



Northampton Community College

Applied Psychology
Associate in Applied Science

PROGRAM AUDIT

2015 - 2020

Jen Bradley, Ph.D.
Professor
Psychology/Applied Psychology

School of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

April 2021

Applied Psychology A.A.S. Degree: Program Purpose

Program Narrative

To meet the need for graduates who are able to function independently in a behavioral health, health care, education, or human service environment, the Applied Psychology program offers an education focused on understanding human development, developmental psychopathology and neurodevelopmental disorders, and responding appropriately to people's resulting needs in these settings. Contextual courses will help students begin to build competency in positive behavior support and counseling skills that can be applied across professional settings, while students' elective and program choices will allow them to develop broader knowledge of life issues that impact people's functioning. Students in the program will be prepared to work with diverse populations, build critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and cultivate knowledge of skills, values and ethics in the counseling profession.

The Applied Psychology program requires a minimum of four academic semesters to complete. The program is offered on the Bethlehem and Monroe campuses. All courses in the program can also be completed online or from a distance with some synchronous class time using videoconferencing technology. As students progress through the program, they participate in skill-building exercises and assignments to develop the knowledge, skills and professional attributes required in behavioral health, health care, education, and human service settings. In their final semester, students participate in a structured internship at an approved internship site, in which they strengthen and specialize their counseling and positive behavior support skills for their site's client population. This experience at the internship site synergizes with concurrent class meetings that enhance professional identity, consolidation of skills, and clarification of professional goals.

Career Pathways

The program will serve students who either wish to transfer to a four-year institution, or students who seek immediate professional employment. For those who wish to work for professional entities with this A.A.S. degree, the Applied Psychology program offers a direct path to employment in behavioral health, health care, education, or human services upon graduation. Positions include: mental health technician, therapeutic staff support (TSS) professional, direct care worker for people with special needs or mental illness, job coach or employment specialist for people with special needs, and EEG technician.

For those who wish to continue their education, the Applied Psychology A.A.S. degree serves as the first two years of a Bachelor's degree, typically in Psychology/Applied Psychology, Rehabilitation & Human Services, Family Studies, or Biobehavioral Health. The Applied Psychology A.A.S. is an appropriate choice for those seeking to work in a clinical capacity with attainment of a Bachelor's degree or beyond, including careers as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Behavioral Specialist, Art/Music/Dance Therapist, Family Therapist, Drug & Alcohol Counselor, Counseling/Clinical Psychologist, School Counselor, School Psychologist, Human Services Caseworker, Rehabilitation Counselor, Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist, Physical Therapist, Health Care Technician, and Physician Assistant.

Transfer Potential

Seamless transition to a B.A./B.S. program is possible at 4-year institutions included but not limited to the following:

- Penn State University – Psychology, Human Development and Family Studies, Rehabilitation and Human Services, Biobehavioral Health, or Applied Psychology
- Lehigh University – Psychology Program
- Kutztown University – Psychology Program
- East Stroudsburg University – Psychology Program, Clinical Track, or Rehabilitation and Human Services
- Cedar Crest College – Psychology Program
- Marywood University – Psychology, Clinical Track
- University of Scranton – Counseling and Human Services Program

Curriculum

The curriculum of 61 credits was designed to function both as a terminal degree for those interested in pursuing professional work in the human services or behavioral health fields, while also being fully transferrable to 4-year colleges to serve as the first two years of a bachelor's degree in psychology, rehabilitation and human services, family studies, or similar degree programs.

The curriculum remained the same from the inception of the program in 2015 through fall 2019. Updates were made but did not take effect during this review period (they were in effect for the fall 2020 semester and beyond). In 2017-2018, program mapping provided more detail for Applied Psychology students concerning courses. The program map was updated showing specific availability of course offerings in Bethlehem, Monroe and online so students could plan their semesters accordingly. Development of a co-curricular map helped students prepare for internship, select supplemental learning opportunities, develop career readiness, and guide transfer readiness.

