

Statement of Purpose

Personal statement of not less than 200 words describing your qualifications and objectives for our program. A description of your clinical and research experiences, as well as memberships in mental health organizations, can be helpful.

I have had a range of academic and extra-curricular experiences that have prepared me to fully benefit from and contribute to the Boston University Mental Health Counseling & Behavioral Medicine program. As a soon-to-be graduate of the Ohio Wesleyan University Psychology Department, I have gained critical thinking skills, abstract reasoning, and an understanding of physiological, emotional, cognitive, and social determinants of behavior. I have taken a range of course work that has aided me in personal development for a future in professional counseling. Furthermore, I interned at RAINN, the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN); I spent my days repeating four powerful words, "you are not alone" to survivors of rape, abuse, and incest through an anonymous sexual assault online hotline. I served as a victim service team member, and I engaged in two-hour crisis intervention sessions with each survivor. During these sessions, I explored feelings of empathy and provided support. I found that a two-hour session was hardly enough time to foster and develop meaningful and beneficial interventions; I desired to help victims in a more in-depth way and to have continued relationships with them. My internship helped me realize that I have a natural ability to understand and actively listen to people.

Additionally, I have been involved in research that is relevant to the way in which survivors make sense of their negative past experiences. While studying abroad in Australia, I conducted research on recovery memory processing. People undergoing psychotherapy have been known to suddenly recover memories that happened to them years ago. Often these events are traumatic and have been suppressed/forgotten by the person. I conducted a three-part experiment consisting of three phases that aimed to demonstrate this effect. Phase I was a list of words, a cue and a target; phase II was a cued-recall test, and phase III was a memory judgement task that asked participants if they remembered recalling the target in the phase II test, but presenting the target with a different cue. The study's aim was to determine whether participants do remember a target word more when the cue is the same in Phase II & III. From the experiment, I concluded people can remember "forgotten memories" when the context of the memory that occurred was the same. My course work, internship, and research experience have solidified my goal of becoming a counselor with a specific interest in mental health counseling.

I am drawn to the Mental Health Counseling & Behavioral Medicine program because of the value it places on personalized academic training, its exceptional clinical training, its CACREP accreditation, and the school's dedication to personal and professional growth of students. Boston University's program will both train me in general counseling approaches and support my development of particular areas of expertise. This integrating framework will shape me as a scholar and clinician, as well as allow me to best support my clients across all dimensions of their experiences. I believe that my strong academic achievements from Ohio Wesleyan University and James Cook University in Australia, as well as my real world experience, have prepared me for a prestigious program in the Mental Health Counseling &

Behavioral Medicine program at Boston University. This program will surely be a transformative experience for me personally and professionally, which will prepare me for a successful career in mental health counseling.

After completing my degree, my goal is to work as a mental health counselor in an academic or community setting. An area of clinical focus that I find myself drawn to, in addition to how best to support survivors of abuse and/or assault, is mental health treatment and intervention in a community setting. I often found that individuals would call RAINN, not to receive support following sexual assault, but rather to seek other forms of mental health support and counseling, which I was not in the position to provide. My research interests are to learn about ways to implement therapeutic interventions and how to maintain an ongoing relationship with my clients. More broadly, my hope is to help individuals develop adaptive behaviors and strategies, regardless of their mental health status and/or past experiences. While not an immediate next step, I anticipate pursuing doctoral studies after several years in the field, in order to refine my skill set. My qualifications include my strong participation and solid listening skills, my ability to lead as well as to collaborate, to critically think, and to fully analyze the issue at hand. I am motivated and committed to the study of mental health counseling and hope to communicate to individuals that “they are not alone.”