

DECEMBER 2020

THE PARAPHRASE

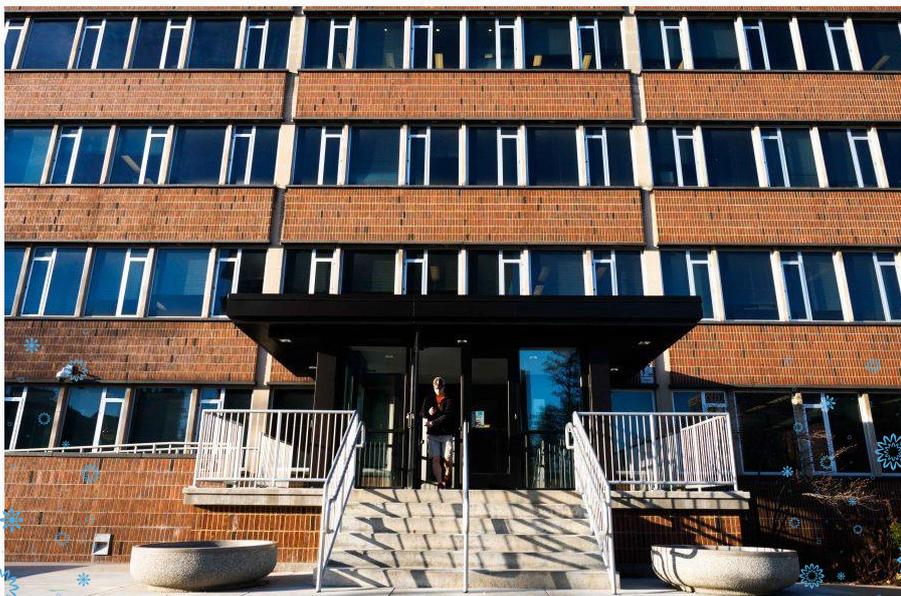
Official Newsletter of The University of Illinois
Counseling Center Paraprofessional Program



Introduction

BY DEAVIONNE CARPENTER

Greetings all, welcome back! We hope you all had an amazing Thanksgiving. For this edition of our Counseling Center Newsletter, you will be introduced to a few people from our current staff and alumni CCPs. As we come to an end of our first semester of the 2020-2021 school year, the Alumni and Paraphrase team wants to wish you all good luck on your finals and we hope you all enjoy your break! Happy Holidays, and stay warm!



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Alumni Spotlight

BY SHWETA GOVILKAR

What did you major in for undergrad and what do you do now?

I transferred to UIUC from Loyola my Junior year as a psychology major and did my concentration in clinical/community. One of the things I loved about UIUC were its concentration program and other things like CCP that really helped me further my education. Currently I am a graduate student at Roosevelt University, getting my master's in clinical mental health counseling and I also work at ComPsych in which I do intake sessions to match people with appropriate mental health counseling services.

Rachel Michalski



Why did you join CCP and how did you find out about it?

As a transfer student, I had to take one of the intro classes with my advisor and other transfer students. In that class, a CCP representative came in and talked about the program and I was immediately drawn to it. I knew I didn't want to take just psych theory classes my entire undergrad but rather gain some more hands-on experience. After finding out about the CCP program, I was hooked because it was exactly what I was looking for. I was especially drawn to it because I always knew I wanted to go to grad school and being a CCP was something that could help me get there.

What was your favorite part of being CCP?

I really enjoyed working with someone else in the program that I did not really talk to that much before. We did a workshop on healthy relationships, a topic we were both really passionate about and ended up harboring a pretty decent crowd. It was nice to work with someone new and I think we learned a lot from each other.





Alumni Spotlight Continued...



BY SHWETA GOVILKAR

What skills did you gain from the CCP program?

Something that the instructors intentionally taught first, and something I didn't realize would stick with me as much as it did was power dynamics. Whether it be as a facilitator, counselor, or getting intake you really do have the power to make or break someone's experience. This later dictates their openness to get help and speak to someone and so being able to check yourself on that is really important. There are going to be times when you are around different cultures, different identities; so, you need to be able to humble yourself and realize they are coming from a place that you don't know about especially if you are from a majority group. While they may see you as the expert in the room as a mental health professional, they are the expert on the experience. In addition to this, learning how to co-facilitate, it definitely can be challenging. Whether you are more on the shy side or like to take control, grappling with that on both sides can be difficult. You have to learn to trust the other person and understand that they care about the topic as much as you do. Lastly, while this isn't a skill, I really learned a lot from the counselors from the project teams I was on. I was on trauma outreach as well as cognitive and psychiatric disorders which gave me first-hand experience with mental health professionals which I felt was really unique to the program.

What were some of the professional goals that the CCP program helped you achieve?

What definitely benefitted me was learning all the different paths you can take and how many different licensures there are and what you can do with each one. This is also what helped me realize that although I love research, it is not a main priority I want in my career. I also want to be able to have my own family, so doing a masters just made in sense in regard to achieving a work-life balance that I enjoy and feel nurtured by.

