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**University of Nevada, Reno
MSW Program Application**

Essay Questions

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ESSAY I:

I've volunteered and worked in the Clark County Nevada Community for 17 years at various non-profit organizations, schools, churches, and charity events. I will continue to do this while being passionate about getting into the MSW in Social Work program at the University of Nevada, Reno. I have implemented behavioral therapy in homes and cultivated healthy parenting techniques for the past four years. I currently work at various non-profit organizations including NAMI Southern Nevada/ as well as take calls on the Warmline for NAMI Western Nevada. I led various support groups from a "Celebrate Recovery" group at a community church, helping individuals toward a life away from unhealthy behaviors to stimulating low serotonin and dopamine levels, to more constructive ones. I also facilitated Peer Recovery Support Groups at NAMI, Southern Nevada. I have witnessed a strong need for parenting tools and mental health resources in Nevada from all my altruistic humanitarian work efforts. As a community leader, I have and will continue to promote illuminating ethnocentric mentalities, while continuing to have the courage to advancement in illuminating stigmas associated with various mental health conditions. I promote evolving mentalities directing the uprising of the synergy; in a dynamic array of cultures, and religious beliefs while implementing healthy behaviors. A strong leader exemplifies these strong ethics, morals, values, and characteristics, as I exude in my daily humanitarian efforts. I have a visual podcast called, "AREYOUADWITHELIZABETHASHTON" where I promote altruistically healthy mindsets. I interview artists, performers, producers, musicians, and humanitarians about re-directing unhealthy

behaviors and mentalities associated with various mental health conditions, to healthier ones. This podcast; I produce, get my interviewees, cast, do makeup/ hair, direct, and act as the host recently made it on IMDb.

I also have a lot of experience as I volunteered in a nursery with children 0-2 years old, at a church organization for seven years devotedly. In addition, volunteered with the homeless for 8 hours weekly at a community church consecutively for two years. They made me an owner of that church due to my dedication, spiritual gifts, and charitable contributions. I witnessed in these various volunteer opportunities, a significant problem here in Nevada with homelessness and parenting flaws, that ultimately can lead to homelessness, mental health conditions, and poverty. I wrote a letter to the Governor of Nevada, pleading for him to promote increasing funding due to this current crisis in our community.

Governor Lombardo,

I am writing this letter out of concern for our community. In the State of Nevada under NRS 433A.0195, if an individual is attempting suicide or homicide, that includes bodily harm to himself or others, including, without limitation, death, unconsciousness, extreme physical pain, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or a protracted loss or impairment of a body part, organ, or mental functioning. This includes serious injury, illness, or death resulting from complete neglect or basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, or personal safety. The individual's qualifications for administering help in an emergency hospitalization of an individual experiencing a mental health crisis in the State of Nevada

under NRS 433A.020 must be selected based on merit as measured by administrative training or experience in mental health programs, including care and treatment of persons in a mental health crisis.

Unfortunately, there have been allegations of "patient dumping" by Rawson-Neal Psychiatric Hospital highlighted in 2016 through Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services. In addition, there has been a crisis of low available bed space, which then is a domino effect of backed-up emergency rooms (Moore, 2018)

I am advocating for more funding to eliminate this issue and, in the long run, help patients recover more effectively and efficiently. This expansive problem speaks close to my heart because a guitar player in the band I met in 2016 moved here to write music with me in 2016 from Huntington Beach, CA. Unfortunately, he suffers from severe paranoia and schizophrenia. I tried on many occasions to get him into a proper facility and stabilize him on the right medication through the care he deserved. However, due to a lack of funding, he did not get the appropriate care he deserved. A long-term facility with proper care would've saved him in his condition. There are so many like this out there on the street. We need to revamp our system of helping with this escalating issue and getting the proper care to individuals with severe mental illness here in Nevada through proper increased government funding.

Overall, this letter has identified the current requirements for emergency hospitalization of an individual experiencing a mental health crisis, the current state of mental

health services in the general community, the available resources for mental health services, and the current state of mental health funding. Based on my collaborative research and speaking from personal experiences, the state of Nevada must increase funding for mental health services. I hope to see more organizations and resources created in Southern Nevada to care for those in need and create a safe place for anyone who may need one. For our community to stay strong and grow stronger, we must cater to those who struggle, especially with mental illness.

Sincerely,

~Elizabeth Ashton Northrup

I have studied the man I mentioned in this letter for eight years now and brought him a meal once a month, every month, and kept tabs on his mental health condition. Just today on July 3, 2024, I checked in to see how he's doing in this extreme heat we are currently facing, as the weather in 110-degree to 120-degree extreme heat warnings. This is a time I worry even more about the homeless, due to the weather which can be extremely deadly and dangerous for the homeless. He told me today he is currently in a shelter and is taking Abilify (5 mg) for his schizophrenia struggles.

