

Brianna LaBruzzo 835302

Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Gregory Koehle

Ed Hosler, Chiefs Deputy (570) 295-9116

Clinton County Probation and Parole

232 East Main Street, Lock Haven PA, 17745

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CRJS 369, 15 credits earned.

During my fall semester of 2021, I completed 600 hours or 15 total credits interning at the Clinton County Probation Office. Over the course of my internship I have had the opportunity to work with Adult, Juvenile and Specialty Court Probation Officers. While working with each Probation Officer I have learned an immense amount of information of what these jobs entail. My main responsibilities while interning was taking appointments, assisting in interviews for the Specialty Courts, going to the local Correctional Facility to review rules and regulations for parolee's, and help out with community service. I was authorized to do paperwork, sit in on court hearings, and accompany other probation officers while doing house visits. This allowed me to gain a lot of experience in regard to what being a probation officer is, and what to expect upon graduating from college and starting my career.

Throughout my internship, I had noticed that a lot of the individuals have some form of mental health issues. This was a challenging aspect of my internship because having learned about mental health while in college, I know that it is difficult for these individuals to understand what is going on when placed in a court room, jail, put on probation or other forms of legality. Often times, these individuals just need the extra care to ensure that they continue to take their medications and go on normally with daily life activities. It was very difficult seeing these individuals in situations where they are not getting the sufficient help they need mainly because they are being put through the criminal Justice system. However, when I brought this to the attention of one of the probation officers early on in the internship, they informed me that even though not every individual with mental health issues gets selected, a part of the specialty courts is behavioral health. This gives those with mental health issues a chance to interact personally with their probation officers and the judge to talk about their progress, setbacks, and goals to ensure they are on a good path to succeed or receive more help if needed. Although mental health issues in the criminal justice system have challenged me to understand the administration of justice, I was pleased to be able to effectively see progress in the criminal justice system taking initiative for those who suffer with mental health issues.

This opportunity has challenged me to see the criminal Justice system in a different way. One example being that going into this internship I had taken a strong interest in juveniles. After having worked with juveniles, I have learned that it is usually much more complicated than just the individual in question. Commonly there are outside factors affecting the juveniles such as issues at home that influence their decision making. The juvenile judge here in Clinton County always made sure to provide parents or guardians with helpful changes within the home, or counseling to help work on and strengthen relationships. Much like those who have mental health issues, some individuals may require extra care and attention to succeed in life.

A significant amount of people I have seen come through the probation office, whether they are juveniles or adults, need some sort of guidance to get back on the right path to stay out of the criminal Justice system. I was pleased to learn during my internship that there is an immense number of opportunities within the community to help these people, and that probation

is the steppingstone to push them and ensure that these individuals are getting the help that they need, simultaneously holding themselves accountable to do well while on probation and after.

During this internship, I have been able to relate a lot of what I have learned in my criminal Justice and psychology classes to the experiences that I encountered with Clinton County probation. A few of the things I have learned in my criminal justice courses applied to scenarios within the internship such as court processing, summons, court order, revocations, and pre-sentencing investigations. Within my time in college, I have learned a lot about why people offend and continue to offend, and also was able to see the importance of accuracy while doing paperwork. I was able to apply these theories to the offenders that I interacted with.

With regard to the psychology courses I have taken, I encountered multiple individuals who suffer with mental health issues. It was good to have knowledge from my previous psychology classes to be able to understand, identify and properly help these individuals. Another course I had taken talked about addictive personalities which would apply to the addicts that I have interacted with. I was able to problem solve and assist the other probation officers to help identify and understand those areas of concern in order to provide those in need with proper requests to help outside of the probation office.

Prior to starting this internship, I was blind on what to expect. I did not know what responsibilities I would have, what I would be learning or seeing, the people I would be working with or the opportunities I would encounter. The only aspect I came prepared for during this internship was that I was required to wear business casual clothing, and my knowledge from the courses I have taken over the last few years. However during the internship I found that my shortcomings came from not being allowed to fully participate in all responsibilities as a Probation Officer. Such as not always being able to go out in the field training with Adult Probation officers, or not being able to work on pre-sentence investigations. Overall it was hard preparing myself for this internship without any thorough knowledge or help on what to expect.

The Probation Office has helped me with my understanding of what knowledge from classes apply in real life situations. Because I was able to work with both adults and juveniles, this internship has helped me to clarify which age group I'd prefer to work with. During the internship I had taken a strong interest in the Specialty Court side of probation. However, I do not think Probation is the long-term career for me. I am thankful I had the opportunity to modify my personal aspirations, although I do not see myself as a Probation Officer. I am able to take away a lot of knowledge and learning experiences I had encountered during my 15 weeks here. The knowledge I will take away from this opportunity helped push me in the right direction to finding my future career, and passion.