Program Outcomes:

The outcomes were developed for the implementation of the program in 2015; wording on two of the program outcomes was updated only slightly in 2019 to correspond to changes planned for the PSAP 250 and PSAP 280 courses for the 2020-2021 academic year. The outcomes were developed to establish the knowledge and skills necessary for competent functioning in a human services/behavioral health position that assists a person with a neurodevelopmental disorder.

1. Distinguish between normal and abnormal developmental processes and behaviors, and correctly identify these processes and behaviors when observing clients.
2. Demonstrate basic counseling skills (active listening, processing, responding, and expressing empathy) and utilize positive behavior support strategies effectively with a client with a neurodevelopmental disorder.
3. Discuss and apply ACA ethical standards and values in a counseling/support staff relationship.

4. Recognize the characteristics of a racially and/or culturally diverse individual (demographic characteristics including gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status) and identify the potential impact of diversity on client functioning.
5. Conduct interviews to gather information in conjunction with reviewing prior assessment material, to explain the client's current functioning from a developmental perspective and identify the client's strengths, needs, and challenges.
6. Identify the common challenges and needs of families with a member who has a neurodevelopmental disorder.
7. Write effective, high-quality progress notes, treatment summaries, and other clinical reports to document treatment.

The Developmental Psychology and Developmental Child/Adolescent Psychopathology courses are offered fall, spring, and summer at the Monroe, Bethlehem, and virtual campuses. The Positive Behavior Support and Counseling courses are offered during the fall at the Bethlehem campus and in blended online format for the Monroe and virtual campus students. The Applied Psychology Experiential Learning course is offered in the spring semester at the Bethlehem campus and in remote format for the Monroe and distance students. The course offerings and schedule align with the program map.

The blended online section of Positive Behavior Support (PSAP 250) began providing a service-learning opportunity for students in fall 2018. This course offers students an introduction to behavioral neuroscience as it applies to positive behavior support. The service learning opportunities enabled students to observe client functioning and develop a comfort level with working with individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders.

Both sections of the Counseling course (PSAP 260) provide students with opportunities to role play motivational interviewing sessions to practice their counseling skills. Students then learn to construct DAP case notes on their role-played sessions, perfecting the mechanics and format of human service/behavioral health case notes. PSAP 250 and 260 together provide the skill sets students require to be prepared for their internship.

Students in both sections of the Experiential Learning (PSAP 280) course complete a minimum of 150 hours at their internship site and participate in class activities and assessments to consolidate their learning. Students then practice their positive behavior support and/or counseling skills with clients, write DAP notes on client contacts, deliver a case presentation, and evaluate ethical issues including those related to DEI.

Learning & Assessment

The PSYC 235, PSYC 258, PSAP 250, PSAP 260, and PSAP 280 courses outline remained the same during this review period. Textbooks for PSAP 250 and 260 varied from year to year; the most current versions continue to be used. Course assessments are tweaked each semester based upon student feedback from the evaluations and in class discussions. This ensures the integrity of course material whether a student takes it on campus or in blended/remote format. The final assessment in PSAP 280 is identical in both course sections to ensure that students are receiving comparable learning experiences. Below follows a curriculum matrix of the the main related courses in the Applied Psychology program during the years covered in this audit. This matrix was developed in 2019 and has not been altered.

Curricular Alignment

School: Arts, Humanities, & Social Science

Program: Applied Psychology

Program Learning Outcomes and Curriculum Matrix

Introduce = I; Reinforce = R; Emphasize= E; Apply = A; Mastery= M

Commented [JAB1]:

Outcome	PSYC 103	PSYC 235	PSYC 258	PSAP 250	PSAP 260	PSAP 280
1. Distinguish between normal and abnormal developmental processes and behaviors, and correctly identify these processes and behaviors when observing clients.		I	I	R	E	A, M
2. Demonstrate basic counseling skills (active listening, processing, responding, and expressing empathy) and utilize positive behavior support strategies effectively with a client with a neurodevelopmental disorder.					I, E, A	E, A
3. Discuss and apply ACA ethical standards and values in a counseling/support staff relationship.				I, R	I, R	E, A
4. Recognize the characteristics of a racially and/or culturally diverse individual (demographic characteristics including gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status) and identify the potential impact of diversity on client functioning.	I	R	R	E	E	E, A

