with interview activity that they can passively attend and keep their camera off (70%), and lunch breaks without any interview activity (68%). The remaining options are displayed in the table below.

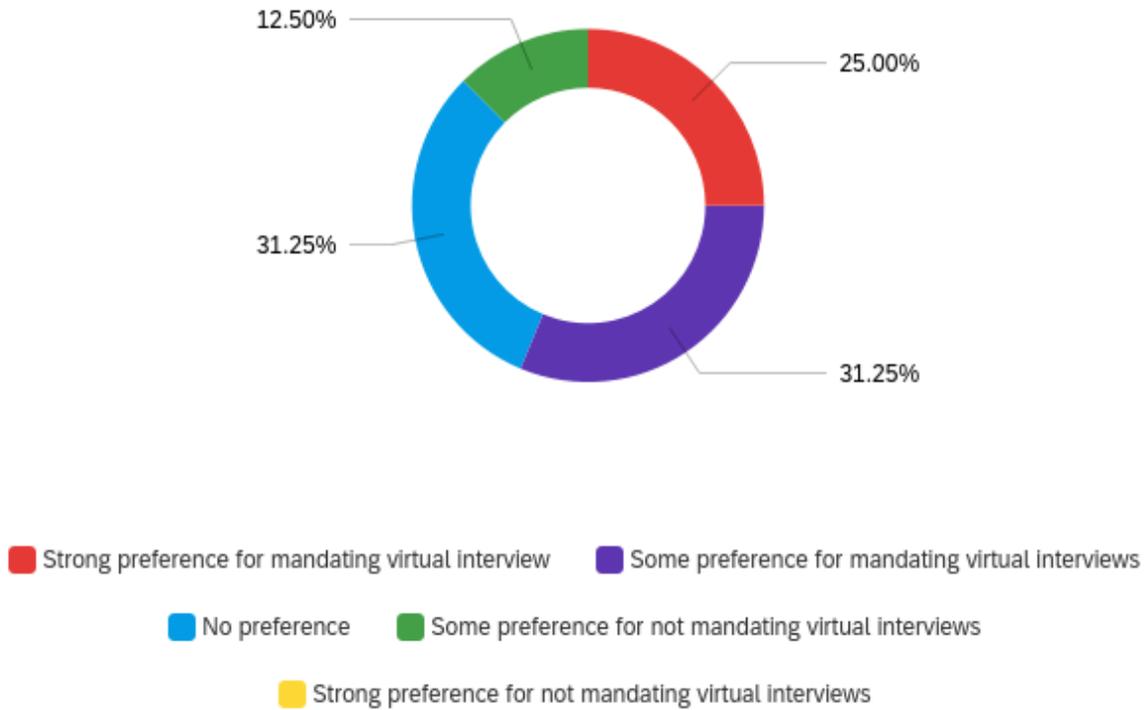
Table 10. *Interview Day Break Time Preferences: Internship Applicants*

Types of Breaks (<i>n</i> = 37)	<i>n</i> (%)
10-minute breaks between events	28 (76%)
Lunch break with interview activity that you can passively attend and keep your camera off	26 (70%)
Lunch break without any interview activity	25 (68%)
15-minute breaks between events	21 (57%)
30-minute break for lunch	19 (51%)
A minimum of 1 break every 2 hours	16 (43%)
60-minute break for lunch	14 (38%)
A minimum of 1 break per hour	9 (24%)
5-minute breaks between events	8 (22%)
30-minute breaks between events	6 (16%)
Over 30-minute breaks between events	2 (5%)
Lunch break with interview activity that requires participation and your camera on	1 (3%)
A minimum of 1 break every 3 hours	--

Post-Doctoral Fellowship Interviews

Pediatric Psychology Trainees applying to post-doctoral fellowships submitted four to six fellowship applications (34.8%; *n*=8), received four to five interview invitations (26%; *n*=8), and received three fellowship offers (34.8%; *n*=8). 16 trainees accepted a fellowship position. Of the pediatric psychology trainees who interviewed for post-doctoral fellowship positions during the 2020-2021 cycle, applicants were “Somewhat” (31.58%) “Mostly”(42.11%) or “Extremely” (26.32%) satisfied with the virtual interview format. Trainees had mixed feelings about virtual interviews during non-pandemic years, with only half of respondents endorsing “Strong” (25%) or “Some” (31.25%) preference for virtual post-doctoral fellowship interviews to continue. Similarly, the majority of trainees had “No” (31.25%), “Some” (31.25%), or a “Strong” (25%)

preference for mandating virtual post-doctoral fellowship interviews. If sites held in-person and virtual interviews, trainees were “Extremely Concerned” (60%) that sites would negatively view them for choosing to interview virtually rather than in-person.