I also started a non-profit organization in 2007 called, "Support For Eating Disorders/Stories of Recovery~Liz Ashton". I have charity events and fundraisers for my organization and many other charities and non-profit organizations. I recently filled through the IRS and my non-profit got a tax ID number. I have a passion for helping individuals with

various mental health conditions such as eating disorders, autism, schizophrenia, co-dependency, addiction, bipolar, PTSD, panic attacks, and so forth. I worked at Mannion Middle School as an SPTA, helping children on the spectrum of autism. I saw the desperate need to help parents implement more effective and healthy nurturing techniques, also including all individuals working with children in our community including teachers, coaches, and school helpers. Once I complete my MSW in Social Work, I will continue to be a leader and make a difference in my community. I will continue to help one child and family at a time, like I have been doing as an RBT, and SPTA, and organizing and leading charity events in the community. While working toward my MSW degree at the University of Reno, I will continue to promote turning to healthy outlets to naturally raise serotonin levels. As I addressed in my letter to Governor Joe Lombardo, homelessness stems from mental health conditions and is a current social crisis we are facing here in Clark County, Nevada. I will continue with my humanitarian efforts to help individuals and our community, altruistically, as research exemplifies genetics playing a major role in this current social issue (Sivaramakrishnan, Venkatesan, Paranthaman, Sathianathan, Raghavan, & Pradhan, 2023). When genetic variants of the serotonin transporter gene (5HTTLPR, SLC6A4 intron 2) and receptor gene (5HTR2AT102C) are analyzed in individuals who passed away from suicide, conclusions were made that low serotonin factors of these two variables, played a significant role in mental health (Sivaramakrishnan, Venkatesan, Paranthaman, Sathianathan, Raghavan, & Pradhan, 2023). Not only genetics, but also age, sex, education, occupation, and social status play a part in the complexities associated with suicidal social risks (Sivaramakrishnan, Venkatesan, Paranthaman, Sathianathan, Raghavan, & Pradhan, 2023). This is also a social problem I will continue to address and work on as a humanitarian in

the state of Nevada (Sivaramakrishnan, Venkatesan, Paranthaman, Sathianathan, Raghavan, & Pradhan, 2023).

ESSAY II:

I currently have worked for a non-profit organization called, “Center For Autism & Behavioral Analysis” for the past four years. In this position as an RBT, I go into homes and help implement behavioral therapies given to me from my BCBA, and help teach the parents I help healthier and more effective parenting techniques. I also show them this by example, working one-on-one with my clients (ages 0-21) while implementing ABA therapies and various cognitive behavioral therapy techniques, created by my BCBA. Under my RBT license, I maintain and renew bi-yearly, I follow an extremely strict yet essential code of ethics under the State of Nevada Board of Applied Behavioral Analysis and also keep my certification under the State of Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division. I take this license very seriously, and one of the BCBAs I’ve been under strict supervision under said, “I follow the code of ethics better than any of the other RBT she has ever worked with” (Kristin Dato in my references). Therefore, I will follow the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Work and Mission/Goals that aligns with the University of Nevada, Reno Social Work program. I follow a code of ethics similar to the ethical code in social work while receiving and maintaining my MSW in Social Work at the University of Nevada, Reno.

I plan to open a counseling practice when I complete the MSW program in Social Work at the

University of Nevada, Reno. I have had many cases where I followed the strict supervision of my BCBA, and was granted permission to implement a cognitive behavioral therapy technique I came up with. It is in a reflection journal I created, published, copyrighted, and now sell it Amazon under my author name, Elizabeth Ashton Northrup, where ask a series of questions for 100 days. I implemented this cognitive behavioral therapy technique with clients for four years and saw a dynamic and significant improvement in their behaviors and thoughts. It's a series of questions I ask clients that first validate how they were feeling after a traumatic event or high-conflict situation (1. What did the situation look like?), (2. How were you feeling?), (3. Was this a small or big problem), (4. What were my thoughts, behaviors, and words in reaction?), (5. Next time, how can I change my thoughts, behaviors, and verbal reactions to feel more at peace with myself and that other person).

I work and volunteer at NAMI Southern Nevada and am in charge of their social media; Instagram, Facebook, and X. In addition, I attend community events to promote on social media. I got certified and led Peer Recovery Support Groups, got certified in Suicide prevention, and spoke at The College of Southern Nevada a few times to give an, "Ending the Silence Presentation" to the Asian American community, as well as to refugees from all over the world transitioning to America to students at UNLV. I worked for Mark One Media (MYVEGAS Magazine) over the summer of 2023 to take a break from implementing behavioral therapy. I did a lot of Excel input, advertising, and photography, put together MYVEGAS Magazine charity events, led marketing, and was the director of their VIP (Vegas Professionals) business account.

