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America Davila, B.A.



America Davila is a Ph.D. student in the clinical psychology program at Northern Illinois University (NIU) with a focus on trauma. She earned her bachelor's degree in psychology and criminology & law studies from Marquette University. America is currently a research assistant at the Center for the Study of Family Violence and Sexual Assault at NIU and was a former research intern at the Center on Violence Against Women and Children at Rutgers University. Her research experiences include the mental health effects of discrimination and microaggressions against ethnic minorities, factors associated with teen dating violence, economic abuse against Latinas, and child physical abuse risk. America's clinical experience includes working with children with histories of trauma and adults with

anxiety and depression disorders. She also has experience working with anxiety disorders through exposure therapy, as used at Adventure Camp. America plans to expand her experience with exposure therapy with the skills she learns through Adventure Camp and will apply these skills not only to help children with selective mutism (SM), but also in her future work with trauma. She is also fluent in Spanish and hopes to utilize her bilingualism during her time at Adventure Camp and beyond. America is looking forward to being an Adventure Camp Counselor this summer and views it as an excellent opportunity to learn more about SM, enhance her skills in evidence-based exposure techniques, and strengthen her teamwork abilities.

Q+A with America

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

Although I do not have previous experience working with children with SM, I look forward to strengthening my professional development by gaining experience working with children with SM. In the future, I hope to be able to work as a psychologist with both adults and children coping with conditions such as social anxiety and SM.

Why are you participating in Adventure Camp?

I am participating in Adventure Camp because I believe this will be an excellent opportunity to work with a population that I have not previously experienced. Working with children with SM presents a rewarding opportunity to expand upon the clinical skills that I have gained throughout my educational career. Being an Adventure Camp Counselor also presents the opportunity to learn from the campers as well as the training offered at Advanced Therapeutic Solutions.

What do you hope to take away from this experience?

I am looking forward to gaining more experience working with children, particularly children with SM. Through this experience, I hope to learn much more about SM and about various therapeutic techniques. Overall, I hope to enrich my professional skills as a future psychologist to better support this population as well as to help my camper grow and use their brave!

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

I would tell him/her that although camp may seem challenging, he/she should know that we want to help them, take it one day at a time, and try his/her best!