



Alumni Profile

Cynthia Harrison

BSW '16, MSW '17

Current Career

Organization: Private practice

Title: Grief & bereavement, expressive arts for children, first responder support

Career Overview

I am in the process of setting up my own private practice. For first responders there is a cumulative weight that comes from their work. Everything seems OK for a while and suddenly there comes this breaking point. There needs to be support along the way that helps build resiliency. These workers give a great deal of themselves and are put in dangerous situations. I think it's important to be able to replenish in a way that doesn't make you seem weak.

Being able to access supports that don't infuse the stigma around mental health is so important. This is part of my goal; to get rid of the stigma while offering supports to first responders. I am planning to have wellness workshops open to the community in London. Things like drumming and laughter clubs and creative expression. People who are going through grief, bereavement and trauma don't even know what they want to express verbally. When you are expressing through arts, like poetry, journaling, and mindful movement — it helps you to access those feelings and be better able to reflect on those things on your own or be able to come to the point where you can seek help.

Tell us about your recent work?

I did expressive arts in a hospice setting for children over the summer. When children are there with a loved one that is dying, a sibling, parent or grandparent for example, they have a support system. There are resources for them there. Children often grieve through play and magical thinking.

How did King's help you in your current role?

King's gave me a lot of practical skills and group work experience. I can go out and do workshops. My teachers were great at helping us network within the community. They gave us insights into their experience in the field. Academia is an important piece, but you also need that practical piece to move forward into your career. All my placements were in grief and bereavement because King's helped me fine-tune exactly the area I was interested in and supported me in my exploration of it.

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