

Gray Lab Summer 2017 Conclusion

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Although my summer experience working in the Child and Family lab has come to a close, I have learned and accomplished so much that I will take with me not only into my continued research position for the upcoming year, but also in my course work, future career paths, and perspectives and interactions with people in my every day life. From achieving all of my initial summer learning goals, to learning lessons of the importance of relationships, resilience, context and self-awareness-this summer experience has challenged and rewarded me in ways I could not have imagined.

In terms of my specific learning objectives, the Gray lab supported me and gave me every opportunity to successfully achieve my goals. My first goal was to broaden my understanding of statistical analyses and SPSS software used to run such analyses and then applying that understanding to ours and others research. Thanks to the support of the NCI grant, I was able to get the SPSS software on my computer. That resource in conjunction with the support of all the Gray lab graduate students, (whether they were sharing their SPSS instructional manuals with me, offering me tutorials involving tedious hours spent showing me how to run varying analyses, answering all of my questions, or sharing with me their own research project data analysis plans and results) I am now confident in both running my own statistical analysis, as well as interpreting the statistics and result tables of the empirical literature that I consume. Part of this first goal was to be able to use this acquired understanding to help the lab make some analyses choices as we shift focus from strictly data collection to analysis. I was able to achieve this goal by writing several syntaxes including ones for child community violence exposure, children's hot self-regulation and children's cool self-regulation. My second learning goal was to strengthen my participant recruitment skills and the administrative side of clinical psychology research. Although after this summer, another undergraduate will take over recruitment, recruitment was one of my favorite experiences I had in lab because it helped me connect the research beyond just participant ID numbers to real people with stories who are inconveniencing themselves to assist with our work. This appreciation and connection was one of the biggest lessons of the summer. My third learning goal was to develop my scientific reading and writing abilities. By the end of the summer I had successfully read and critically analyzed and discussed our weekly empirical article for lab meeting, presented and lead an article discussion during lab meeting, completed a literature review on self-regulation, and finished my honors thesis proposal. The Gray lab gave me the exposure, tools, support and challenge that I needed to gain confidence in my scientific reading and writing abilities. My fourth learning goal was to further my PSRA coding reliability and complete a systematic review of how past studies used PSRA data to inform analyses plan within our own research. Using the Interclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) measure to determine inter-rater reliability, by the end of the summer Hannah (our lead lab coordinator) and I were within an acceptable range of reliability and had made good progress and double coding PSRA videos. I completed my PSRA systematic review and started creating syntaxes to assist in our future data analyses. My final goal was to work closely to the graduate students and learn from them. This goal was easy to achieve due to the strong mentorship values the lab

has, and without the support from all of the gray lab team—none of my above goals would have been attainable.

So, now that I reached all my summer learning goals, what is next? Luckily, I get to continue working in the Gray Lab for the next to semesters! I hope to continue to build on my current experience as I endeavor to complete my senior year honors thesis. I am excited to see how the graduate student's projects evolve as they take on their master thesis, dissertation and compositional research projects. I am excited to meet new people, as more undergraduate students join the lab and to give them any knowledge and support that I can to assist them on their research endeavors. Furthermore, if any readers are Tulane or New Orleans students interested in getting involved in undergraduate research projects—please feel free to contact me for any questions or support you may need in starting the process. I cannot recommend the experience highly enough! Beyond the upcoming semesters, this summer experience has given me career goals of eventually pursuing graduate work in psychology so that I can best give back to both the field and my community.

Beyond the skills I learned, the Gray Lab has also developed my concepts of social justice within and beyond the field of psychology. One lesson from the summer that particularly resonated with me was one surrounding cultural sensitivity and understanding the dangers of labeling and telling and recognizing only one story. During one of our weekly lab meetings we read the following [article](#) to guide our discussion about the risks of closed-minded labeling, particular within the work we do. In it, Nigerian writer Chimamanda Adichie beautifully captures how everyone gives labels and everyone has been singularly labeled to all of humanities detriment. Understanding this inherent misstep and consciously countering the instinct to make assumptions about someone's identity is incredibly important in any field where you are interacting with people who may identify differently from you. In regards to psychological research this applies in many ways. Here is an interesting [article](#) that exemplifies this lesson by explaining and empirically supporting the dangers of focusing on one story in research by expanding trauma research beyond a strictly psychopathology maladaptive perspective to contextually adaptive strategies. These are just two examples of how the Gray Lab has challenged my biases and grown my perspectives on social justice and how to be a compassionate human. I will link our [Lab Values](#) here for further lessons that being a part of this lab has taught me.

In terms of my goal and NCI's mission of being a leading woman and an agent of positive change, working in the Gray Lab has taught me how to reach these goals by

introducing me to inspiring models. Whether it was the mothers I talked to at the pediatric clinic, the administration and staff at the Head Start programs, my undergraduate research peers, the graduate students, or Dr. Gray herself, being constantly surrounded by incredible and hard working women with a diversity of skill sets and ways of contributing has helped me find my own voice and confidence in the field and beyond. I am so grateful for this experience, and I plan to apply what I have learned this past summer in all of my future endeavors