Overall, fellowship applicants’ responses indicate the virtual format substantially reduced financial burdens (Table 11).

Table 11. *Virtual Interviewing & Impact on Quality of Life Variables: Post-Doctoral Applicants*

To what extent did the virtual format... where 1 = not at all, 5 = substantially (n = 16)	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Reduce financial burden	4.00	5.00	4.94	5.00	0.24
Reduce stress	1.00	5.00	3.56	4.00	1.00
Improve quality of life	1.00	5.00	3.56	4.00	1.17
Improve accessibility	2.00	5.00	4.38	5.00	0.99

Hinder your ability to connect with faculty members at the site	1.00	5.00	2.31	2.00	1.04
Hinder your ability to connect with trainees at the site	1.00	5.00	2.25	1.03	1.06
Hinder your ability to "get a feel" for the program culture	1.00	4.00	3.19	3.00	0.88
Hinder your ability to "get a feel" for the site	2.00	4.00	3.25	3.00	0.66
Hinder your ability to "get a feel" for the city	2.00	5.00	3.94	4.00	0.97

Leading up to virtual interviews, trainees found several activities & materials to be helpful. The below table is sorted in descending order of pre-interview activities post-doctoral applicants found “Extremely” helpful.

Table 12. *Reported Usefulness of Pre-Interview Activities & Materials: Post-Doctoral Applicants*

Pre-Interview Activities (n = 16)	Not at all helpful	A little helpful	Somewhat helpful	Mostly helpful	Extremely helpful	Not applicable
Personalized interview schedule with meeting links	--	--	1	1	14	--
Name / contact information for a staff member if experience technical difficulties	--	--	--	2	13	--
Electronic meeting invites (e.g., Outlook invites)	--	--	1	3	12	--
General Interview Schedule	--	--	1	4	12	--
Access to electronic training manual, brochure, or website	--	--	2	5	10	--
Open houses or informational sessions before or after the interview date	--	3	1	2	4	--

The following table is sorted in descending order by the number of trainees who found each of the interview day activities or approaches “Extremely Helpful.”

Table 13. *Reported Usefulness of Interview Day Activities & Materials: Post-Doctoral Applicants*

Interview Day Activities (n = 16)	Not at all helpful	A little helpful	Somewhat helpful	Mostly helpful	Extremely helpful	Not applicable
Individual interviews (1 trainee / 1 faculty member)	--	--	--	3	12	--
Meetings with current trainees	--	--	--	2	12	--
Overview of interview day schedule	--	1	--	3	11	--
Faculty member introductions	--	--	1	3	10	--
Presentation on program structure, available rotations, research opportunities	--	--	--	4	9	--
Discussion of diversity, inclusion, advocacy efforts	--	--	2	4	8	--
Photos of general training site	--	--	2	2	5	--
Individual interviews with the director of clinical training (DCT)	--	--	--	5	4	--
Meetings with potential research lab members	--	--	1	--	4	--
Pre-recorded tours of training site	--	--	2	3	4	--
Photos of psychology services at site	--	--	3	1	3	--
Applicant introductions	1	1	7	2	3	--
Faculty group interviews (1 trainee / multiple faculty members)	1	--	3	5	2	--
Pre-recorded videos giving overview of each rotation	--	1	2	--	2	--

Unstructured time to meet with faculty members of your choosing	--	--	1	2	1	--
Trainee group interviews (multiple trainees)	2	3	1	2	1	--
Presentation on geographic location/city	--	2	2	6	1	--

The majority of trainees preferred virtual interviews that lasted 1 day (76.19%) for 2-4 hours (46.15%) or 4-6 hours (38.46%). The preferred interview start times were 8-10am EST (48.28%). Trainees also preferred to have three or four faculty interviews lasting 30-45 minutes. Majority of trainees also preferred 10-min (60.9%) breaks between interviewing events, as well as a lunch break with no interview activities.

