

## MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE

# Child & Adolescent Behavioral Health



### What Students are Saying:

The fully online Child & Adolescent Behavioral Health (CABH) Program at USF prepares professionals to serve in public and nonprofit agencies and schools that work to positively impact the lives of children, adolescents, and emerging adults. Read below what one of our first students in the Youth & Behavioral Health Concentration, Christine Gitch, has to say about the program.

### An interview with Christine Gitch, student in the Youth & Behavioral Health Concentration

#### Why did you choose the MSCABH program at USF?

I wanted to get my foot in the door to my dream of helping children and adolescents, and to acquire the extensive education needed for behavioral health. When I read about the diversity of courses in the MSCABH program, that's when my aspiration reached its peak.

#### Tell us about your undergraduate degree.

I obtained my Bachelor's Degree in Journalism at Rider University in New Jersey.

#### How did you find out about the USF MSCABH program?

After being at USF for one semester studying aging and neuroscience, I gradually realized my true passion was to study mental health in children. I set up a meeting with the director of the MSCABH program, who patiently spoke with me about all of my options (even alternate programs at USF). Not only was this person extremely influential, but he is the reason I applied to the MSCABH program. He introduced me to a professor in the program, who is now my advisor, who also did an incredible job explaining the courses and helping me choose the right track.

#### Have you had any experiences working in the field of child and adolescent behavioral/mental health?

I worked with children for six years at a childcare center in New Jersey. As the years went by, more and more children were being diagnosed with developmental disorders and mental health issues, and my love for the job only increased from there, and I chose to continue my education. During my first semester in the MSCABH program, I sought out any professors in the program

who would willingly let me get involved with their research. From there, I was introduced to USF's Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) and soon began volunteering for them. I am currently a mentor to a 23 year-old student with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The more experience I gain working with individuals with developmental disabilities, the more my thirst for knowledge and research continues to grow.

#### What do you hope to achieve with this degree? Do you have a dream job in mind?

I aspire to be a highly trained researcher who supports people with developmental and behavioral disabilities. My goal is to excel in behavioral health research and implement groundbreaking ideas to help individuals who suffer from behavioral health disorders. I have several dreams in mind, and this program definitely keeps my options open.

*This program has been more than satisfying. The wide range of courses, the variety of material, and the excellent networking opportunities have taught me more in three semesters than I learned throughout my four years of undergrad. I think one of the most intriguing aspects of this program is the fact that the other students are just as passionate about behavioral health as I am, which makes it easy to converse in a knowledge-filled atmosphere.*

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