

## Personal Statement

As a psychologist, I plan to continue my commitment to public service by delivering mental health services to individuals living in under-privileged communities. I first seized upon this idea during the four years I worked as a criminal investigator with the New York City Department of Investigation—an agency whose mission is to identify and eliminate corruption in City government. In this capacity, I worked on a number of cases that took place in high-crime, low-income neighborhoods. My experiences working in these communities led to my decision to leave law enforcement. I found that I was more interested in playing a constructive role in helping the people of these communities, especially the young people.

After realizing that I was more interested in providing services to people rather than enforcing laws, I took a series of steps to reorient my career in the direction of becoming a clinical psychologist. I began my preparation for this career change by enrolling in the NYU Wagner School of Public Service, where I am finishing my Masters in Public Administration. I pursued this degree with the conviction that a well-run public service organization can be the agent for meaningful social progress. As my studies progressed, I realized that my faith in public service was tied to my own sense of social responsibility. The management training I received through the Wagner School has provided me with the general skills essential for program management, development, and evaluation. The training that I would like to receive at the University of Mississippi Clinical Psychology Program will provide me with the research and clinical skills necessary to be a resource for under-served communities as a provider, planner, and evaluator of mental health services.

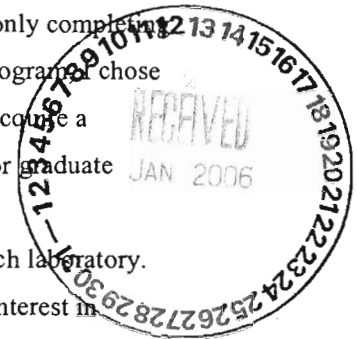
I have chosen to apply to the University of Mississippi Clinical Psychology Program because the research interests of the faculty along with the overall orientation of the program is the best match I have found for my dual interests in clinical practice and community psychology research. I am particularly interested in the work of Dr. David Hargrove with community-based mental health organizations, especially his attention to the internal dynamics of the treatment team. In my experience as a clinical case manager for chronically mentally ill patients, I have seen first hand how the relationships among the members of the treatment team can dramatically impact the level of care provided to

the patient. Further, as a student and adjunct faculty member at the NYU Wagner School, I have often thought of combining my interests in managing organizations with the design, delivery, and evaluation of mental health services. Collaborations with community-based organizations offer opportunities to improve upon, not only effective outcomes, but also the process that guides the delivery of mental health services. I am especially interested in the managerial challenges of translating a theoretically based model into an intervention program. Currently, I am encountering a similar challenge at the NYU Child Study Center where I am researching a school-based intervention designed to improve the interpersonal relationships of students in the classroom environment. I believe the experience that I have gained through this project has prepared me for future collaborations with public service organizations. Certainly, the opportunity to work with Dr. Hargrove would enable me to pursue this goal.

I am also interested by Dr. Alan Gross's work with the issue of date rape. As a volunteer at New York City's only 24-hour suicide prevention hotline, I have had many calls from victims of sexual abuse whose lives have been tragically altered. Many of these callers continue to suffer from a constellation of psychiatric symptoms whose debilitating effects prevent them from overcoming their traumatic experiences. The opportunity to join this research would enable me to better assist this often overlooked and surprisingly widespread population.

In conclusion, as a clinician and researcher I will have two goals-- to deliver the highest standards of psychotherapeutic services to the patients in my care; and, to apply the tools of science to improve the capacity of mental health, school, and government organizations to achieve their goals of service to their communities.

I have recently graduated from UMass Boston *Magna cum Laude* with a Bachelor's degree in psychology. While my initial Bachelor's degree is business-related, the psychology classes I had taken during that time sparked my interest in the field. Rather than only complete the minimum requirements necessary for application to a psychology graduate program, I chose to resume classes part-time while continuing to work full-time. My wish was to acquire a comprehensive background in psychology courses that would fully prepare me for graduate school.



My research experience began in Dr. Lizabeth Roemer's emotions research laboratory. On recommendation of one of my professors, I approached Dr. Roemer with an interest in enrolling as a research assistant. Working in the lab gave me valuable experience completing lab tasks such as pilot testing, entering and verifying survey data, working with SPSS, and transcription. This experience solidified my interest in becoming a clinical psychologist. I built upon that experience in doing my senior honors thesis, again with Dr. Roemer.

