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Anna Rakowski, M.S. CCC-SLP



Anna Rakowski, M.S.CCC-SLP, earned her Master of Science in speech-language pathology from St. Xavier University. For the past nine years, she has worked with children of varying ages in a public school setting, as well as adults in a hospital setting. She has experience with students who coped with social and academic difficulties due to a wide range of communication disorders such as autism spectrum disorders, articulation disorders, language delays, apraxia of speech, stuttering, selective mutism, learning disabilities, and many others. Anna has also worked with patients affected by neurogenic disorders such as aphasia and dysarthria, as well as patients with voice and cognitive communication disorders. In addition to being ASHA certified, Anna

also holds a bilingual (Polish) approval through the State of Illinois Board of Education which allows her to provide evaluations and treatment in the Polish language for individuals with communication disorders. Currently, she is providing bilingual and monolingual assessments and treatment for clients ranging from toddlers to adults. In the future, Anna hopes to become a resource for other speech language pathologists and families whose lives are affected by selective mutism especially within the Polish community.

Q & A with Anna

Why did you choose to return to Adventure Camp to be a counselor for the second year?

I learned so much and had such an amazing experience at the Adventure Camp last year that I just knew I wanted to do it again as soon as camp was over last year. There is always more to learn and new campers to help. Having new experiences and working through new challenges will help me improve my skills to be an even better therapist.

What do you hope to take away from your experience at Adventure Camp?

As a speech-language pathologist, I get to work with children and adults who have a wide range of difficulties. Through this experience, I hope to learn more about selective mutism and develop a greater understanding of effective ways to treat it. Gaining new knowledge and firsthand experience will allow me to be a better therapist to my clients who are coping with this condition. I am also hoping to become a resource for other speech language pathologists and families whose lives are affected by selective mutism especially within the Polish community.

What's your favorite part of Adventure Camp? Do you have a favorite memory from last summer?

This is such a hard question to answer, as I have so many memories from last year that were my favorite. If I had to pick one, it would be going to Dairy Queen and seeing all the happy faces after the ice cream orders were placed. It was an unforgettable day, as this was a challenging task for many of the campers. But in the end, everyone got their ice cream!

Would you recommend learning about SM or completing SM training to other speech-language pathologists?

I would definitely recommend learning about selective mutism and participating in selective mutism training to other speech-language pathologists as this condition affects more individuals than it is commonly believed. I feel that selective mutism is very misunderstood, and there is a lot of confusion about how to treat it and who should provide the treatment. Also, the resources available to speech-language pathologists as far as treatment is concerned are very limited. Every speech therapist should learn as much as they can about selective mutism so that they can be more confident and effective when they do come across an individual with this condition.

What do you believe people should know about selective mutism?

I think most importantly people should know that selective mutism is real and it goes beyond shyness. It is not a case of defiance or refusal to communicate. It is an anxiety disorder that can be treated. The sooner the child receives help, the better the outcome will be, so please do not wait if you notice a problem with your child.

If you could talk to your camper right now, what would you tell them?

My number one goal in being an Adventure Camp counselor is to make a positive impact in their life. I want them to have a great camp experience in an environment that they

are comfortable in and that they feel safe in. I will do everything that I can to assist them in reaching their personal and educational goals, and I am very excited to be their camp counselor.