

*Abstract: What if every youth had access to mental health resources without having to go through expensive, time-intensive therapy? This is a lofty mission, but is a mission I want to start taking a part in now at UCLA. The first-ranked clinical psychology PhD program at UCLA is an exceptional training program because graduate students are expected to conduct research, take classes (for primary focus and minor), be a teaching assistant, and work with patients in the training clinic. The pace and expectations exceed those of other programs, so to help ensure that students can accomplish this there are support systems: a primary advisor matched to our research interests, supervisors for clinical training, and courses taught by top professors. My ultimate goal is to gain more expertise in designing practical mental health treatment tools for youth and adolescents, although I could drive change as a researcher, a professor, or a therapist. UCLA's multi-faceted program prepares students for any one of these, while ensuring that they are equally well-educated in the other areas. My advisor, Dr. [REDACTED], is also invaluable to expanding my insight into youth treatment issues.*

An AP Psychology course in high school ignited my passion for clinical psychology, but it was not until attending [REDACTED] that I realized that I loved statistics, I loved research methodology, and I loved grappling with the current conundrums in the field. During a summer abroad as a counselor at [REDACTED] in rural [REDACTED] I developed an interest in youth mental health specifically and I realized the need for psychological resources that can be easily implemented universally. After serving in multiple research laboratories as a research assistant, I wrote a senior thesis on adolescent stress, earning a Summa Cum Laude thesis grade. However, it was my enjoyment of this research process that affirmed my desire to continue my studies in clinical psychology at a graduate level. At [REDACTED], I also translated my knowledge about wellbeing into practice, such as designing "[REDACTED]" which encourages

students to practice *evidence-based* wellbeing behaviors for themselves one week at a time in a game-like and collaborative program. Again I enjoyed creating this program, but without yet receiving a higher education, I did not have the necessary knowledge to apply this program more broadly. Last year, I worked with teenagers at [REDACTED] while applying to graduate schools that I believed would further my knowledge, experience, and aptitude related to the treatment of youth and adolescent mental health. During this time, I helped design a stress-reduction program for [REDACTED] Public Schools by adapting [REDACTED] to make it high-school appropriate. As much as it was well received, teachers later expressed that unfortunately there had been little time in their curriculum to schedule the program. Accordingly, my interests began to shift to the practical application of clinical psychology treatment research, which affected how I selected the graduate schools I applied to.

Now, even in the mere three months since starting my clinical psychology PhD at UCLA, my conceptualization of mental health and treatment solutions has expanded to consider issues that I had not previously. Most importantly, the mentorship of my advisor Dr. [REDACTED] has been invaluable. Upon entering this program, I already had research ideas related to the accessibility and broad-scale applicability of mental health treatment for youth and their families. However, Dr. [REDACTED] encouraged me to wait until I had been exposed to the current treatment work happening in our laboratory. Prior to this exposure, I understood that resources were often failing to match what people need, but knowing this was insufficient to develop solutions.

My work at UCLA has already helped me to begin formulating those solutions, and my mission is to develop more effective treatment methods beyond the scope of traditional options. After much consideration, many meetings with Dr. [REDACTED], and dozens of written assignments, I have realized one shortcoming of clinical psychology research: forgetting to consider clients'

needs, as well as their psychopathology, when designing treatment tools. Even for the treatments that do produce improved outcomes, the effects are often lost at one year follow-up, highlighting their low durability. Realistically, we cannot expect struggling families to schedule frequent visits to the clinic, and we cannot expect them to stay in treatment for life. I am now considering new solutions, such as creating children's books with cognitive-behavioral therapy practices embedded, allowing parents to deliver treatment boosters outside of a clinic. My coursework, my advisor, and observing real clients were essential to facilitating these considerations.

Additionally, having access to Dr. [REDACTED]'s database of hundreds of existing youth treatments allows me to write a research thesis on the current state of treatment durability. Building this database took years, and I am fortunate to have this jumpstart. Lastly, Dr. [REDACTED]'s connections with numerous leaders in the field also help refine and improve my ideas. Already it was [REDACTED] awareness of an administrative wellbeing group at UCLA that inspired me to expand my [REDACTED] program beyond Harvard, and to launch it at MIT, Wellesley, UCLA, and Yale this year. Without the experiences and mentorship provided here, I would know what my goals are, but not how to meet these goals in the most effective and impactful way.

Following your goals is most meaningful when it is not only rewarding for you, but also rewarding for the people you are trying to help. Many people want to follow their passion and make a difference in the world. However, passion and skill alone may not get you there. Here at UCLA I have grown to realize that it is not just my skills, aptitude, or dedication that will help me make a difference, but also my understanding of the complexity of these phenomena in the real world. In ten years I hope to be leading a research team working on innovative solutions to treatment dissemination. With the Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fellowship, continuing graduate studies at this top program will ensure I receive the training to do this in a meaningful way.