I would like to conduct graduate research in the areas of anxiety disorders, experiential acceptance, and treatment. In my undergraduate research, my interests developed in the etiology of PTSD, as well as the maintaining factors and implications for functioning in daily life. As a research assistant, I studied risk factors involved in development and maintenance of PTSD. I expanded upon this in my honors thesis to include risk factors as well as protective factors, including experiential acceptance and self-compassion, as correlates of PTSD. In this thesis, I worked closely with Dr. Roemer and a graduate student mentor, beginning with the literature review, through all stages of research to the end result, a presentation to faculty. I have also presented my research in poster format at two conferences. What I found interesting is that while it has been shown that a majority of the population is exposed to trauma during their lifetime, not all will develop PTSD, or some may develop acute PTSD but recover. In collecting data for my honors thesis, I surveyed a population of university students that had been exposed to trauma. The encouraging thing is that in spite of traumatic events, a large portion of people are able to go on with their lives, including attending university.

Though my current job is not directly related to the psychology field, I found that the skills I have also enhance my academic proficiency. I am able to work both independently and collaboratively with others, using strong communication and adaptability skills. I feel that my abilities in those areas have been strengthened, because similar interpersonal and collaborative relationships are often found in the workplace as well as academia. Because I worked and attended college simultaneously, I was able to prioritize my time to meet the demands of each. I believe this experience prepared me well for graduate school, particularly with taking classes along with practica. I feel that my work and grades received at UMass are more indicative of my success academically, rather than previously, before I had chosen to pursue my interest in a psychology degree. While my Verbal GRE score is not as high as I might like, I feel that my

Analytical Writing GRE score is a more accurate representation of my writing abilities and potential. Overall, I feel that these aptitudes will continue to benefit me greatly and translate well to a clinical psychology program.

In my career, I would like to do both clinical work and research in the areas of anxiety disorders, experiential acceptance, and treatment. Dr. Wilson's research in the areas of acceptance and treatment aligns well with my interests. Having the ability to discover more about disorders, being involved in developing new therapies, and using them to help those affected by the disorders is very important to me. Because my interests encompass both research and clinical work, this made the choice of clinical psychology doctorate programs a clear one, because I believe that the scientist-practitioner model will give me the most comprehensive training in each of these areas. The strength of the faculty and the clinical program at Ole Miss is outstanding, and I hope I will have the privilege of pursuing my graduate degree there.

I failed my freshman psychology course. The professor objected to my sleeping in class and surprised me by dropping my grade two levels. After finally adjusting to college the following year, I found myself sheepishly eager to continue studying psychology. In my junior year, I retook the course and changed my major.

My later undergraduate work varied tremendously from that first year. I decided to pursue an Honors Baccalaureate, which required an undergraduate thesis. I connected with my social psychology professor, Dr. Bothwell, and began researching other-directedness under his direction. I was surprised at how exciting the research process was. In my final year, I considered applying to doctoral programs. However, having changed my major late, I had not taken full advantage of all that UL's psychology department had to offer. I chose to enter the department's Master's program in Experimental Psychology.

In graduate school, my goal was to enhance my research skills. Familiar with the process, I was able to begin research for my Master's thesis immediately. I chose an issue that seemed distressing to many of the women around me, eating behavior. Curious about the cognitive aspect of eating disturbances, I sought to clarify some of the expectancies that facilitate those behaviors. Under the direction of my quantitative psychology professor, Dr. McFatter, my thesis involved extensive study of not only disordered eating, but also data analysis. I took nine hours of statistics under Dr. McFatter, including an independent study in Structural Equation Modeling. I graduated confident that I was prepared for a research-oriented career.

Since graduation, I have had the opportunity to consider the roles of a clinical psychologist more closely. As an adjunct instructor, I remain affiliated with the university. I enjoy teaching psychology, and take great pleasure in hearing from students that they want to know more. This position also allows me to conduct research. I have authored one paper with Dr. Bothwell and have another in preparation. Finally, I engage in a variety of applied activities, including sign language interpreting, applied behavioral analysis, and rape crisis intervention.