I have chosen the UNR School of Social Work specifically because my son currently goes there and is working towards his bachelor's in computer programming. His name is Robert

Northrup, and he also serves in the Air National Guard. He has had a magnificent experience so far at UNR and recommended the MSW online program in Social Work to me. I love living in Nevada, and I had an exceptional experience at Nevada State University, UNR felt like the right next step. It's essential to have impeccable professional and social education while working in communities that are in alignment with ethical practices (Munson, 2001). Research has indicated that supervision practices and ethical challenges that are evident in the social work field can cause and create burnout (Munson, 2001). Therefore, it's emphasized to make sure self-care practices are implemented regularly, as well as staying strong in ethical values, and maintaining a concrete moral compass. Quality supervision staying extremely professional at all times, keeping power dynamics in check, function of supervision practice, and continuous safety interventions for social workers should remain accountable for decisions and actions at all times (Munson, 2002). I will continue to implement this as I have done for the past four years under the State Of Nevada Board Of Applied Behavioral Analysis and the State of Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division. My BCBA, under direct supervision for the past four years, said, "Liz, you follow the ethical rules and guidelines better than any other person I've ever worked with". Therefore, I know I will have no problem following the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Work and the mission/goals of the University of Nevada, Reno School of Social Work.

ESSAY III:

On May 22, 2022, I performed at a charity event where 100% of all the funds we raised and given to children in Cebu, Philippines. I helped my music partner Phil get sponsors, funding, a location (at Noypitz, Town Square), fliers, billboards, and create tickets, as we were the directors of this event. This charity event was called, “Music Aid 22”, and all the funds we raised were in correlation with The World Cultural Foundation Inc. and Juanito I King Foundation, Inc. At this point, many people didn’t realize it because I hid my panic attacks and anxiety well, as I am a master at masking my insecurities, which sometimes one has to do as a leader. However, in the field when I’m implementing therapies with my clients it’s a time to show my vulnerabilities since I’ve noticed the right amount of that helps my client relax and feel more comfortable with me and trust me. I’m continuing to work on overcoming my public speaking/singing stage fright, but it seems like each time I face my fears, and participate in these charity events, it gets easier and easier.

On October 14, 2023, I received a humanitarian Award from the City of Las Vegas office of the city council specifically Councilwoman Olivia Diaz and the Las Vegas City Council for my work in the community aiding the immigration reform march. I was awarded this for my, “dedication to advocating for positive change in our community”. In this immigration walk, I gave a speech to the public and also sang the healing music I’ve written that I have published on iHeart Radio, Pandora, Spotify, iTunes, Apple Music, Amazon, and many other music platforms under my artist/singer-songwriter name, Elizabeth Ashton or Liz Ashton. I teach my clients that

I work with as an RBT to write music to express their feelings, as a natural serotonin lifter, and a healthy way to release dopamine. In the immigration speech I gave, I talked about my passion for helping families from all different cultural backgrounds (I helped a family that just migrated here from India), another family I helped was from Asia. Another couple was two moms raising 5 children together as an African American couple (therefore, I help families with different sexual orientations), and many more as an RBT.

ESSAY IV:

Helping families implement therapy in their homes is extremely effective, since my BCBA and I witness how the various family dynamics directly affect the child we are helping. As a team, my BCBA and I come up with therapies as a collaborative effort, and I implement them under the strict supervision of my supervisor. This fundamentally changed how I view various cultures, religious beliefs, and dynamics over the past four years implementing ABA and cognitive behavioral therapies under my RBT license. When I helped the family from India, the mom would force-feed my client rice, stuffing it forcefully down his throat. This alarmed me but then after talking with my BCBA, we also had to integrate cultural differences, and slowly but effectively we helped teach the parents a healthier way of feeding their children. Most effective therapies don't generate lasting change overnight, but lasting changes take place over the years. Patience, ethics, having a moral compass, strong values, being positive, energetic, a good example, and extremely empathetic to various backgrounds are essential characteristics to have and exemplify while working in the career of psychology, and I have all these characteristics.

Helping families from various cultures, religious beliefs, sexual orientations, and complex dynamics significantly impacted me in opening my eyes and rising above any ethnocentric beliefs, and played a part in realizing parenting and child-rearing can vary from home to home. I will continue to exemplify and promote healthier parenting techniques within my community while completing my MSW in Social Work from the University of Nevada, Reno.

Resources

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