**A Person as a Professional Narrative**

Lauren Chadwick

Longwood University, Department of Counseling

COUN 503

Dr. Jordan

November 25, 2024

**A Person as a Professional Narrative**

The needed skills for being a Licensed Professional Counselor LPC are vast. My personal experiences start with empathy. I have dealt with a diverse amount of mental health experiences personally, and I feel I can connect to a wide amount of people. This is not to say that I know everything on what others have gone through, however. Secondly, it is in the fact of my professional experiences. I have started my professional journey in cognitive and emotional research at my undergraduate institution, Christopher Newport University. After graduating, I began being a Crisis Counselor for Crisis Text Line. I de-escalated many people from self-harm, suicide, and other distressing themes. I learned how to talk to almost anyone from diverse backgrounds and find their commonalities and strengths to help them. My research background co-existed well with this experience because of how it informed me of possible causes of my texters’ issues and possible solutions for them.

In addition, I started my year and 3-month long journey at Youth for Tomorrow, a residential I worked at. I did much, being de-escalation, restraints, crisis work, active supervision, and working under licensing standards. I saw hatred, trauma, racism, stories of all kinds of abuse, bullying, AWOLs, self-harm, and even a suicide attempt. Alongside that, I also saw post-traumatic growth, intentional change, effective trauma-informed therapy, and love and trust coming from children who have consistently had nothing handed to them their entire lives. It is an experience that is difficult to put into words altogether. This taught me about the dual-sides of humans, and to never stop searching for the strengths in someone. I picked up quickly on how to connect with clients at different developmental stages than I. Additionally, I learned the balancing of personalities of my co-workers and learning how to delegate in a plethora of situations, from outings to a crisis.

I took this experience for everything it was. When it was time for me to go to Longwood, I said goodbye to Youth for Tomorrow and got a job at Buckingham County Department of Social Services (DSS). It was my second time helping the Medicaid population and I quickly learnt what the effects for lacking resources looked like. I gained skills on advocating, as one of my clients needed help with therapeutic services. This was also seen in experience with how the DSS system works altogether. I feel that this experience is invaluable because I want to go into a community services board (CSB) setting. I know the DSS and CSB entities work closely. I also learned how to treat and respect clients who are involuntarily receiving services. All of the clients I served did not want DSS in their lives. I learned how to let them know that what they were receiving was to help them, without imposing my values on them.

On the other side of the coin, some personal challenges and limitations I have are that of more personal factors. I found that my personality and personal behavioral tendencies are influential in my therapeutic approach. Something I found at my time at Youth for Tomorrow is that I had a hard time being confrontational. The longer I was there I got better at it, however, there is still much to work on. A strategy to overcome this could be to recognize the signs that someone needs confronting, and verbally work up to it. Confrontation can be extremely beneficial for a client, and it doesn’t need to be a moment of shock and strong words.

An additional limitation I am aware I need to work on is not being too dependent on my supervisors. At all my jobs, I was known voraciously for asking questions. I checked in with supervisors constantly to make sure I was making the right move. There was struggle with thinking on my own, and not wanting to make a mistake. Mistakes can be costly in human services, however, they are unavoidable. A way to mitigate this is to do research beforehand and come in informed. One can do research on theory, policy and other such things to come into the session ready and not have to stop to ask a supervisor what can be done.