Considering the depth of my involvement in academic and clinical activities, I feel I have created a solid foundation for future training. With this in mind, I am seeking admission into the Clinical Psychology program at the University of Mississippi. In Ole Miss, I see the opportunity for training in a range of both research and professional skills that are grounded in psychological science. In addition, the behavioral approaches represented by the faculty appeal greatly to my own way of thinking. Most importantly, several members of the faculty possess expertise in areas of interest to me. I am eager to participate in research on topics to which I have had primarily clinical exposure, including behavioral therapy and sexual victimization. I value the principles set forth in Acceptance and Commitment therapy and would be eager to work in the lab of Dr. Wilson. I would also like to formalize my interest in date rape by studying the context in which it occurs under Dr. Gross. Overall, I feel that the graduate program at Ole Miss would be an ideal setting within which to pursue my goals.

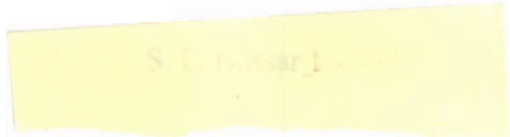


## Relevant Background and Professional Goals

I have been interested in a health related field since an early age due to my mother's career as a nurse. During my adolescence, I spent some time observing her at work and was attracted to the idea of helping people, yet I had not considered any particular specialty. As a college freshman, I enrolled in a psychology course and found that it evoked a great deal of personal interest. However, with my parents' divorce finalized earlier that year, I struggled to maintain a healthy relationship with my distant mother and sister while I lived with my father and brother. The effects of the divorce became evident in subsequent years as I watched my brother cope with depression and my sister battle major depression, anxiety, and bulimia. I, too, dealt with anxiety and indecisiveness about my academic future.

While employed in the Department of Rehabilitative Services at a local hospital, I became acquainted with patients managing diabetes and suffering depression related to the loss of their limbs. I thoroughly enjoyed assisting therapists with patient wound care and physical therapy; nevertheless, I was concerned with the psychological rehabilitation that these patients needed. Pressured to decide a major my junior year, I chose Biology with the idea of becoming a psychiatrist. Although I was earning above average grades in my biology courses, I soon found my academic interests were not in biology. I thought considerably about my intense and genuine intellectual fascination with psychology. My sister's struggle with depression and related disorders and my work experience had increased my interest in the etiology, diagnosis, and treatment for psychological disorders. I then declared Psychology as my major, desiring to further my knowledge in the field of Clinical Psychology.

As I have immersed myself in psychology courses over the past two years, I have seen a dramatic improvement in my grades and have been awarded Dean's List every semester since.



Although all of my psychology classes have advanced my desire for continuous learning, the undergraduate course that has prepared me the most for graduate school has been Senior Research. The benefits that I have received from that class have been immeasurable as I designed, conducted, and presented an original study titled *The Effects of Personality Type on Procrastination in College Students*. Through the investigative process, I have discovered how creative and enjoyable research is and that I want to be involved in the scholarly process because I understand the importance of clinical science and its interconnectedness with clinical service.

After a thorough review of numerous programs in clinical psychology, I have chosen to apply to the University of Mississippi for a number of reasons. First, training is guided by a cognitive-behavioral approach. Second, research and clinical activities begin during the first two years of training. Third, the available clinical experiences would allow me to work with populations I find of particular interest, such as adults and adolescents at the Psychological Services Center. Fourth, I am drawn toward several of your faculty members, including Dr. Kelley Wilson for his work in New Wave Behavior Therapy and the role of verbal processes in emotion and cognition, and Dr. Paul Deal for his work in serious mental illnesses. I would be pleased to have either of these faculty members as my mentor.

As I look to my future in psychology, my professional goals include having innovative careers in research, teaching, and practicing. My foremost academic interests lie in research concerning cognitive-behavioral therapy, emotion, depression, eating disorders, anxiety disorders, stress, and preventive health. My current employment at a behavioral hospital has given me a chance to observe clients during the course of their treatment and has allowed me to develop rewarding relationships with them. This experience has supplemented my understanding of how vital empirically-founded assessment and treatment methods are for psychological

intervention and has enhanced my desire to participate in research that furthers such growth within the profession.