5. Conduct interviews to gather information in conjunction with reviewing prior assessment material, to explain the client's current functioning from a developmental perspective and identify the client's strengths, needs, and challenges.				I		R, A
6. Identify the common challenges and needs of families with a member who has a neurodevelopmental disorder.		I		E	E	E, A
7. Write effective, high-quality progress notes, treatment summaries, and other clinical reports to document treatment.					I, R, A	A, M

Outcomes	PSYC 103	PSYC 235	PSYC 258	PSAP 250	PSAP 260	PSAP 280
Communicating	I		R	E	E	E, A
Analysis & Problem-Solving	I	E	R	E, A	E	E, A
Using Technology	I	R		R	E	E, A
Understanding Diversity	I	E	E, A	E	E	E, A
Engaging with Ethical Questions	I	R		E, A	E, A	E, A

School: Arts, Humanities, & Social Sciences

Program: Applied Psychology

Program Learning Outcome Assessed: Write effective, high-quality progress notes, treatment summaries, and other clinical reports to document treatment.

Expected Outcome: 75% will score a C or higher on the final exam

Assessment Method	Results	Recommendations/Action Plan/Follow Up
DAP Note sample	See addendum B	See addendum B

Please see (Appendix B) for assessment details and outcomes.

Enrollment

Commented [JAB2]:

Year	Applied Psychology Enrollment Figures					
	Total Students	Retained	Changed Major	Withdrew	Graduated/ Transferred	Retention Rate
2015-2016	30	7	6	9	8	53%
2016-2017	70	25	10	21	14	59%
2017-2018	86	27	15	28	16	59%
2018-2019	92	24	18	36	14	55%
2019-2020	110	46	11	29	24	70%

Overall, the Applied Psychology Program has grown consistently since its inception in 2015. Students of all ages and ethnicities are attracted to this program. For some non-traditional students, this is either a change of career or something they have always wanted to do and are now able to take classes. Students who have had challenging life experiences also want to “give back” and help others and make the world a better place. Some students are directly out of high school and some have been in the work force. Many students hold full- or part time jobs while attending school and also juggle family responsibilities. Students hear about the program from visiting the NCC website, exploring career opportunities in high school, taking career tests or realizing they want to help people. They find their way to Applied Psychology by talking with people in the field, their families, NCC advisors, etc. Students have the choice to take almost all courses for the program on campus in Bethlehem or Monroe. The entire program can be completed from a distance, in online and blended online courses. Overall enrollment is greater at the Bethlehem campus, reflecting the size differences in the student body between Bethlehem and Monroe. In the PSAP courses, enrollment in the Monroe blended course sections has been more robust. (See Appendix B)

Enrollment data shows that 20% of the students who initially enrolled in the Applied Psychology program completed the degree, either by transferring or graduating. Within this group, 30% of the students graduated and utilized the A.A.S. as a terminal degree, while 70% continued to pursue their education at a 4-year college.

Commented [JB3]: Who do I ask for the enrollment/graduation statistics for 2018-2019?

Applied Psychology Transfer Schools	
College	Students
Bergen Community College	2
Bloomsburg University of PA	1
Brigham Young University	1
Cedar Crest College	2
Community College of Philadelphia	1
Curry John Jay College of Criminal Justice	1
DeSales University	6
East Stroudsburg University	13
Florida A&M University	1
Grand Canyon University	2
Harrisburg University of Science & Technology	1
Kutztown University	5
Lehigh Carbon Community College	2
Messiah University	1
Moravian College	1
Oklahoma Christian University	1
Pennsylvania State University	3
Reading Area Community College	1
St. Johns River Community College	1
Smith College	1
Temple University	2
University of Phoenix	1
University of South Carolina	1
West Chester University	1

Students' chosen transfer schools varied widely. East Stroudsburg University received 24% of Applied Psychology students who transferred, with DeSales University and Kutztown University as the 2nd and 3rd-most popular transfer schools. It is likely that some students transferred because they had relocated, given that they transferred to other community colleges. Most students, however, pursued bachelor's degrees.

