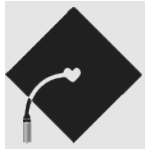


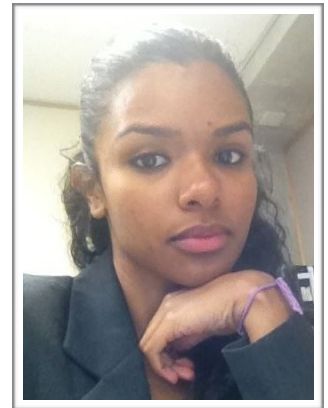
# Social Worker

Aspiring Clinical Social Worker



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The College of New Jersey, Class of 2014



## **Describe your current position.**

I am currently learning how to be a clinical social worker. As a student in Smith's Master of Social Work program, I will graduate with my Master of Social Work (MSW) in two years. During these two years, I am in my program for 11 months. During the summer, it is approximately 6-8 hours of coursework a day for the curriculum portion. I am in my field placement (clinical aspect) from late August through April, and we get the month of May off.

## **What makes your work meaningful?**

Social work makes me consider structural forces that affect the person and their psyche. I can really focus on the individual and locate the challenges within. I am able to view mental health in this environment and see how the environment makes them do all these things, rather than the pathology in themselves.

## **What does an average work day and year look like for you?**

It really depends on what part of the program I am in as a student. I will be placed at Spelman College next year, where I will be doing college counseling. That involves meeting with students and working with them around whatever issues they bring up. For example, it could entail anything from severe mental health illness to simply struggling with being a college student. It involves constant management and education. Mental health is diverse. You meet one client with one issue then another with a totally different concern.

## **What are the two best and two worst things about working in your current role or sector?**

As a country, we are in crisis. There is Black Lives Matter, police brutality, mental health, women's reproductive health. Together, we are not equipped to provide mental health services at the level we need. Being a clinical social worker in this era, there is scarcity. There is the crisis of "where do I want to go?" and in what area. With clinical social work, you can do anything.



You can be a social worker in public health, in private practice, in a school, or any setting. So the question becomes, "Where are my efforts most useful?" At the same time there is the question of, "How much am I actually challenging systems and how much am I being complicit in them?"

For example, if I work in a school, my boss is the school, so I am still part of a system. I am here to advocate for my client to help them meet their needs and still navigate the system. It is like trying to serve two systems at the same time.

On the other hand, this profession aligns with my soul and who I am. There is a certain peace in participating in the fight.

**What do you wish you knew as a recent Bonner graduate preparing for this field?**

There is a big divide in Bonner. I think that people think if you are not a tree hugger, or do not go to a protest with the intention of getting arrested, that there is not a place for you, which is not true. There is social concern in every aspect of the world. A lot of these issues are political in their social. They are oppression-based, you cannot separate them. I wish Bonner in my time at TCNJ laid out those lines better.

**How would you recommend interested students or individuals get involved in this field?**

My advice is, if you are looking into social work, know what area you want to impact. The programs are different so look into the variety there is. Most social work programs tend to be very similar to counseling programs, and I chose Smith College because it was one of the few that stressed the psychotherapy aspect of social work.

