# Social Worker Interview Report: Laura Tatom

## Education background and training

The social worker graduated from Alabama University in 1997 with a Bachelors of Social Work and ended up getting her license in Social Worker in the State of Alabama and is current attending the University of Alabama to obtain her Masters in Social Worker. As the interviewee noted during the interview, her desire to become a social worker started early on in life. Having an idea of the profession that she wanted to pursue, it was easier for Laura to focus her attention on areas that would help her achieve her dreams. While in high school, Laura ensured that she was competitive in the important areas of science, math, and English. Further, the interviewee participated in various volunteer activities while in high school as a way of growing into the social work.

After high school, Laura had to select an institution that had a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The interviewee settled on Alabama University where she graduated in 1997 with a Bachelors of Social Work. As noted by Laura, the admission committee at the school not only had an interest in her academic qualifications but also her volunteer experience. Having had spectacular academic performance and volunteer experiences throughout her life, it was easier for her to gain admission to an accredited social work program. Laura continued with her exemplary performance while at the university and also engaged in more volunteer activities. The completion of her undergraduate program did not mark the end of her studies even after getting licensed in the state of Alabama as she is currently pursuing masters in social work at the University of Alabama while still doing social work in the community.

## Licensure of Laura Tatom

Laura Tatom is a licensed social worker after completion of her undergraduate program at Alabama University. For Laura to qualify as a licensed bachelor’s social worker (LBSW), she had to have had all the requirements for licensure as an LBSW. According to the social work licensure requirements, Laura was required to have completed a bachelor’s degree in a program accredited by CSWE. Further, she was required to sit for a bachelor’s exam from the ASWB where a score of 75 percent is required to pass. Laura was also expected to complete supervised social work for 24 months (Socialworklicensure.org, 2017). The interviewee satisfied all the requirements of the licensure application and was licensed by the state of Alabama.

On her work history, Laura Tatom first worked for 5 years at a group home called Higdon Hill that is seen as most suitable for young people that are not there for roles that are seen as independent. However, there are benefits realized from the services that help out with the transition into the society. Among her responsibilities were helping the adolescents transition successfully in the community by providing advice as well as facilitations needed for the transition. Her current job is working with Lifeline Children’s Services in Birmingham Alabama where she helps families with counseling and international adoption. Being a Christian organization, Lifeline extends the love of family as well as the love of Christ to the children who need adoption; lifeline partners with local churches in ensuring that at-risk families are supported in their pursuit of the goal reunification with their children after an event that may have caused separation. The organization also offers other services beyond adoption that include fostering, caring for the un-adopted and providing crossing services. Crossing services refer to equipping adoptive families with the knowledge, encouragement, and resources that may be required to create the best parenting environment for the child (Lifeline, 2017). While the organization provides direct services to the affected individuals, it largely focuses on partnerships with local churches as they have the information on the most affected individuals within society. Further, a partnership with the churches is usually guided by the need to offer services while still envisioning Christian values.

Her job activities, therefore, revolve around finding the best families to adopt the children at Lifeline, providing informational services to different clients, and extending the needed resources following adoption. Also, Laura’s job activities and professional roles include ensuring that the children are in an environment that they are comfortable in whether at Lifeline or the following adoption. The implication is that she has to do follow-up activities after adoption. With her job activities being around adoption and fostering, Laura’s client groups are families who either seek children to adopt or are looking for support services after adoption. Institutions are also part of the client group at Lifeline as some institutions seek to offer supportive services to the organization and the children it supports.

Laura Tatom became a social worker as she has always loved working with people and inspiring them positively. The interviewee had a cousin who grew up with a foster parent and her cousin was raised well by the foster parent thus encouraging Laura to engage in positive social transformation by being a social worker. Her cousin has grown up to be an attorney, and this has furthered the desire by Laura to continue extending positivity to ensure that other children get the same chance in life. Having grown up with both of her parents, she has always known what it means to have a family. As such, her social work participation has been guided by the need to extend the same familial love to other people in a social transformation approach. The different social organizations that she has worked in have helped in advancing this dream and she continues to be passionate in her current engagements at Lifeline.

## Professional work preferences and development

Being an introvert, Laura loves to work individually even though she sometimes work in teams depending on the demands of the situation. According to Laura, working individually has its advantages that include the ability to focus as there are limited interruptions and there is no need to change just so as to accommodate others. She notes that social work sometimes has a lot of paperwork that cannot be completed while working in a team but rather individually. Working within teams has its distractions and may be less productive when the group members are not focused on the task at hand. As she notes, groups/teams have a lot of gossiping and chattering that makes it hard to accomplish the tasks at hand. Despite her opposition to teamwork, she says that working in teams can be advantageous when the task requires the bringing together of different ideas and capabilities. When the team members are focused, there is an increase in efficiency and the completion of tasks at a faster rate.

Laura notes that each interaction within her workplace is an opportunity for professional development as it exposes her to different aspects of being a social worker. Most importantly, the organizations provide training opportunities for the worker’s development as well as a way of increasing productivity in the workforce. While the training is focused on honing the individuals’ skills for better performance as a social worker in the organization, some of the training and seminars have focused on self-care due to the toll that the social work takes on the individual. According to Laura, her strategies to self-care are centered practicing the essence of self-efficacy, self-awareness, and self-regulation. Through these strategies she has been able to handle the demands of the social work while also focusing on professional development that will ensure she becomes an effective social worker in the community.

## References

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