Program Cost & Income

The Applied Psychology Program remains a cost-effective program for the college ranking as 124 out of 135 programs in fiscal year 2020. Most recently in 2020, the FTE income for an Applied Psychology student was \$8,031 while the cost was only \$6,959. This is significantly less money than the college average per student of \$7,820. Income continues to be higher than expenses, indicating that this program is financially solvent.

ACADEMIC AUDIT FINANCIAL DATA					
2019-20					
Applied Psychology Degree					
	FY2020	FY2019	FY2018	FY2017	FY2016
Program Income					
Tuition	467,762	377,318	329,066	287,874	147,176
Local Reimb	79,080	64,117	54,607	47,232	23,635
Operating Reimb	191,794	149,988	124,685	108,633	43,067
Stipend Reimb	-	-	-	-	-
Total Income	738,636	591,423	508,358	443,739	213,878
Program Costs					
Direct Costs	289,226	245,710	197,354	164,453	83,497
Indirect Costs	350,758	292,791	234,741	193,858	96,753
Total Costs	639,984	538,501	432,095	358,311	180,250
FTE	91.97	76.31	68.03	60.93	31.57
Income per FTE	8,031	7,751	7,472	7,283	6,776
Cost per FTE	6,959	7,057	6,351	5,881	5,710
Inst Avg Cost per FTE	7,820	7,933	7,075	6,703	6,416
Rank	124 of 135	123 of 133	104 of 126	124 of 132	117 of 129

Staffing

I teach the PSYC 235, PSYC 258, PSAP 250, PSAP 260, & PSAP 280 courses at Monroe/online. Corresponding sections of these courses in Bethlehem have been divided between Jeff Armstrong and Karin Donahue (see table below). In addition, I am the Applied Psychology Program Coordinator. Responsibilities include: ensuring the currency of program curriculum in all modalities and all locations, ensuring curricular alignment of program learning objectives and the Gen Ed core outcomes, providing leadership for the program and serve as point person for the program, promoting the program on and off campus, reviewing student waivers, performing discipline-related environmental scans to inform curriculum including but not limited to analysis of the field, articulation agreements, organizing internship requirements for all students, maintaining and developing internship sites, and submitting an annual report to the Dean summarizing the programmatic work and activities related to the program coordinator role.

The full time faculty in Applied Psychology/Psychology includes a well-credentialed and diverse group:

Faculty	Degrees	Location
Jen Bradley Applied Psych/Psych Tenured	Ph.D. Lehigh University M.Ed. Lehigh University B.A. Lehigh University	Monroe campus and online
Jeff Armstrong Psych/Applied Psych Tenured	M.A. Monmouth University B.A. Pennsylvania State University	Bethlehem and online
Karin Donahue Psych/Applied Psych Tenured	Ph.D. University of Pennsylvania M.S. University of Pennsylvania B.A. University of Pennsylvania	Bethlehem

In addition, adjunct faculty members are responsible for teaching sections of Introduction to Psychology and Developmental Psychology. Full time faculty provide instruction for all sections of Developmental Child/Adolescent Psychopathology, Positive Behavior Support (PSAP 250), Counseling (PSAP 260), and Experiential Learning (PSAP 280).

Program Outcomes for Graduates

An emphasis on graduating with the A.A.S degree in Applied Psychology has shown growth in the number of graduates. The majority of students have transferred to other institutions, most likely to obtain a bachelor's degree in Psychology. Data also shows that the majority of students who did not pursue their education were employed in positions for which they obtained the A.A. S. degree. This reflects positively on the program students experience at NCC.

Applied Psychology	2019	2018	2017
# of graduates	10	9	5
continuing education	6	4	3
employed in related position		3	2
employed in unrelated position		1	
did not respond	4	1	

Current Student Survey and Alumna Commentary

Students in the 2021 cohort were surveyed to assess their satisfaction with the education they received to reach the program's goals. Eight students completed the survey; they were asked to assess whether the program enabled them to meet each of the program goals using a 1-5 Likert scale, with 1 = Very Much Disagree and 5 = Very Much Agree. Their responses are provided in the table below. Overall survey results were very positive, especially considering that this cohort was unable to participate in the planned internship normally integrated into the program due to the pandemic. The instruction and alternative assignments we created for this cohort were sufficient, as students rated our success on each goal at or above 4.38, indicating that they agreed that the goals had been met.