## Relevant Background and Professional Goals:

A lifetime of experience has prepared me for work as a clinical psychologist. Years in paid and volunteer work force together with personal experience have convinced me that the community a person functions in has tremendous power to either reinforce or undermine progress. The University of Mississippi's Clinical Psychology program offers the opportunity to work within an intentionally supportive community to develop knowledge and skills. I would like to work with Dr. Karen Christoff to develop and use those skills to facilitate health and growth in the wider community.

Work as a bio-chemistry laboratory research assistant and as a business strategy consulting research associate honed my interest in how and why events occur. Work in operations management at a bank, as well as service as a director of a condominium association, a member of a church vestry, a preschool board, and an alumnae club board taught me that the norms of the community in which a group functions can shape what and how goals are reached, and to an extent determine who reaches them.

Years spent as a mother raising three children, as a preschool teacher, and as an equestrian taught me sensitivity to changing emotional and physical needs. The children, students, and animals taught me sensitivity to non-verbal communication, the need for small, clear, logical progression in learning, and the value of repetition. They also taught me the power of positive reinforcement, and the destructiveness of punishment, despite attractive short term benefits.

I have participated in both academic, hard science research, and in business strategy research. These experiences taught me different elements of the research process, and underscored the importance in all research of integrity, accuracy, and clarity.

For two years I was a research assistant in a university biochemist's lab supporting research funded by the National Institute of Health. My responsibilities included monitoring experimental progress and recording data and observations while compounds were run through first a column (which separated elements of a compound), then a fraction collector (which identified the presence and quantity of those elements). This work taught me to document observations accurately and fully, even if the results did not support the thesis. While a thesis can be modified, a researcher's integrity cannot.

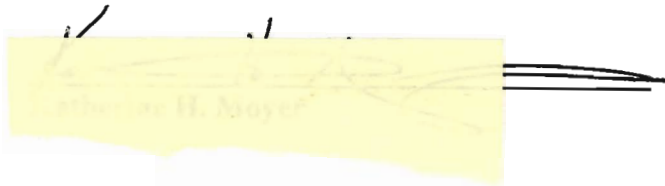
Also for two years, I was a research associate for a management consulting firm specializing in business strategy. Initially, our entire team met with the client to determine the extent and focus of the client's inquiry. I then conducted initial research from online and corporate documents. From this research, our team identified information that needed to be obtained or confirmed through field interviews. I solicited and conducted field interviews, reported the results to the

team, discussed my findings in relation to others' interviews, and assisted in preparing the final report and presenting the material to the client. Consulting work taught me to present conclusions clearly, concisely, and without jargon.

Experiences in the community and personal losses including the death of my brother during my teens and the failure of my marriage later in life also taught me the both the difficulty and importance of renewal. The person who is of most help guides, facilitates, and serves as a catalyst as an individual struggles to find and take their own path. Through education as a clinical psychologist, I would like to serve in the community in that role

**Signature**

**Date**

A handwritten signature in black ink is written on a yellow sticky note. The signature is cursive and appears to read "Catherine H. Meyer". The sticky note is partially obscured by a horizontal line drawn across it.

**16 November, 2006**

I have been involved as a research assistant for Denise Chen in the Rice University psychology department for the past three years, first under the Rice University Century Scholars program and later under an NIH Minority Student Research Supplementary Grant. My specific tasks have included subject interviewing and screening, data entry and analysis, experiment running, lab organization and management, ordering supplies, and training fellow assistants. For the summer and fall semester of 2003, I was appointed lab manager, which involved organizing and assigning tasks to the members of the lab as well as overseeing the performance of the other members of the lab and monitoring the different experiments. While this research has dealt mainly with human olfaction as it pertains to psychology, particularly the social aspects of psychology and human interaction, my interests lie within clinical psychology.

I enjoy both the research and professional aspects of clinical psychology and plan to utilize both in my future after graduate school. For me, clinical psychology embodies the whole aspect of mental health, in my opinion, rather than just the biological or social aspects; rather, it combines the two to create a realm all its own, one in which the most help and understanding can be accomplished. The University of Mississippi's emphasis on research helps those who eventually go into practice to understand the underlying mechanisms that affect what is seen in individuals and gives a greater understanding to those who treat those individuals, which is important for complete care for the patient; as well, there is also a heavy focus on the practical aspects of clinical psychology in Ole Miss's clinical psychology program which I also find extremely important. It is for that reason, that I am strongly inclined to study and grow in the University of Mississippi's program.

