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Consulation With A Professional

For my interview with a Mental Health Professional I interviewed my school counselor Eryn Kjelland. She is specified in holistic approaches to train in many methods. Eryn attended the University of Wisconsin-Platteville and received a master's degree in the field of Psychology. While Eryn was in college she served as a LPCC (Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor) intern to experience what it is like to be a mental health clinician. Now she is a school counselor at Alameda Community Learning Center and also a mental health clinician on her own time. One of the first questions that I had asked her was " Why did you choose your particular fields in Psychology?", she told me that when she was in school she enjoyed learning about it and have always had in interest in being able to help others and was mainly just interested in the field of psychology.

When I was interviewing Eryn I wanted to know what is the first things she looks for or asks when meeting with a new patient. She responded by saying " Why they came and the problem that they are having". Also that her approach is different when she is either working with a child or an adult. So then I asked " How does speaking with a minor differ from speaking with an adult?", she said that for a minor it is more of a private practice meeting and when she is working with a child in school it isn't as private. When she is working with a child she likes for

them to have fun activities by letting them draw and/or play with toys. As for an adult the vocab usage is different and the techniques that are performed are different.

I then took it a step further to be able to understand what goes through her own mind when she was becoming a mental health clinician. The first thing that I asked was “What was your inspiration to be a clinician?, What keeps you motivated to stay in the mental health field?”. She had responded by saying that she is fascinated about the field of psychology and that also how many people are shaped into different ways but most importantly that she want’s to be able to help people with their problems so that they can get their life back on track. I then asked Eryn “Does hearing the problems that patients have affect you in a way?”, she said that she tries to separate herself from the dramatic events she hears so that it doesn’t stick with her. Since it didn’t really affect her I then asked “Have you ever considered changing fields?”, whether if it was from your job or you had another interest. She said that she has because of the low pay in this area.

For the questions I thought of, I wanted to know more about how she wanted to be this type of person and how she handles her patients. The question that I asked her was “Did anyone in your life have a disorder that made you want to do what you are doing right now?”. She responded by saying that someone close to her did have a mental illness and that she had also wanted to learn more about the field of psychology. I wanted to know more about the hard stuff that she has to go through with these patients in order for them to receive the help they need. I asked “ How do you handle patients who may be committing suicide?”. The first thing

that she told me that she does is she does a risk assessment to evaluate the potential risk that can be involved and then she said that she calls a police officer to transfer the patient to a facility. After she told me about that I had to ask “What are some of the frustrations that you have encountered during your experience as a mental health provider?”, she responded by saying “the most frustrating thing is that there are insurance companies that will not cover up the pay for the private company and also that families are not willing to support their child so that they can get the help they need”. I know it’s not easy being able to do what she is doing but I wanted to know how challenging being a mental health clinician really is. So then I had asked “What are some of the things you find the most difficult about your career?”. She told me that there are a lot of things that are difficult and that working with children could be one of the toughest, especially about their environment they live in not being stable. Also that when she was an intern it was hard working with mentally ill patients because she didn’t really have that much experience but now she doesn’t have the same feelings as she did when she was beginning as an intern.

After hearing the tough situations that she has to do I wanted to stick on how she treats her patients and the hardest disorder for her to treat. I asked “What is the hardest psychological disorder to treat?”. She said that for her it is sociopathic behaviors because of the lack of empathy that she receives from the patients. It might not be the most challenging for every mental health clinician but for Eryn it was the most difficult even by just how she said it was almost as if it is that hardest thing that she has ever done. I then had asked “What is the most difficult things that she has encountered when working with a patient?” and her response was

similar to the last one about the difficulties about her career which was that children are the most difficult. She said the abuse to children are tough and that the environment they live in is hard to hear about. The last question that I asked Eryn was "What's the most memorable case that affected you in a positive or negative way?". She responded by saying that the most memorable case that she remembers in a negative way was when she was just starting out as a mental health clinician and she was working with a first grader about being sexually abused by their own parent. It even sounded like it disturbed her when she was telling me about this case. So then she told me about a case that affected her in a positive way which was her first year as a counselor at Alameda Community Learning Center when a student gave a graduation speech about how Eryn helped her with her problems that she was going through. It was interesting to hear about the life that she has as a mental health professional and how she helps people to make their lives better.

From doing this assignment I learned a lot on what it's like and what it takes to become a mental health professional. I was also told stories about the patients and how the mental health clinician approaches them and how she treats their disorder. Not to long ago I was thinking about becoming a psychologist when I get older, now I got to understand and listen to the experience about being one. It still sticks with me but when taking this class I learn about the dramatic stories about what these people go through and think of and I look up to my school counselor and other mental health clinicians as heroes as well as everyone one else who is going through problems. Listening to their experiences as when they were helping a patient for their first time it surprised me that they knew that after listening to the terrifying stories that

adults and even children tell them that they still want to be a mental health professional and have these stories stick with them for the rest of their life. I also learned what techniques they use towards children and adults when they are having this serious of a problems and way to approach them. Looking back on my interview there are some areas where I could of asked for more detail when working with patients. Also about her classes and experiences when she was in college. I have never witnessed her in her work of working with a patient but I would love to see how she helps people and how the patient participates during their meeting. I think that this process of a personal reflection is like setting goals for myself. It is a way for achieving goals by helping others when they are having serious problems whether you are a mental health clinician or helping them get the help they need. If I do want to become a mental health clinician I can always look back on this and get the inspiration from Eryn. I look at this experience and think of it as a life changing experience where it can help me get a career out of this because I enjoy learning about this field and learning about personal experiences so that I know what it is like during these situations. At the end of the interview all that topics that we discussed stuck with me in a way where I see how clinicians like Eryn help people by saving their lives and helping them get through life.