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Meghan Kanya, M.A.



Meghan Kanya graduated from Michigan State with a bachelor's degree in psychology. She is currently working towards her Ph.D. in clinical psychology with a specialization in children and families at Northern Illinois University. Prior to beginning her work at Northern Illinois University, Meghan had the pleasure of working with hundreds of children and adolescents of all ages while teaching swim lessons and coaching a summer swim team. Additionally, Meghan interacted closely with children and families while conducting research at Michigan State on children's development of cognition, emotion regulation, and temperament characteristics. Within her graduate school work, Meghan has worked clinically with children, adolescents, and adults coping with anxiety, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, conduct issues, depression, developmental disorders, and general adjustment issues, both in outpatient clinics and in elementary and junior high schools. This is Meghan's second time as a counselor at Adventure Camp and she is excited to continue to be a part of the AC team and to provide evidence-based care to the children and families involved!

Q+A with Meghan

What's your favorite part of Adventure Camp?

One of the most amazing parts of Adventure Camp is the unique way in which it is structured to allow children the greatest number of opportunities to generalize their practice and learning. Typically in therapy, clinicians and their patients work one-on-one to overcome anxiety and learn to use their brave. At Adventure Camp, although for most of the week campers are paired with one counselor, they are also exposed to other campers, counselors, and people in the public. My favorite Adventure Camp activities are the field trips we take, as it gives me the opportunity

to have my mind blown by my brave campers who are so willing to be vulnerable and practice their skills with strangers in the community.

What is the biggest take-away you've experienced?

Being a part of the Adventure Camp team and working with the campers has reinforced for me how resilient and strong children and adolescents are. Our campers come to camp experiencing such high levels of anxiety, and are still willing to participate in activities and engage with people in ways that make them feel vulnerable and may even scare them. Their strength is so inspiring and has encouraged me to use my brave in my own life when things get tough.

What do you hope to take away from this experience?

Although I've learned a lot about exposure therapy and parent-child interaction-based treatments, I have only had limited practice using these techniques with real people. Through Adventure Camp I'm hoping to gain more experience implementing exposure and interaction-based therapies and working with children and adolescents to empower them to grow to their fullest potential.

Would you recommend SM training for other graduate students?

I would absolutely recommend SM training to other graduate students! Through the training process you not only learn the ins and outs of selective mutism itself, but also gain an appreciation for the foundation of research upon which interventions for selective mutism are based. Additionally, you have the unique opportunity to then apply all the information learned to actual practice with children and adolescents. This one-two punch in terms of training allows for greater understanding and retention of the information presented within the SM training.

How can you integrate this experience into your academic or professional goals?

I think Adventure Camp offers such a unique opportunity to work with a collection of children and adolescents who really need guidance and support. Once I graduate I am planning on working with children and families in a clinical setting and within the community to raise awareness of issues in psychological functioning and ways to intervene. The experience of Adventure Camp will allow me to better assist individuals with selective mutism within clinical settings and to talk about the difficulties individuals with this condition face and how to best assist them.

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

If I could talk to my camper right now, I'd tell them that they're in for such a fun and rewarding week. The work we will do at camp is going to be hard and scary at times, but together we will work together to be brave and to face our fears. I cannot wait to get started working with you and to see all we can achieve together this summer!