In my experience with the different methods of treatment and approaches to disorders, I find that cognitive-behavioral approaches as well as social learning best fit my interpretations of mental health issues, although I am also strongly inclined towards systems therapy and Rogerian and humanistic therapies to a lesser extent. Having come from the Mississippi delta region, I have seen firsthand the need for psychologists and a greater understanding of clinical psychology in rural areas and in communities in general; Ole Miss is one of the few schools that offers training and research in rural psychology and public mental health systems. I also strongly believe that working with children especially with disorders that prove to be long term or particularly damaging is the best way to improve the mental health overall of the nation. I am also interested in issues pertaining to women, particularly with violence towards women, because my studies in my women and gender studies classes have made me not only empathetic towards this group but also have opened my eyes to the incredible need for help, courage, and shelter for this particular group. At Ole Miss, there are faculty members who focus on the particular issues that interest me, such as Dr. Christoff, Dr. Deal, Dr. Gross, and Dr. Hargrove.

## Personal Statement

The summer of 1991 I worked with a research mentor in the genetics lab at the University of South Carolina. My paper from the research is titled "The Development of a DNA Probe for use in Analyzing Variations in the Genome of Striped Bass (*Morone saxatilis*).". My lab procedures included electrophoresis and radioactive labeling. This mentorship satisfied the research requirement at my high school, The SC Governor's School for Science and Math. I enjoyed the precise work that my protocols required, and my mentor was pleased with the accuracy of my results.

I have volunteered at Open Arms Day Care, a program for homeless and near-homeless children. I also volunteered at the Sexual Assault Resource Center here in Rock Hill. I was on call for emergency room exams and crisis calls. I am now returning to volunteer there after graduation.

This past summer I worked for nine weeks as a counselor at Camp Ramapo near Rhinebeck, New York. The camp provides a therapeutic environment for children with emotional and behavioral disorders. Most of the time I worked with boys ages 10-13. The children had a variety of problems (ADHD, ODD, developmental disorders, autism, depression). The camp did not emphasize clinical labels, but focussed on behavioral management. It was a challenging experience to spend about thirteen hours a day with the kids.

I enjoyed my volunteer and work experience, especially the camp. I want to practice psychotherapy at some point. I



want to keep open to many areas of research in graduate school. Some of your clinical faculty listed interest in social skills, "issues related to violence against women," and sexual violence. I would be interested in doing research in these areas, and I think I would fit well into your program. I also am interested in anxiety disorders, especially agoraphobia.

## Personal Statement

I, Stephany would like to pursue the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Clinical Psychology at the University of Mississippi. The purpose of this statement is to outline the educational and clinical experiences that I feel demonstrate my potential for a successful career as a clinical psychologist, as well as to comment briefly on my current interests and professional goals.

My formal study of psychology began while I was an undergraduate at the University of Mississippi (U.M.). In addition to completing the required course work, I enjoyed spending one year as a part of a research team focused on developing novel learning paradigms to assess drug effects on anxiety and chronic pain in animal models. I feel that this experience was a useful introduction to behavioral research methodology and provided me with a good working knowledge of the principles of learning. Upon graduation, I decided to pursue a master's degree in clinical psychology at Mississippi State University (M.S.U.). While at M.S.U., I completed a master's thesis which focused on examining differences between children with reading problems and their peers on a standardized battery of neuropsychological tests. I also completed practicum experiences at North Mississippi Regional Center (N.M.R.C.) and at East Mississippi State Hospital.

When I graduated M.S.U., I took a job at the N.M.R.C. as a master's level psychologist, and I have held that position now for more than three years. Consequently, most of my clinical work to date involves developing and implementing behavioral interventions for persons with mental retardation, in addition to monitoring behavioral and pharmacological treatment effects. I am also working with Dr. Paul Deal on a project designed to prospectively examine neuropsychological and adaptive functioning in



individuals with Down syndrome.

