

Growing up in a rural community has equipped in me the desire to discover accessible, available, and affordable mental health care for residents. Mental illnesses are common in both urban and rural towns, but services are much more difficult to find in smaller populations. Ketchikan has done significant progress in implementing counseling programs in schools and throughout the community. Although, there are still many teens that are afraid to seek help due to stigmas about therapy. The fear of opening up and being vulnerable still lingers.

I want to pursue a master's or doctorate in psychology and become a mental health counselor for teens and young adults. I hope to specialize in Anxiety and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). These two mental disorders currently impact many teens and adults. The effects of COVID-19 have been detrimental to teens. Anxiety is influencing kids at younger ages, and affecting their learning abilities. I want to get rid of the stigma surrounding anxiety and mental disorders.

Another reason for pursuing a degree in this field is that I have had experience in dealing with a mental disorder. I have struggled with stressors in my life that have caused me a lot of anxiety. Once I received therapy, I was able to use tools to help me manage my anxiety. I believe that having been to a counselor, I will be someone that can relate to teens struggling with making the first steps to seeking treatment.

After college, I hope to open up a private practice in Ketchikan. The expense of hiring a therapist is why many people don't attend therapy. My business will provide resources at a reasonable price. I plan to hire psychologists from diverse backgrounds and various ethnic groups. Currently, the field of psychology has very little representation of races other than caucasian. I will seek employees who specialize in various disorders, so the community is properly supported.

In Ketchikan, we are extremely fortunate to have access to mental healthcare, but in more secluded areas people are extremely limited in their treatment plans. They either have to come over by boat or participate in online sessions. This can cause them to be less likely to seek care, and overall disregard their health. I will be an advocate for travel grants and better accessible healthcare. I hope to discover ways to entice counselors to remain on these islands permanently, so the residents can receive direct care.

In my community I have seen there isn't an emphasis on the importance of mental health. I hope that as a counselor, I could develop some programs that implement mental health education into classrooms and facilities. At a young age, it's critical for kids to know how to take care of their mental wellbeing. I believe this will help reduce the stigmas surrounding mental disorders such as anxiety and depression.

Unfortunately, in today's world, races and various ethnic groups still experience racial discrimination on many different levels. Sometimes these individuals have negative experiences when seeking counseling. These confrontations with racial discrimination and inequity can lead to detrimental effects on mental health. Racial inequality, medical under service, and social exclusion have proven to lead to premature illness and psychological stress.

Bias and a lack of multicultural competency have created mistrust between a patient and the psychologist. Incorrect treatment is the result of this. I desire to open up an affordable practice that is welcoming to all colors and ethnicities. My employees will know how to correctly recognize symptoms and provide culturally sensitive care. I will make certain I understand how to use family and cultural values into each of my client's treatment processes. It's significant for groups like Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to recognize that their values are important, and that they don't need to assimilate into "American culture."

As a business I will integrate beliefs, practices, and cultural backgrounds into my clientele's treatment plans. As counselors we must respect our patients and develop trust. We need to be skilled to understand and relate to our patients. I will make certain my business provides the best support and care for my clients. Even today, groups look down upon other races. This has damaged the mindset and wellbeing of our young and old. As a counselor, I will be someone that works to discover ways to help minorities be able to recover from these certain situations. I want to make a positive impact in the lives of my patients.