

Personal Statement

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“What do you want to be when you get older?” was a question that was asked from as long as I can remember. I went from psychologist, to psychiatrist, and then finally landed on social work. Throughout the process of choosing what I wanted to do as my career I always knew my main goal in life was to be in a profession that helped people in need.

Throughout my adolescent and teenage years, I went through experiences that opened the path to social work for me. My brother battled with many different mental illnesses leading to psychiatric hospitalization at nine years old. My parents were constantly fighting, and my dad and my brother were fighting to the point of physical fights. When these moments were happening and my home life was chaos, I knew that I wanted to help individuals like my brother, and individuals in need of services. I knew I wanted to help individuals find resources, to make them feel comfortable and to help them find their calm in a storm just like my mom, the social worker, and the psychiatrist did for my brother. That is what gave me the motivation to pursue my social work career. I then came to Longwood University and took the introductory to social work class and I knew I had chosen the right career path.

As I grew as a social work major, I started to develop career goals. My goal is to receive my Masters in Social Work and obtain a certificate in either substance use disorder or clinical social work. I want to work as a medical social worker in a hospital and eventually become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

Some traits that I possess that I consider to be some of my strengths are my communication skills. I find being a good communicator in this field is very important and I learned that during my junior internship, as it was hard to work with my supervisor who did not have the best communication skills. I have great discipline, time management and organizational

skills. I have good critical thinking skills and I am a very personable person and I get along most with everyone. All these strengths I believe will help me prosper in receiving my graduate education and beginning my social work career. While I have developed these skills, I will admit that the journey at times was difficult.

My freshmen and sophomore year were challenging for me. My freshmen year I was in the hospital for a few days, I did not have a grasp on studying, I did not enjoy my general education classes, and I was adjusting to being away from home. I am terrible in math and science and all I wanted was to get to my junior year where I was mainly taking all social work classes because that is what I thrived in, and my grades showed that. The spring semester of my sophomore year I finally found a form of studying that worked best for me, made dean's list that semester, and have not got below a 3.0 since that sophomore year spring semester. I am proud that my grade reflects my maturity, growth, and development throughout my college career. I have learned how to properly balance my classes, my extracurricular activities, my engagement, and my study habits.

My freshmen year I volunteered at Madeline's House which is a domestic violence shelter in Farmville, VA. During this experience I mainly supervised the client's children as the clients participated in group sessions that took place downstairs. Even though I did not directly intervene with the clients my volunteer experience still was eye opening because it showed me how social workers work as a team to wholistically support the client in their time of need. The opportunity broadened my perspective on how difficult and traumatic experiences may impact behaviors of children. I thought about children from my childhood who I thought were mean but now I understand that the outburst may be more directly related to their life situations. This volunteer experience was my first hands on experience with a social worker and with clients. I

then did my junior internship at the YWCA domestic violence shelter in Lynchburg, VA. This internship took place during the peak of COVID which was a challenge. The shelter had weeks where we worked from home and then when we were in the shelter. The clients were not staying in the shelter but placed in a hotel due to COVID restrictions, which made it hard to get the full experience of how the shelter ran. Even with this challenge I was still able to have one on one experience with clients and their children. I did intake assessments, helped find resources in the community for the clients, worked with clients to get back on their feet after leaving their domestic situation, requested protective orders, engaged in victim advocacy, and facilitated groups. Another challenge that was faced during this internship was monitoring client compliance in the program since they were residing offsite. We had to work together as a team to make sure the shelter was still functioning appropriately. While I was doing this internship, I was also balancing classes, work, and my social life. This was very hard and tiring but I was able to adapt, and I successfully concluded the semester while earning dean's list and surviving the pandemic. Ultimately throughout my college experience, I have faced many circumstances that have challenged me academically and professionally but throughout all those challenges and circumstances utilizing my skills and strengths, I have not only achieved, but I have exceeded my own expectations. I have my little brother to thank as his story has motivated me every single step of the way.

