

I have a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Psy.D., and am a Licensed Psychologist in Minnesota. Before I went to graduate school I was a Youth worker serving “at risk” adolescents. I decided to get a doctorate because I wanted to be able to use my privilege to help inner city youth and families and I knew that being a “doctor” would allow me to have a more powerful voice in the systems that often do not serve people of color and poor people well and in fact are frequently dismissive and destructive.

I was licensed in 1995 and have worked with youth and families in many different capacities since then. Initially, I was fortunate enough to be able to implement many of the ideas from my dissertation in the development of a school based middle school day treatment program in Minneapolis. In my time working in a nonprofit agency I was a therapist in therapeutic kindergarten and middle school day treatment, and an in-home therapist. I also developed the graduate training program in the agency and performed psychological evaluations across the agency in the 11 programs that we had at that time. Supervising people who were working towards licensure and presenting training for different programs in the schools were additional responsibilities I had there.

Upon leaving the agency in 2001 I started my private practice and was an adjunct professor in the Masters of Education program at St. Mary’s and in the Doctoral program at the Minnesota School of Professional Psychology. In 2002 I became a FT core faculty at MSPP, which I continued to do until 2008. Since 2009 I have been involved with the creation of the Doctoral Program in Counseling Psychology at Saint Mary’s University here in Minneapolis. Currently I have a full time practice in South Minneapolis and am half time core faculty in the Psy.D. program at St. Mary’s.

Program development is an area of interest and something that I really enjoy doing. I have been involved with developing mental health programming in small culturally specific agencies and have been able to impact the development of both clinical and training models in those places. I have been blessed to be involved with the development of the Doctoral program in counseling psychology at Saint Mary’s. My colleagues and I feel very strongly about teaching students within a mentorship model and have worked hard to develop a training program that is relationally grounded, culturally oriented and academically rigorous.

I primarily teach and work from a Multicultural-Feminist perspective that incorporates developmental neurology and is very relationally oriented. My private practice is a mix of therapy, supervision and consultation. I really enjoy being able to do so many different things each week that all ultimately have the potential to help people heal. I work with children, youth, adults, couples and families with a variety of difficulties and issues. I do play therapy, including art therapy, with children, and various forms of expressive arts work with adolescents and adults.

My main areas of expertise involve trauma, autism spectrum and other neurological syndromes, multicultural work and every combination of those things. Trans-racial

adoption is of great interest to me and I work with many families who have adopted children, both domestically and internationally, who have been severely abused and/or trafficked pre-adoption. I have been a Level II practitioner of EMDR since 1996 and use many different means of working with severely traumatized youth and adults. A good portion of my practice is working with people with severe and persistent dissociative disorders. I also work with people who have single incident trauma.

I have had the good fortune to be able to go to Sri Lanka and teach about autism spectrum disorders, which has also been a significant portion of my practice at different times over the years. I was also involved with developing the in-home therapy program in district 281 for families with children on the Autism spectrum. Related to this, I see youth and adults who have other neurological syndromes and processing issues like FASD and head injury or brain tumors. An important aspect of working with children and youth is consulting with schools and coordinating between home, school and therapy so that the needs of youth and families are best served. I mostly consult with schools on the phone but also occasionally go to IEP meetings. I typically attend one school meeting a year without charge for the families that I work with. I do a fair amount of teaching parents how to advocate for their children in schools and facilitating connections between home and school, particularly when there are historical difficulties between them. Sometimes that takes the form of a parent who had difficulties as a youth in school or experiences of racism or other forms of discrimination in school or other systems that is impacting the parent's ability to engage in relationships that are helpful for the family. I also frequently have to "interpret" parents for schools, again, particularly when there is cultural divides.

I really love all of the work I do with youth and families. I also really enjoy being able to teach people how to work with youth and families. I consult to schools and mental health agencies and teach in a doctoral program so get to create relationships around learning all the time. My biggest challenge is paperwork. I really dislike doing the paperwork required sometimes to get people the services they need. I do it and I actually do it quite well, advocating for the needs of my clients, but I dislike having to spend so much time with meaningless systems that are put in place to restrict access to services.

There really is no such thing as a "typical day" for me ☺. Basically, I see clients all day Monday and Friday and half day on Tuesday. I teach and do school related stuff on Wednesday and Thursday all day. That being said, I frequently do school stuff on Tuesday and Friday and sometimes have to schedule therapy or consultation on a Wednesday or Thursday. And I try to write as much as possible!! I really like having a certain degree of flexibility in my schedule because I interface with so many other people and systems that it helps to be able to shift things around when needed. Consultation with a professional mentor is one of the most crucial parts of being a good clinician! I get support intellectually, emotionally and spiritually in those relationships and it keeps me being able to do the work that I do with severely

traumatized people. I also am a part of a peer consult group with other clinicians who have been practicing 15+ years. We meet about once a month, which is essential for anyone who is doing the level of therapy work that we all are doing. I very much cherish and appreciate my professional relationships with my mentors and my peers.

I think that it is pretty clear that I love what I do and I am very grateful for the opportunity to teach and help so many people on their healing journeys. Thanks for the opportunity to share my story with you.

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