How was it adjusting from undergrad to grad school? Do you have any advice?

Honestly being in the CCP program prepared me really well because I was already in separate teams, had practice with working relationships, meetings outside of class, etc. I learned how to time manage efficiently because now as a grad student who works full time most of my days Monday- Friday are 12-hour workdays. A key thing to remember is to prioritize self-care, even 'basic' things like making sure you have good food that will energize you is so important.





Counseling Center Staff Spotlight

BY LUCY ROSE BYRNE

Kathy Wierzchowski

(she, her, hers)



-Clinical Counselor

-Ph.D. Counseling Psychology, Purdue University

-Licensed Clinical Psychologist, State of Illinois

What are your roles and responsibilities at the Counseling Center (CC)?

I'm a clinical counselor at the CC, so most of my roles and responsibilities fall under a generalist practitioner umbrella. The great thing about this is that it means I get to do a little bit of everything! I see clients for individual counseling, co-lead two groups (a general therapy process group and the Graduate Women's process group), work with our CPDT team on assessment procedures, and do a ton of outreach. It has been a lot of fun to be involved in outreach, like In Focus, the Perfectionism Workshops, RIO, and the IHW team. Besides these direct services, I am also involved with the Media Communications team and the In-Reach committee. A final aspect of my role involves supervision of trainees, so I have had the pleasure of serving as a supervisor for one of our practicum students this year as well as the providing supervision of group to one of our pre-doctoral interns.





Counseling Center Staff Spotlight Continued

BY LUCY ROSE BYRNE

What is your professional journey? What is your proudest accomplishment?

For as long as I can remember, I always knew that I wanted a job that would let me work with people in some capacity. For a while, I thought this meant that I should be some sort of medical doctor, but in college I realized how much I enjoyed my Psychology classes. After declaring a major in Psychology at Marquette University, I decided to stay at MU and pursue a master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Through participating in research and a practicum at a mental health outpatient hospital, I realized that there were so many populations I was interested in learning how to work with and that there were many experiences that I still wanted to have before I entered the "real world." That led me to pursue my doctorate in Counseling Psychology at Purdue University. After various practica and other experiences, I completed my doctoral internship at Grand Valley State University, graduated in 2019, and completed a postdoctoral resident at UW-Madison during the 2019-2020 academic year. I think one of the things I am proudest of is my dissertation. It took several years to pick a topic and learn everything about it, but in the end, it ended up being a surprising project with some awesome results! What's even more wonderful about it is that it has encouraged me to keep up with the scientist/researcher part of my professional identity, so I have continued to work on research projects with colleagues and present at conferences on my dissertation topic. What are your goals for the future? What are you passionate about? What is the most rewarding part of your job? Moving forward, I think first and foremost I want to continue to adjust to being a full-time staff member. I have spent so many years in grad school that now I'm adjusting to not being a student anymore! I have really enjoyed my time as a counselor at U of I so far, so I think the big next step is to get licensed. Both clinical assessment and career counseling are huge passions and expertise areas of mind, so I would love to have an opportunity to include them a bit more in my work. I need to keep exploring options, but I might consider collaborating with other offices on campus or even getting involved part-time with private practice in the future in order to continue to use these skills. Down the line, I could also see myself getting more involved with administration or leadership in the CC as well. Although I have worked hard to get to where I am now, I could see how as things continue to change in the work of psychology and college mental health, new opportunities and formats of providing services could arise, leading to new professional opportunities, and that is very exciting to consider.





Counseling Center Staff Spotlight Continued

BY LUCY ROSE BYRNE

What are your goals for the future?

Building a life here in C-U and getting connected with the community. What are you passionate about? My family and friends, working toward social justice, community, live music, good food.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

Knowing that what we do makes a difference in people's lives. We help them, and we help our community, because the people we help go on to contribute to our community and our world.

What do you wish every student knew about the CC?

How dedicated and talented the staff is. That we are frustrated by the limitations of Covid as well. Any words of advice to current CCPs? Keep doing what you are doing, you have made a great choice to be a CCP. You are starting in the right place—I started my career with an undergraduate programming position. Get involved and make sure you have a variety of experiences.

Upcoming Events

BY DEAVIONNE CARPENTER



Daily Mindfulness Drop in Workshops:

- Monday, December 14th 2020: 4:15PM-4:45PM
- Tuesday, December 15th 2020: 4:15PM-4:45PM
- Wednesday, December 16th 2020: 4:15PM-4:45PM
- Thursday, December 17th 2020: 4:15PM-4:45PM
- Friday, December 18th 2020: 4:15PM-4:45PM



Expressive Arts Online Drop-In Workshop:

- Monday, December 14th 2020: 3:00PM-4:00PM

Sit with Sankofa:

- Thursday, December 17th 2020: 4:00PM