Program Goal	Average Score
How well did the Applied Psychology program enable you to meet this program outcome: Distinguish between normal and abnormal developmental processes and behaviors, and correctly identify these processes and behaviors when observing clients.	5
How well did the Applied Psychology program enable you to meet this program outcome: Demonstrate basic counseling skills (active listening, processing, responding, and expressing empathy) and utilize positive behavior support strategies effectively with a client with a neurodevelopmental disorder.	5
How well did the Applied Psychology program enable you to meet this program outcome: Discuss and apply ACA ethical standards and values in a counseling/support staff relationship.	4.88
How well did the Applied Psychology program enable you to meet this program outcome: Recognize the characteristics of a racially and/or culturally diverse individual (demographic characteristics including gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status) and identify the potential impact of diversity on client functioning.	4.38

How well did the Applied Psychology program enable you to meet this program outcome: Conduct interviews to gather information in conjunction with reviewing prior assessment material, to explain the client's current functioning from a developmental perspective and identify the client's strengths, needs, and challenges.	4.88
How well did the Applied Psychology program enable you to meet this program outcome: Identify the common challenges and needs of families with a member who has developmental differences.	4.75
How well did the Applied Psychology program enable you to meet this program outcome: Write effective, high-quality progress notes, treatment summaries, and other clinical reports to document treatment.	4.88

Two alumni from previous cohorts shared their experiences in the program, to provide some insight into the typical educational experience for students in the program. (See Appendix D).

Discussion & Conclusions

Since the program's inception, it has continued to attract a large number of diverse students. The program design provides a strong foundation in development, both typical and atypical, along with positive behavior support and counseling skills. Students have ample opportunity to practice their skills in a safe and supportive environment while clarifying their career direction. These opportunities occur within the courses and also in service learning and internship experiences. Program graduates are well-prepared to work in professional helping positions and have developed an identification with the field of Psychology.

Transfer agreements are in place with Cedar Crest College, East Stroudsburg University, Kutztown University Penn State Lehigh Valley, and DeSales University. Students who have transferred to other colleges have had 100% of their 61 credits accepted towards their Psychology bachelor's degrees.

I have also worked with the Marketing Department to provide more extensive information on the NCC website. The program handbook stored on the website is reviewed and updated annually. Information to prepare students for internship placement is provided on a private link on the NCC website and is also updated annually.

I also met with Mark Henry and Eric Rosenthal to discuss my involvement in determining students I will advise and having a stronger plan for making sure students get appropriate advising, by sharing information to all who advise students in the program. I met with Mark, Eric, and the Success Navigators several times to ensure that the Success Navigators had accurate and timely information about the program, transfer information, and career options for students. This is still a work in progress.

Conclusions

The Applied Psychology program at NCC is robust and delivers a strong, solid academic base for students interested in careers in human services or behavioral health. Academics are complimented by experiential learning through service learning projects and a semester-long internship at a site that fits with the student's career goals. Students who opt to continue their education through transfer report feeling well-prepared by their experiences at NCC and are ready for the next level of learning

1. The Applied Psychology program remains in a strong position both from enrollment and fiscal perspectives.
2. The curriculum of the Applied Psychology program continues to be updated to align with program outcomes and ensure students a smooth transfer to 4-year programs.
3. An assessment project was completed during the spring 2021 semester.
4. Opportunities for service-learning and a semester-long internship are part of the program.
5. Continue to maintain relationships with local 4-year schools and foster new relationships for potential articulation agreements.
6. Continue to maintain relationships with internship sites and develop new internship sites as appropriate.
7. Continue to communicate with all faculty/success navigators who advise Applied Psychology students to ensure important information for not only advancement in the academic pathway but preparation for internship, career readiness, and transfer readiness is in place for all students in the program.