Table 14. *Interview Day Break Time Preferences: Post-Doctoral Applicants*

Types of Breaks (n = 16)	n (%)
10-minute breaks between events	14 (88%)
Lunch break without any interview activity	13 (81%)
30-minute break for lunch	8 (50%)
Lunch break with interview activity that you can passively attend and keep your camera off	7 (44%)
5-minute breaks between events	6 (38%)
15-minute breaks between events	6 (38%)
A minimum of 1 break per hour	5 (31%)
A minimum of 1 break every 2 hours	4 (25%)
60-minute break for lunch	4 (25%)
30-minute breaks between events	1 (6%)

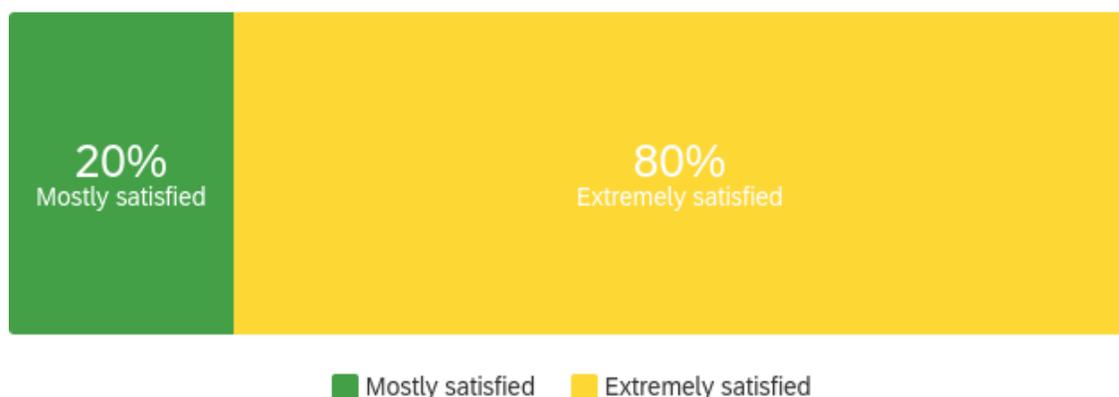
Over 30-minute breaks between events	--
A minimum of 1 break every 3 hours	--
Lunch break with interview activity that requires participation and your camera on	--

Application Outcomes Across Training Levels

Graduate School Applicants

On average, graduate school applicants applied to 10.64 graduate programs with a range from 6 to 22 programs, were invited to 4.35 graduate program interviews with a range from 1 to 11 programs, and interviewed at 4.21 graduate program interviews with a range from 1 to 10 programs. Of those that applied, 71% were given an offer to a graduate program and on average applicants were given two graduate program offers. Of those given offers, all accepted a graduate program offer in a PhD program, with 82% attending Clinical Psychology PhD programs, 9% School Psychology PhD programs, and 9% attending an Other or Not Listed PhD programs. The graduate program applicants are attending programs with tracks or emphasis in pediatric psychology (44%), child psychology (33%), health psychology (11%), other or not listed (6%), and generalist/not applicable tracks (6%). The majority (80%) of applicants accepting graduate program offers reported being “Extremely Satisfied” and 20% reporting being “Mostly Satisfied” with the program they are attending. Of those who did not receive an offer, 100% planned on reapplying in the future.

How satisfied are you with the program you will be attending?