Although I am currently working with older adults at the N.M.R.C., the balance of my work there has involved working with children and young adults, and this is the area where I feel I would like to concentrate my clinical and research efforts. Broadly speaking, I am interested in the use of operant conditioning principles to develop interventions for behavior problems in children. I am particularly interested in interventions designed to promote the functional use of speech in children with autism and would like to do research in this area. I am also interested in the assessment and treatment of “compulsive” behaviors in children with and without developmental disabilities, especially as these behaviors may relate to a child’s level of cognitive development. I feel that these interests are congruent with Dr. Alan Gross’s interest in clinical child psychology, and I feel that I would benefit from his considerable expertise in behavior analysis.

In summary, I feel that the behavioral orientation of the clinical program at U.M. and its emphasis on a scientific approach to service delivery meshes well with my previous experiences and future goals, as I am interested in a career that would allow me to divide my time between the related areas of clinical practice and applied research. I appreciate your thorough consideration of my application, and look forward to hearing from you in the coming months.

## LETTER OF INTEREST

Doctoral training in the Clinical Psychology program at the University of Mississippi would be a complementary continuation of my undergraduate and graduate work providing me with excellent preparation to attain my long-term professional goals. My aspiration is to pursue a career in an agency setting combining research and clinical practice. Specifically, I am interested in providing inpatient and outpatient services in a school setting or related agency to children and adolescents coping with behavioral and emotional problems. In addition, I would like to conduct research in an area of clinical psychology that is directly applicable to my clinical work. Therefore, I feel that doctoral training at the University of Mississippi would provide me with an excellent opportunity for preparation toward my future career.

During undergraduate education at the University of Arkansas, I worked extensively with children and adolescents. One of my first opportunities was tutoring children struggling with learning disorders, developing individual programs based on these disorders, and conducting individual sessions focused on the program goals. In addition, through the Behavioral Attention Training program (Dr. John Marr), I trained ADD/ADHD children to assist them in maintaining on-task behavior in the classroom. I also taught several classes including an educational psychology course, teaching mnemonic devices, test taking skills, and ways in which information is stored in the brain. While working as a tutor and teacher, I was promoted in the field of organizational behavior to director of the tutoring center. In this role, I implemented methods to promote motivation and initiative of staff. I created several activities that strengthened creativity in developing programs. Further, I managed human resources, guarded financial accounts, and marketed tutoring services. Following graduate education at Boston University, I counseled emotionally and behaviorally disturbed children and adolescents in a school setting. Currently, I am employed in therapeutic foster care supervising staff and working directly with emotionally disturbed adolescent girls. This union of clinical experiences has given me a substantial foundation of education and skills that I could develop further through doctoral training at the University of Mississippi.

My research experiences are closely aligned with that of my clinical opportunities, and they most resemble those of Dr. Karen Chrstoff and Dr. Alan Gross. Throughout my education, I have focused my research on child and adolescent adjustment to the development of emotions in various situations. I am particularly interested in how emotions and behavior affect psychological disorders, learning disabilities, and daily life, including academics. While employed at the tutoring center, I was involved in the initial stages of a research project studying memory aids and their effectiveness in an elderly population under the supervision of Dr. John Marr. During graduate training, I aided in leading a research project supervised by Dr. Anne Thompson, studying the emotions surrounding money dilemmas of college age students. Moreover, I engaged in research at Children's Hospital-Boston in two capacities. In the department of Behavior Medicine, I assisted Dr. Leslie Spieth, Dr. Lauren Raezer, and Dr. Bruce Masek in a Quality Assurance project studying the improvement of a parent-training group for parents of children with behavioral disorders. I organized a substantial amount of old data, created a database, reviewed abundant amounts of literature, and helped discover useful patterns in the data. With Dr. Pamela Beasley in the department of Psychiatry, I was

involved in the initial stages of a study investigating the health status of cystic fibrosis adolescents following a written self-disclosure task.

Given my background and interests, I am highly enthusiastic about the opportunities offered through the Clinical Psychology program at the University of Mississippi. Involvement with Dr. Christoff's or Dr. Gross's research would allow me to continue to strengthen my interests and skills. Furthermore, the clinical training and practica in the program would support a focused extenuation of past experiences in addition to room for the development of new interests. For these reasons, I would be honored to have the opportunity to receive doctoral training in the Clinical Psychology program, and I am positive that I have the motivation and the abilities to be an asset to your program.