

P R E F A C E

Graduation: So much to look forward to. But what am I supposed to do? In my case, I knew very little about what the next few years of my life were going to consist of after graduating with my Masters in Psychology and becoming a registered Marriage and Family Therapist-Intern. I had vague notions of gathering “3,000 hours,” and taking two state tests to become a licensed professional. I thought I knew all that was needed to achieve my goal of becoming a licensed therapist in private practice.

What I didn't know, nor was I able to prepare for, were all the challenges, pitfalls and difficulties along the way.

I wrote this book for you, the graduate student either on your way to becoming a registered Intern or already there. Here are the lessons I've learned. It's all here — a “how to” organize, prioritize, know when to begin your studying for the exams, and learn when it's time to leave an internship guide. You'll travel with me through the highs and lows of navigating your internships, and you'll learn about yourself in the process.

It's an exciting stage you've worked hard to be part of.

Let me help you enjoy it.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Learning How to Survive Your Journey

I remember the long wait for the end — the end of finals, papers and classes — everything needed to graduate with a Masters degree. It's an accomplishment all by itself, if that's your intended goal. But if you, like me, plan to become a licensed therapist, then reading this book may help you survive the next two or more years as a registered intern.

While you were in school, you were told about gathering your 3,000 hours to become eligible to take the state tests for your license as a Marriage and Family Therapist. You may have worried prematurely about passing the two exams because you probably heard about their difficulty. Maybe you received some assurances about passing them, too. You may even have heard something about how to study for the tests and about buying study guides. But I'll bet your graduate program didn't spend very much time explaining how you were going to live in this new realm of being an intern, a place where you will spend the next two to four years of your life.

We leave school with the attainable goal of becoming a licensed therapist. What you may not have considered are the myriad experiences you will encounter while getting there, and how those experiences may impact you and your growth as a professional.

On this journey, you will discover and deepen your therapeutic skills, strengths and passion, and you will become more grounded and confident in your own truths. As an intern you are laying the foundation for your career path ahead.

This book is designed to help guide you through the process.

A lot will occur over the next few years.

You will likely encounter an array of colleagues and supervisors who will test and enlighten you.

You will learn more about the real world of professional therapy than you can imagine.

There will be exhilarating times that reinforce how well suited you are to this calling.

And there will be moments of doubt — many moments — when you will wonder if you can even do this.

You can.

You will.

Keep reading.