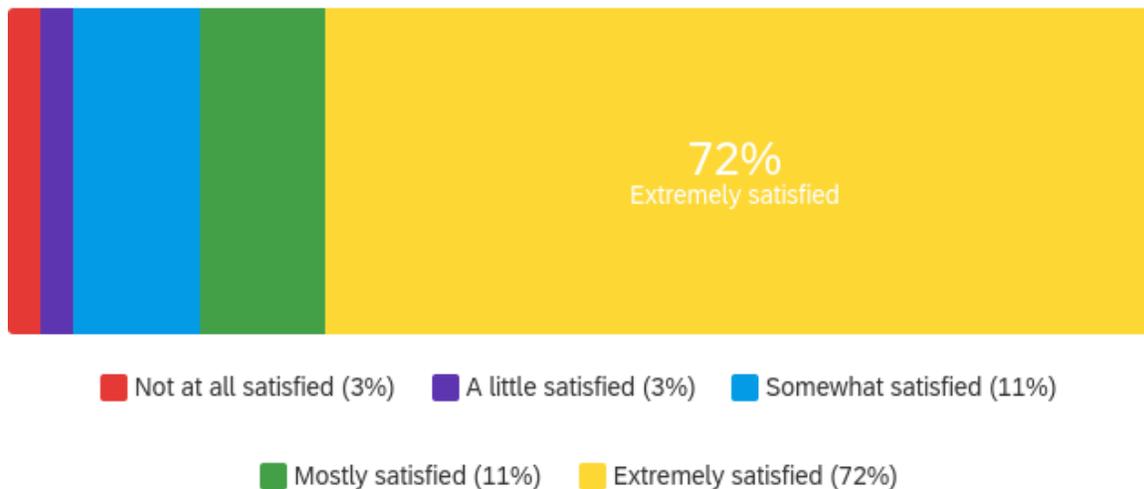


Pre-Doctoral Internship Applicants

On average, graduate students applied to 16 internship sites with a range from 11 to 30 programs, were invited to 9.46 internship interviews with a range from 2 to 18 sites, and

interviewed at 9.33 internship sites with a range from 2 to 17 sites. All applicants matched with an internship program with 91.67% matching in the first round and 8.33 matching in the second round. Over half (54.28%) matched with their top ranked site and 28.57% matched with their second ranked site, with a range from 1 to 9. The majority (72.22%) of internship applicants were “Extremely Satisfied”, 11.11% were “Mostly Satisfied”, 11.11% were “Somewhat Satisfied”, 2.77% were “A Little Satisfied”, and 2.77% were “Not At All Satisfied” with their internship program.

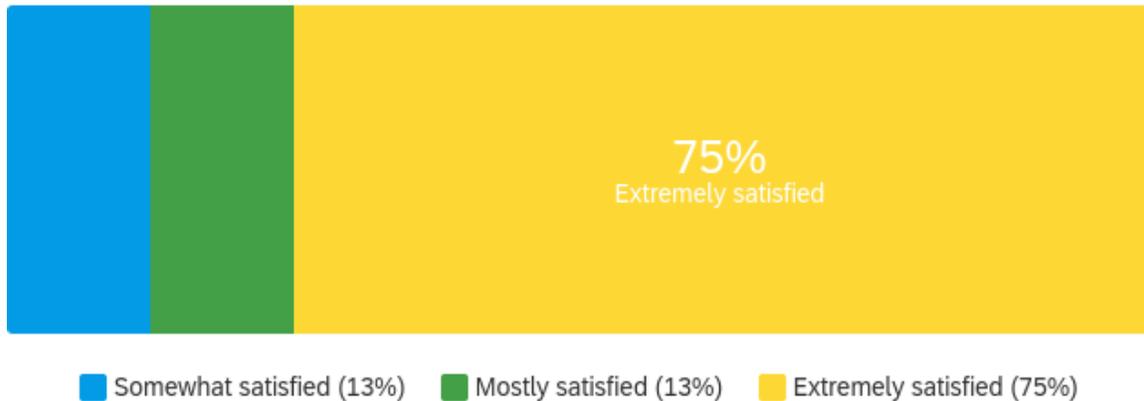
How satisfied are you with the internship you matched at?



Post-Doctoral Fellowship Applicants

On average, trainees applied to 6.31 fellowship programs with a range from 2 to 14 programs, were invited to 5.38 fellowship interviews with a range from 2 to 10 sites, and interviewed at 5 fellowship programs with a range from 2 to 9 sites. All applicants were given and accepted an offer from a fellowship program with an average of 2.53 offers to each applicant. The majority (75%) of fellowship applicants were “Extremely Satisfied”, 12.5% were “Mostly Satisfied”, and 12.5% “Somewhat Satisfied” with their fellowship program.

How satisfied are you with your fellowship position?



