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## Anton Petrenko, M.A.



Anton Petrenko is a fourth year graduate student in the clinical psychology program at Northern Illinois University (NIU). His research focuses on children's temperament and emotion regulation development. Anton graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 2007 with a bachelor's degree in psychology. He also obtained a master's degree in Counseling Psychology from California State University, East Bay in 2011. Anton worked with children in clinical settings for the past ten years, ranging from providing in-home behavioral therapy for toddlers with autism to conducting family therapy sessions. Prior to coming to NIU, Anton worked as a classroom therapist in an elementary school in Oakland, California. While at NIU, Anton continued to gain clinical and assessment

experience with children, adults, and families as a clinician in the Psychological Services Center. During the 2018-2019 school year, Anton will be working as an extern at the Joliet Public School District. His favorite part of working with children has been seeing kids push themselves outside their comfort zone and being rewarded with good memories of new experiences! Anton has been a counselor for winter Adventure Camp for the past two years and is looking forward to his first summer Adventure Camp. His favorite ice cream flavor is mint chocolate chip, his favorite summer activity is swimming, and he owns two cats.

## Q & A with Anton

**What's your educational background, how does that relate to your work with children with SM?**

I have a bachelor's degree in psychology, a master's degree in counseling psychology, and I am starting my fourth year in a clinical psychology PhD program, with a specialization in child and developmental psychology. My educational background and my previous child-focused clinical experiences have taught me the

importance of delivering evidence-based treatments in an environment that engages and motivates children to overcome challenges. In other words, SM treatment needs to be fun, rewarding, and memorable, which is exactly what Adventure Camp is like.

**How does this training experience fit into your academic or professional goals?**

Working as a counselor during AC will allow me to continue building expertise in using PCIT-SM with a variety of clients. This valuable experience will help me work with children who have SM in the future, or to provide supervision to clinicians working with such clients. Since I plan on working with children and families after graduate school, it is likely that having these skills and experience will be useful with children who have SM and/or high levels of social anxiety.

**How does this camp, in your opinion, have lasting effects on children with SM?**

I think that children come to this camp expecting something scary and challenging. They walk away feeling optimistic about themselves, having been able to overcome the many challenges of camp. I think that the memories they take with them involve making new friends, using their voice in the community, and of participating in some unique (and fun!) activities. I also think that campers realize that there are other children like themselves, and seeing other campers using their brave inspires them to do it too.

**How do you use your brave?**

Being scared to do things is part of everyday life, and I've used my brave in plenty of situations! Over the years, I've done lots of scary things, like surfing, learning how to ride a motorcycle, and skydiving. Each one of those activities was terribly frightening at first, but I always told myself that if others can do it, I can learn to do it too. And after using my brave and overcoming my fears, all of those things turned out to be really fun!

**Adventure Camp is around the corner! If you could talk to your camper right now, what would you tell him or her?**

I would say that all the counselors are very excited to meet this year's campers. We all understand that going to five days of Adventure Camp can be frightening, but there are plenty of fun activities to look forward to. I've seen campers during previous Adventure Camps have lots of fun, and I'm sure when you use your brave, you will too. You can do it! All the counselors (and other campers) will be happy to help you out!