

Meet My Team

Fresno Mental Health Training Program

Associate Post Masters Mental Health Fellowship Bios



Sarah Esparza, LMFT
Training Director

Hi there! My name is Sara Esparza, LMFT and am delighted to be the training director for the Post Master's program in Fresno. I previously worked as the assistant Program Director and Behavioral Manager 1 for BMS and ON call. I am a licensed marriage and family therapist who has been practicing in the Central Valley for the past 12 years.

I am also one of the primary supervisors for the training program I. I truly believe that mental health is key to our overall health and quality of life.

Taking care of our emotional being assists in maintaining our physical being. Roles and Responsibilities As a therapist I aim to help my patients achieve their best quality of emotional life. That looks different for everyone, and the journey is finding each individual's emotional health. I practice using techniques from a number of different theories, including cognitive behavioral therapy, EMDR, and psychodynamic theory. I genuinely enjoy walking alongside my patients in their journey.



**Michael A Nunes, LCSW
Addiction Medicine and
Recovery Services
Behavioral Manager II**

My name is Michael Nunes. I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and have been licensed since 1997. I have worked at Kaiser Permanente since 1997. See below for information regarding my education, training, and experience.

I received my Master of Social Work in 1994 from California State University, Fresno. I have an advance certification form the worldrenowned Albert Ellis Institute in New York, and from Christine Padesky, Ph.D. in Cognitive Therapy through the Center for Cognitive Therapy in Huntington Beach California. I am an Associate Fellow with the Institute and certified to practice rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). In addition, training in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Motivational Interviewing, substance abuse treatment, eating disorders, and couples' therapy. This is only a partial list of my continued education.

I have been a licensed clinical social worder since 1997 and have been at Kaiser Permanente Addiction Medicine & recovery Services Department and Mental Health Department since 1997. In 2004, I became the Program Director in the Addiction Medicine and Recovering Services. I have worked in private practice since 1995, working with various mental health issues and addictive behaviors. I also taught Cognitive Behavioral Therapy at California State University, Fresno in the Department of Social Work Education from 2001 to 2004.



Sonja Ayerza, LMFT
Addiction Medicine and
Recovery Services Behavioral
Manager I

Hello, my name is Sonja Ayerza. I am a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and have been licensed since 2004.

I have worked at Kaiser Permanente in the Addiction Medicine and Recovery Services (AMRS) department since October 2015 and am currently enjoying my new role as Behavioral Health Manager 1 for AMRS.

My therapy style includes techniques from Humanistic theory, CBT, DBT, MI, and IFS. I am also an EMDR certified therapist. I truly enjoy being one of the supervisors for the Post Master's Program.

It is an honor to walk alongside my patients on their journey to sobriety. I meet my patient's where they are and provide a safe place for them to learn and try new responses to life's stressors.