

Sarah Abercrombie Interview:

How would you describe your area of study to a novice?

Counseling psychologists aspire to help individuals develop skills to cope more effectively with a variety of problems. My goal is to carry out this process collaboratively with my clients. Counseling psychologists place an emphasis on clients' strengths and resilience. We also aspire to gain a strong understanding of research in order to help guide our work with clients.

What is your primary motivation for persevering through graduate school?

I am motivated by my desire to work in the field. I am eager to complete my degree and use the skills I obtain to work with clients and serve the community in which I work through clinical work and also through social advocacy. I am hopeful that, in using the skills I acquire throughout my education and career, I will be able to facilitate small changes on an individual level with clients and also on a community level through advocacy work. I am aware that in order to be able to have the best chance of doing these things, I need to obtain a solid educational foundation.

Do you think there is any value in social networking with other graduate students in non-related fields?

Yes; I think interdisciplinary conversations are often useful. Whenever people come together from a variety of fields, a more diverse perspective of whatever issue is being examined can be uncovered.

What is your favorite stress-reduction technique?

I enjoy cooking a great deal and find the sensations involved with the process very relaxing. I also enjoy running as a stress-buster when the weather is nice.

What is the last book you read strictly for pleasure and how long ago was it?

The last time I completed a book strictly for pleasure was this past summer before beginning the doctoral program. I read the Hunger Games series.

Please describe your most meaningful academic relationship.

I had a very influential English professor named Allen Swords during my undergraduate education at Clemson. Mr. Swords challenged me to be very vocal in class and to step outside of my comfort zone; forcing me to begin to develop skills that have been very important in my academic career. Mr. Swords was instrumental in my professional and academic development and encouraging me that I could succeed as a graduate student.

What surprised you the most about graduate school?

I have been surprised by the amount of information that can be learned in a small amount of time. When I look back at my master's education and the first year in my doctoral education, it amazes me how much information has been covered in just three years.

If travel to Mars happens in your lifetime, would you want to be one of the scientists on board? If yes, what would you contribute to the mission?

No; definitely not. I love the idea of space travel but I would be way too terrified to get on a spacecraft.

What is your favorite comfort food and why? How often do you consume it?

I love, love, love mashed potatoes. I eat them at least once a week.

If you hadn't been admitted to graduate school, what do you think you would be doing right now?

I would be at culinary school or working in a kitchen and trying to get into culinary school.

When do you expect to complete your degree?

I will complete my degree in the summer of 2017.