

INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Emily Johnson

Graduation Semester & Year: Fall 2025

Semester & Year of Internship: Summer 2025

Major: Psychology

Minor: Education

Hobbies: hanging out with friends & family, cleaning, yoga, & watching Netflix.

Campus Activities: SPSEA & Psych State of Mind

Future Plans/Career Goals: School or Mental Health Counselor

Hometown: East

McKeesport, PA



- **Internship (company/your title):**
Adelphoi Village (Intern)
- **How did you find your internship?**
Through the awesome Kristen Stratton! (*Internship Coordinator/Career Services*)
- **What were your duties?**
 - Actively observed and assisted in the daily schedule of youth activities, including mealtimes, cleanup, daily chores, laundry, etc.
 - Developed capabilities to document client behaviors in electronic health records systems and assisted in the delivery of treatment plans.
 - Observed youth behaviors and discussed approaches with more experienced personnel related to appropriate interventions.
 - Established credibility by demonstrating positive behaviors by completing tasks, maintaining schedules, working as a team member etc., for youth to observe.
 - Learned routines, regulations, and safety protocols. Observed tasks of the unit and sought to understand the why behind the what.
 - Learned how trauma-informed care becomes a guide for creating a safe and nonviolent environment for the clients in our care and the staff who care for them.
 - Developed an awareness of the theory related to client confidentiality for HIPAA, treatment plans, court proceedings, etc.
 - Learned computerized systems related to clinical health records, employee self-service, time reporting, scheduling, training, company intranet, security, etc.
 - Experienced shift work by rotating across times and the days of the week, including the role staff played in non-clinical work responsibilities overnight.
- **How many hours per week were you at your internship site?** 6-10
- **What did you enjoy most about your internship?**
I've always known that I wanted to work with kids. That passion is what led me to start my college career in education — the desire to be a positive influence, to help children grow, learn, and feel seen. I thought teaching was where I would make the biggest difference, but switching majors and starting at Adelphi, something began to shift. I started to feel a pull in a different direction — something deeper, something I couldn't ignore. That calling led me to my internship working with juvenile girls, and from the very beginning, I knew I had found something truly special. This experience opened my heart in ways I never expected. These young women, many of whom have faced unimaginable challenges, still carry strength, hope, and potential within them. And being part of their journey — listening, encouraging, and showing them that they matter — has been one of the most powerful, humbling experiences of my life.

It was in those moments — sitting with them, earning their trust, watching them open up little by little — that I realized this is exactly where I'm meant to be. My internship didn't feel like a step on the way to something else. It felt like coming home to my purpose.

If I had to choose all over again — to go to Adelphi, to start in education, to follow this unexpected but beautiful path — I would do it in a heartbeat. Every moment, every challenge, every breakthrough has been worth it. This isn't just something I did. It's something I carry with me and always will.

- **What was the most difficult aspect of the internship?**

The most difficult part of my internship was seeing just how much pain and trauma some of the girls were carrying. Hearing their stories no child should ever have to tell — was heartbreaking. At times, it was hard not to feel overwhelmed or helpless, especially when I wanted so badly to fix things for them but couldn't. Learning to sit with their pain without trying to rush in with solutions was one of the hardest but most important lessons. I had to understand that sometimes just being there — really being present, listening, and showing up consistently — was the most powerful thing I could offer.

There were moments when I questioned if I was strong enough for this work. But over time, I realized that strength isn't about having all the answers — it's about having the heart to keep showing up, even on the hard days. That's what these girls needed, and that's what I gave them — and in return, they taught me more about resilience, courage, and compassion than I ever expected.

- **How did your experience at UPG and within your major prepare you for your internship?**

My experience at UPG and in the Psychology department prepared me well for my internship by providing a strong foundation of knowledge and skills that I could apply in real-world situations. The coursework helped me understand key concepts related to human behavior, communication, and emotional support, which were directly relevant to working with the juvenile girls during my internship.

Additionally, the department emphasized critical thinking, empathy, and ethical practice, all of which were essential as I navigated the challenges of the internship. The supportive environment at UPG also encouraged collaboration and reflection, which helped me grow personally and professionally.

- **How has your internship prepared you for a career?**

This internship prepared me for a future career in psychology by giving me firsthand experience in understanding trauma, building trust, and supporting emotional healing. It showed me the importance of a compassionate approach and deepened my commitment to helping others navigate their challenges.

It confirmed what I've always known deep down — that I'm meant to work with young people, to be a source of support and light in their lives. My internship didn't just prepare me for a career — it helped me find where I truly belong.

- **What recommendations do you have for other students about doing an internship?**

My biggest recommendation for other students doing an internship is to approach it with an open heart and a willingness to learn—not just from the work, but from the people you meet. Be patient with yourself and the process, especially when things get challenging.

Take every opportunity to listen deeply, ask questions, and step outside your comfort zone. The relationships you build and the lessons you learn will shape you just as much as the technical skills. Most importantly, remember that growth often comes from difficult moments, so don't be afraid to lean into them.

Finally, stay true to why you started and let your passion guide you. Internships can be a powerful step toward finding your path.