Appendices

Appendix A Catalog Course Pages

Appendix B Assessment Report

Appendix C Applied Psychology Program Outcomes

Appendix D Alumni Commentary

Appendix A Catalog Course Pages

First Semester

COLS101	College Success	1 credits
CMTH102	Introduction to Communication	3 credits
ENGL101	English I	3 credits
MATH150	Introductory Statistics	3 credits
PHIL201	Introduction to Philosophy	3 credits
PSYC103	Introduction to Psychology	3 credits
	Total:	16

Second Semester

BIOS105	Contemporary Biology	4 credits
CISC101	Introduction to Information Technology	3 credits
ENGL151L	English II	3 credits
PSYC235	Developmental Child Psychopathology	3 credits
PSYC258	Developmental Psychology	3 credits
	Total:	16

Third Semester

PSAP250	Positive Behavior Support for Individuals with Neurodevelopmental Disorders	3 credits
PSAP260	Counseling Individuals with Neurodevelopmental Disorders	3 credits
SOCA103	Principles of Sociology	3 credits
	Elective	3 credits
	Elective	3 credits
	Total:	15

Fourth Semester

CMTH215	Intercultural Communication	3 credits
PSAP280	Applied Psychology Experiential Learning	3 credits
SOCA125	Sociology of Families	3 credits
	Elective	3 credits
	Elective	3 credits
	Total:	15

Total Credits: 62

- **SPED160** and **SPED175** are suggested electives for students planning to work in the school setting
- An Elective must be completed in a Writing Intensive (WI) section

Appendix B... Assessment Project

TITLE: DAP Note Writing

People Assessing: Jen Bradley, Ph.D., and Jeff Armstrong, M.A.

Dates:
Conducted
Spring 2021

Learning Outcome Assessed: Write effective, high-quality progress notes, treatment summaries, and other clinical reports to document treatment.

Expected Level of Achievement: 75% will score a C or higher on their written DAP note

Purpose: When students graduate from the program and become employed in human services/behavioral health positions, they will be expected to arrive with documentation skills appropriate for the Psychology profession. Students need at least a grade of C to demonstrate basic proficiency in DAP note writing. It is important for students to understand and demonstrate the writing mechanics, conceptualization skills, and terminology used in the profession.

Results:

COURSE section	A Excellent	B Good	C Acceptable	C-/D Poor	F Unacceptable	Total # of Students
PSAP280-01	7	1	1		1	10
PSAP280-02	11	1	1		1	14
TOTALS	18	2	2		2	24

Assessment Method	Results	Recommendations/Action Plan
DAP Note with rubric	<p>22/24 or 91.7% of students achieved a grade of C or better (see chart above).</p> <p>Overall, the findings support the teaching approaches for DAP note writing. Every year, students are taught and practice DAP notes on role-played sessions in the PSAP 260 course Every year except this year because we were unable to hold internships due to Covid, students write DAP notes for sessions with clients held during their internships. (This year they continued to write DAP notes from role-played sessions.) The program learning outcome is being achieved by taking the PSAP 260 (Counseling Individuals with Neurodevelopmental Disorders) and PSAP 280 (Applied Psychology Experiential Learning)</p>	Continue with this assignment for all PSAP 280 classes.

	<p>courses. Teaching and assessment methods appear to be very effective, as every student who submitted a DAP note for the assessment received a grade of C or better. F grades were assigned for students who did not submit a DAP note.</p>	
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Appendix C Applied Psychology Program Outcomes Remain the Same

School: Arts, Humanities, & Social Science **PROGRAM:** Applied Psychology

Submitted By: Jen Bradley, Ph.D.

CLUSTER APPROVAL DATE: Program level outcomes were approved in 2019 and remain the same.

1. Distinguish between normal and abnormal developmental processes and behaviors, and correctly identify these processes and behaviors when observing clients.
2. Demonstrate basic counseling skills (active listening, processing, responding, and expressing empathy) and utilize positive behavior support strategies effectively with a client with a neurodevelopmental disorder.
3. Discuss and apply ACA ethical standards and values in a counseling/support staff relationship.
4. Recognize the characteristics of a racially and/or culturally diverse individual (demographic characteristics including gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status) and identify the potential impact of diversity on client functioning.
5. Conduct interviews to gather information in conjunction with reviewing prior assessment material, to explain the client's current functioning from a developmental perspective and identify the client's strengths, needs, and challenges.
6. Identify the common challenges and needs of families with a member who has a neurodevelopmental disorder.
7. Write effective, high-quality progress notes, treatment summaries, and other clinical reports to document treatment.

