

NOVEMBER 2019

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WEDNESDAY  
**MAY 22**

## PEDIATRIC PSYCHIATRY RESIDENTS BRING MEDICAL PERSPECTIVE TO CLINIC STUDENTS

**May 22, 2013**

Dr. Ademola Bello visited the Children’s Advocacy Clinic (CAC) recently to share his perspective on medicine and treatment options for clinic clients, all of whom are children in the dependency system or children who are the subject of custody litigation. His visit is part of a recent CAC expansion to include pediatric psychiatry fellows as part of the Clinic, comprised of graduate-level social work students and law students.

Dr. Bello was invited to share his clinical perspective on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD), two common results of childhood abuse and neglect. Trained in adult psychiatry, Dr. Bello is completing a two-year fellowship in pediatric psychiatry at the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center.



Soft-spoken and relaxed, Dr. Bello began by encouraging law students to ask questions at any time. He started with a rundown of the different types of PTSD. One law student raised her hand. “That sounds just like something one of my clients is doing,” she said, describing how the client experienced an act of violence last year. “She’s reliving this over and over again.”

Dr. Bello cautioned that he would not want to diagnose someone without a meeting but that the clinic students should follow up on psychological care for the child. Dr. Bello explained the treatment options from his perspective. “We can treat psychologically, with talk therapy. We can treat socially, which is the trickiest one for us—things like getting the child out of an abusive home because there are only so

many state dollars to work with and so many foster homes—and we can treat medically or biologically with medication.”

The discussion then turned to the elements of RAD, characterized by a child who is unable to form a normal bond with an adult. Dr. Bello explained that children can suffer from both PTSD and RAD at the same time.

Law student Marta Rifin found the presentation helpful for her professional development. “As an attorney, I’ll be expected to provide not only legal counsel but also general advice that may be important to a client. The interdisciplinary nature of the clinic definitely provides us with the opportunity to touch on topics that we may have never considered as relevant and pertinent outside of the classroom.”

**A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH**

Founded in 2006 under the direction of Professor Lucy Johnston-Walsh, the Children's Advocacy Clinic provides students with access to faculty members from across Penn State University, including the disciplines of medicine, psychology, sociology, and education — to address legal and non-legal issues associated with their clients. Children are represented by both a law student and a graduate social work student who use a team approach to address each child's needs.

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