



Lana Sanders

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When I was first introduced to the Mississippi Counseling Association in graduate school, I felt an immediate connection and need. The feeling of being connected to so many other counselors, all motivated to help those in need, was tremendous and joyful. It threw gas on an already raging fire to be a part of something bigger. I also saw the need for continued growth was severely evident as resources sadly are often limited in the mental health field.

After obtaining my Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Delta State University in 2010, I had every intention of continuing my journey, but life had other plans for me. I spent the next 7 years working in a completely unrelated field, but I wasn't satisfied. I made the decision to continue my efforts and obtained my Master of Education in Mental Health Counseling from The University of Mississippi in 2018. I had the great honor and privilege of being selected as an Emerging Leader in 2016 while in graduate school. I understood that this meant I was making a commitment to serve. I was awarded the 2016 Janie G. Rugg scholarship and the 2017 June Comola scholarship. Additionally, I served as the Secretary and Treasurer for the Mississippi Graduate Student Counseling Association in 2016, was on the First Timer's Breakfast Committee in 2017, was the Greeter Committee Chair in 2017, and was the NCCA Poetry and Poster Contest Chair in 2018.

I made a promise once completing school to continue to serve, but my life took a drastic turn due to family obligations and my own health problems. Having taken the time to work on my health and now having fewer family obligations, I now want to "get back in there!" It has always been my mission to serve where I can. I currently work as a Residential Therapist in an inpatient co-occurring treatment facility focused on treating addicts. It is an incredibly difficult but rewarding job. I currently have my P-LPC and have just applied for full licensure. Additionally, I am a Certified Addictions Therapist (CAT) and a Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC). I have learned while working in community mental health how desperately we still need mental health resources and revisions to the system, but also the importance of self-care. I feel I can help bring this balance to MCA.