5/10/2021

My name is Brandy Martinez and I am a graduate of Northampton Community College's Applied Psych Program. My experience as a student in the Applied Psychology internship program prepared me not only for future academics but also for my current position in the workforce. While in the internship program I served at Colonial intermediate Unit IU 20 where I was able to utilize the skills I learned in the class.

Dr. Bradley's class prepared me for my responsibilities to write professional DAP notes, presenting adequate case presentations, practice cultural competency, understand normal development as well as differentiating typical development from non-typical development and issues related to neurodevelopmental disorders. In the program I learned the significance of considering how an individual in their environment impacts and possibly confounds the issues they are facing (understanding family issues through the use of mapping and other tools and motivational interviewing), we practiced various methods of positive behavior support and counseling skills as a means to consider the function of an individual's behavior, how to help create a safety and sense of calm (regulation), promote best practice using the code of ethics, and ultimately promote resilience and competency.

I now work for the IU and have been successful integrating with a team as I work with kids ages 14-18 with various diagnosis, comorbidity, and even on differing levels of the ASD spectrum. I am honored to have had the opportunity to participate in this program as it has thoroughly provided me with an understanding of the clients I work with in the partial hospitalization program, and helps me to understand that there is more going on in their lives than what is seen in their behavior. My co-workers, have complimented me on my education several times as they have said that my knowledge base regarding the DSM-5, and the functions of behavior is beyond what they would have expected from someone coming in at the associate level. I am not only able to be a professional, I can make a difference in the lives of these kids. I am very grateful for this program. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Brandy I. Martinez

Applied Psychology Program

The Applied Psychology program at Northampton Community College gave me essential skills as a foundation to build on for my BS in Counseling Psychology. I hope to share in this some of the overall benefits of the program specific courses and experiences that I personally found to be critical as I continued my journey post-graduation with an AAS in Psychology from NCC. This is not to say that each course taken didn't play an important part in the overall experience or knowledge gained but the course concentration classes had some impacts that deserve additional recognition.

Learning about the mental and behavioral disorders and exposure to the DSM 5 prepared me to have a better understanding of why someone may have a specific diagnosis or why they may not meet the criteria for something. It helped me to be prepared to not only read the reports written by others summarizing my client's disabilities and /or disorders but, it put me in a position where I could understand the terminology that is used within my field allowing me to communicate clearly and concisely with other professional peers. Other important skills learned in the courses included DAP notes and Active listening. DAP notes are a critical part of record keeping for anyone in this field. NCC's Applied Psychology program was the only place that I was exposed to learning how to write them. This is something I express gratitude for daily. These short notes provide a snapshot of a therapeutic interaction giving someone the ability to know the Data (who, when, where) the Assessment (what happened, what was the activity, reactions to interventions etc.) and the Plan (what are we doing next). Equally as important for anyone going further in Psychology or entering directly into the work field with clients is Active Listening. This skill was taught and practiced regularly. This is for me, my most used skill and is a crucial part of my job as it would be for anyone working directly with clients.

The last thing I would like to mention about the program, and for me was the most critical part, is the internship. Having the opportunity to put this learning into practice as well as come back to the classroom to meet with my peers and professor to share experiences was such an instrumental part of this learning process. Books and classrooms can teach us only so much but being in the field can show us if the area we thought we liked is the right one for us or potentially open our eyes to something we didn't even think of. Internships also allow us, the student, to begin to make those professional connections outside of the school environment. It allows us to get feedback from people actively in the field and expand on the learning in a way that connects all the dots and completes the picture.

Overall, the foundation I was given from this program set me up for success. I was prepared to go directly into the workforce if I wanted in several capacities or, I could push further on in my education and pursue a higher degree taking with me a solid knowledge base with which to add on.

Sincerely,

Christie McElwee