

Rostock Internship comments

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I had a wonderful time completing my Turing Scheme placement at the forensic psychiatric clinic of the Universitätsmedizin Rostock, in Germany. This experience offered insights into both research and practice within a clinical setting.

For the research aspect, I got involved in the PART-Beirat and worked on updating training materials for patients wanting to join the participatory research board. My highlight was observing participatory research meetings, as these gave me insight into the practicalities of involving patients in research and allowed me to directly engage with patients outside of a therapeutic setting. It has to be mentioned here, that I found myself in the very privileged position of being half German and understanding the language. I hope to carry this commitment to involving people with lived experience forward within my professional development.

Another highlight were the English conversation classes my fellow intern Joanna organised. We had three engaging sessions with patients, where we discussed everything from the differences between the German and English prison systems, to German culture (mostly Techno and Schlager), to deep philosophical topics. The patients were incredibly open and willing to share insights into their personal lives, experiences and aspirations. These insights were incredibly impactful and I am grateful to the patients for trusting us enough to share these with us.

I furthermore gained insight into the multidisciplinary nature of forensic psychiatric care. I had several opportunities to meet with a range of professionals (psychologists, medical doctors, social workers, nurses, probation workers, etc.) to gain insight into their work. Having just graduated university, this was incredibly valuable to deciding my future career path. I additionally had the opportunity to join occupational therapy sessions in the clinic, namely sports and cooking. This was another great opportunity to engage with patients, and gave me insight into what their daily life at the clinic looks like.

I am incredibly grateful to everyone involved for making this experience possible and for being so welcoming. This experience has been truly rewarding and I am grateful to have had this opportunity.

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During my time at the Clinic for Forensic Psychiatry in Rostock, I had an unforgettable and eye-opening experience. From the first day, I was met with warmth and positivity from both staff and patients, which created a welcoming atmosphere. I enjoyed learning about the different roles that contribute to the smooth running of the clinic and appreciated the opportunity to ask questions of professionals whose insights will guide my future career and PhD plans. I was also able to gain valuable experience about the realities of working in a research environment, working with empirical data to construct a systematic review.

One of the highlights of my stay was arranging conversation classes with English-speaking patients. These sessions not only gave me a window into their daily lives and experiences at the clinic but also allowed me to get to know them personally and learn about their aspirations. The patients were open, friendly, and engaging, and I had some deep, memorable conversations that I will carry with me.

I also took part in a range of therapies, including sports, arts and occupational therapy, which gave me a better understanding of what daily life looks like for patients. This internship was an invaluable opportunity to see forensic psychiatry in practice and to experience firsthand how a respectful, inclusive approach can make a real difference in patients' lives.