

Getting to know:

Biography

Emma Hamilton

Emma Hamilton is a recent University of Minnesota graduate with a double major in Psychology and Spanish Studies. She currently holds a full-time position at the renowned Minnesota Center for Twin and Family Research, works in Dr. Moin Syed's Narrative, Identity, Culture, and Education lab at the University of Minnesota, and volunteers with Latino youth through La Oportunidad in Minneapolis. In the past, she has worked with Dr. Bonnie Klimes-Dougan in the Research on Adolescent Depression (RAD) lab exploring suicidality in youth and at risk populations. Emma graduated with distinction, received the Sharon Borine Award for best major project in psychology, and is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa and Psi Chi honor societies. Emma hopes to enter graduate school in the near future and intends to continue working with underserved and at risk populations.

Q&A

What sparked your interest in psychology?

I've always been interested in the human condition, how individuals interact, think, feel, and behave. A good place to start was my Introduction to Psychology course, where I was exposed to two-week successions of topics taught by leading researchers in the field. Each topic was engaging and I was able to 'sample' the various domains of psychology and eventually hone my exposure

to reflect my true interests (which is the beauty of the expansiveness of psychology!).

What led you to this topic?

I've worked continuously with Dr. Bonnie Klimes-Dougan at the University of Minnesota researching suicidality in minority youth and at risk populations. Paired with my Spanish major and previous volunteer positions at the Minneapolis American Indian Center and the Harriet Tubman Center, I was inspired to explore racial/ethnic and cultural differences in rates of, vulnerability to, and protection against suicidal behavior, which remains a major public health phenomenon.

Did you have a mentor, and how did you get involved with him/her?

For my senior thesis I took a concurrent course in a research lab led by Dr. Bonnie Klimes-Dougan. I first inquired about her research one year earlier when I took her Abnormal Psychology course, and discovered that our research interests regarding suicide overlapped. I continued working as an RA in her lab for one year and still unofficially assist in projects post-graduation.

*How long have you been working on this paper?
What has the process been like for you?*

I worked on this paper continuously for about five months. The process was harrowing at times, but enlightening to compile such a variety of research and findings. Throughout the process, I felt like the work I was doing would be a significant contribution to the literature and to public health knowledge in general, which was a motivating thought.

How was collaborating on a paper with another

author?

At first I felt like I was over my head, but it was an excellent learning experience. The best advice I can give is to explore all avenues when determining a research topic. You will undoubtedly run into findings you didn't expect and will come out of the experience as a much stronger researcher!