

Illustrating Life at Mount Sinai as a Psychiatry Resident PGY-3



Brenda Ratemo, MD

My Background

Hello there, fellow Psychiatry lovers—my name is Brenda. I am 3rd year resident at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Psychiatry Residency Program. I grew up in Nairobi, Kenya and moved to the United States for college and medical school. After receiving a B.S. in Natural Science from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, I went on to the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth University. A road rich with experiences and training has brought me to Mount Sinai.

Why I Chose Mount Sinai

I knew that I wanted to come to New York City for the broadest exposure to different pathologies in psychiatry. To this day, I am still in awe as to the many presentations of illness that I have the opportunity to encounter. I also could not resist the allure, vibrancy, energy, plethora of things to do, and the ability to not need a car. For all these reasons, the city fit, and Mount Sinai even more so. I have been able to customize my experiences to fit my specific interests in global mental health and explore my curiosities in other aspects of psychiatry. I was able to do an elective performing psychiatric evaluations of asylum seekers in the U.S., and have further plans to travel to Dilley

Family Detention Center in Texas to work with CARA Family *pro bono* staff to gain more exposure to detainees' experiences.

It is indeed a privilege to work with and have access to smart, innovative clinicians and researchers in the field. I have fantastic co-residents who inspire me to learn more and importantly, an administration that is very responsive to our feedback to make our experiences as robust as possible.

My Schedule and Life as a Third-Year Resident

Third year of residency, I feel, is the prime training year to put together one's knowledge and experience to form one's future professional self. We are allotted tremendous flexibility to each pursue our respective interests. I, for one, will begin to pursue further training this fall at the renowned New York Psychoanalytic Society and Institute, which also happens to be an affiliate of Mount Sinai. This year, I was delighted to get my own office, which I decorated to my liking; after all this time, having a professional space to call one's own is a substantial validation! As for my schedule, my day begins with the gym and breakfast before getting to work by 8:30am. I take 30 min to review my schedule and do some administrative work before I start to see my first patient at 9am. In addition to my adult caseload, I have a different clinic three afternoons each week: Child, Geriatrics, and Continuing Day Treatment Program. The rest of my day is spent seeing patients, going to numerous weekly supervisions for psychopharmacology and psychotherapy (CBT, DBT, psychodynamics, family, etc.), or working on an elective interest. Thursdays are fully dedicated to didactics. I am currently taking a Family Therapy elective, and I am working with a weekly couple's case. My day ends around 5pm, after which I go home or hang out with friends. Additionally, I get the opportunity to schedule my vacation as I see fit, such that I travel back to Kenya every year. Psychiatry is a very exciting, burgeoning field, and being at Mount Sinai has enabled me to actively experience its growth and potential.