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Therapist Explains Why Chicago Therapists Need Therapy

December 1, 2014 3:00 AM

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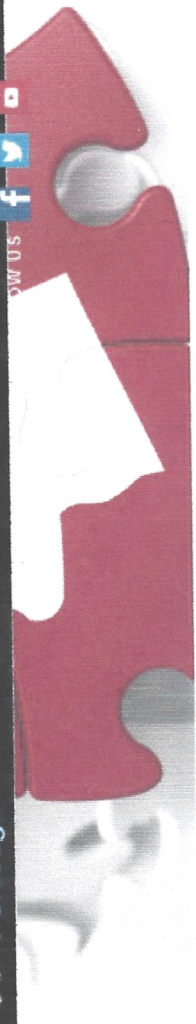
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Jinnie Cristerna has one simple rule for finding a psychologist. Don't see a therapist that hasn't already had a therapy session to work out their own issues



(Photo Courtesy of Jinnie Cristerna)

"I don't see how you can not be a consumer of the product you're selling," said Cristerna LCSW CH. "Even if you don't think you need to go to therapy. Knowing that you're just as screwy as everyone else in the world is what's going to make you better than any

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the world is what's going to make you better than any other therapist you know."

Psychology Today reports that over 27 percent of adults (59 million) received mental health treatment, varying from medication to verbal help. With this demand, studying psychology and other social sciences may seem like a bright career path. But Cristerna recommends taking more than just therapy and mandatory courses for the degree.

"I think writing and public speaking are important," said Cristerna, who also writes a regular column for JET magazine. "A lot of times you will have to present your case to your colleagues, and being able to write in a clinical way is one thing. There's a template. But to be able to write in a way that allows the common person to understand what you're trying to say is something different."

The University of Chicago graduate holds a master's degree and has over 20 years of experience. She thanks a volunteer pilot program from former President Clinton's Inaugural AmeriCorps for helping her to decide on her career path. She was placed in the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization when it was still in its early stages, and professional therapists immediately caught her eye.

Cristerna earned her master's in 1999 but credits a certification course in heart-censored therapy at Washington State as being the most beneficial for her career.

Of her chosen career, Cristerna says, "The stories and the insight that you get from other people's experiences and journeys is more than amazing. I actually grow as a person as well. I learn from them as much as they learn from me. I think that's the best part of doing what I do."

Shamontel L. Vaughn is a professional journalist who has work featured in AXS, Yahoo!, Chicago Defender and Chicago Tribune. She's been an Examiner since 2009 and currently writes about 10 categories on Examiner.com.

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