Costs & Benefits of Virtual Interviewing: Qualitative Feedback

Reflecting on the 2020-2021 virtual application cycle, trainees reported both advantages and disadvantages to virtual interviewing through open-ended prompts at the end of the survey. Across training levels, four major themes emerged from this qualitative data regarding the advantages of virtual interviewing. These themes included: 1) reduction in financial burden; 2) accessibility; 3) equity; and 4) comfort. Most notably, trainees reported a significant reduction in financial strain because of the virtual interviewing format. Not only did trainees not have to budget for travel, lodging, and meals for each interview, many described a reduction in school and/or work-related absences which indirectly reduced costs. Moreover, the reduction in time spent traveling allowed for increased accessibility. Trainees reported being able to attend more interviews than originally planned. Trainees also described increased feelings of equity because of the virtual interviewing format. Applicants with dependents at home, individuals with disabilities and/or chronic health conditions, and those with limited financial means were able to attend interviews safely from their homes. Similarly, many trainees endorsed an increased sense of solace that resulted from being able to complete interviews from their home. Building in time for self-care with pets and partners, as well as the ability to integrate breaks throughout the interview days helped some applicants manage any associated interview-specific anxiety.

While all trainees described numerous benefits of virtual interviewing, many trainees also identified disadvantages and potential areas of improvements. Four major themes emerged in relation to the limitations of virtual interviews: 1) diminished opportunities to experience sites/cities; 2) lack of standardization across sites; 3) feelings of disconnect; and 4) issues around technology use and exhaustion. The most frequently described disadvantage of virtual interviewing was the limited opportunity to get a “feel” for the training institution and location. Many applicants reported concerns with accepting offers or highly ranking sites in locations they have not visited in person. Some sites did offer video tours of sites/cities which aided in addressing this gap, however, trainees reported wide variability with regards to interviewing formatting and supplemental material. This leads to the issue of standardization between sites, of

the lack thereof. It appears that some sites provided supplemental materials (e.g., pre-recorded site videos, individualized interview day schedules with meeting links, lunch vouchers, etc.), as well as additional programming (e.g., pre-interview student socials, lunchtime programming, etc.), whereas others may have only conducted interviews with little integration of innovative dissemination of materials and programming to round out trainee interviewing experiences. On that note, many trainees reported favoring sites who appeared more organized, as well as those who showed thoughtful effort to optimize trainee experience when adapting their scheduling to accommodate the change to virtual interviewing. This included consideration of the variability in interviewee time zone when developing interview day schedules. These trainees reported more favorable feelings towards these particular sites and their assessment of the overall culture, attributing it to the site's focus on optimizing trainee needs and quality of life. Standardization of materials and interview programming may also increase equity across training sites, particularly for those sites who do not have the budgets to provide additional materials and programming for interviewees. Applicants also reported feeling disconnected from faculty and current trainees due to the virtual format. Further, many trainees described limited opportunities to observe informal faculty/students' interactions, which they reported using as a proxy to assess the overall culture and supportiveness of the training program. Even in the presence of social or informal gatherings, large meeting sizes made it difficult for applicants to feel comfortable to speak up and have more personal conversations. Lastly, trainees endorsed a wide range of issues with technology. This ranged from "Zoom fatigue" to issues with internet connectivity to a lack of scheduled breaks for trainees to reset between interviews. Moreover, many trainees described frustration with more non-traditional video conferencing platforms (e.g., Microsoft Teams) that resulted in increased video lags and subsequent awkward interview experiences. Many of these issues can be addressed by specialty-wide standardization of interviewing practices.

Future Directions

Based on these findings, several actions could be taken to further improve the application and interviewing experience for pediatric psychology trainees. Given the significant reduction of financial burden and the associated increased accessibility, an overwhelming support for virtual interviewing was voiced by trainees across the educational spectrum. Improvements for future application cycles should focus on efforts to increase standardization of interview formatting across institutions. Moreover, small group programming to optimize networking, such as a student social the night before interviews and informational sessions with faculty and students on interview day, should be utilized to increase trainees' feel for the program, institution, and culture. Likewise, innovative approaches to address the lack of in-person visitation should be addressed. Some trainees proposed institutions holding non-evaluative in-person open houses after sites have finalized and submitted offers/rank lists but prior to applicants accepting offers/submitting rank lists to allow applicants to visit their top sites and make informed, well-rounded decisions. While this idea may address the issue concerning lack of opportunities to access the "feel" of a particular site, it may also decrease equity and accessibility for applicants

who are unable to attend these in-person post-interview open houses due to financial or schedule-related restrictions. Nonetheless, the 2020-2021 application cycle has proved to be a success for pediatric psychology trainees by increasing equity and inclusion while simultaneously reducing stress and burden across many domains of life. The upcoming application cycle presents institutions and training faculty with the opportunity to maximize equity and better serve pediatric psychology trainees across the education continuum.