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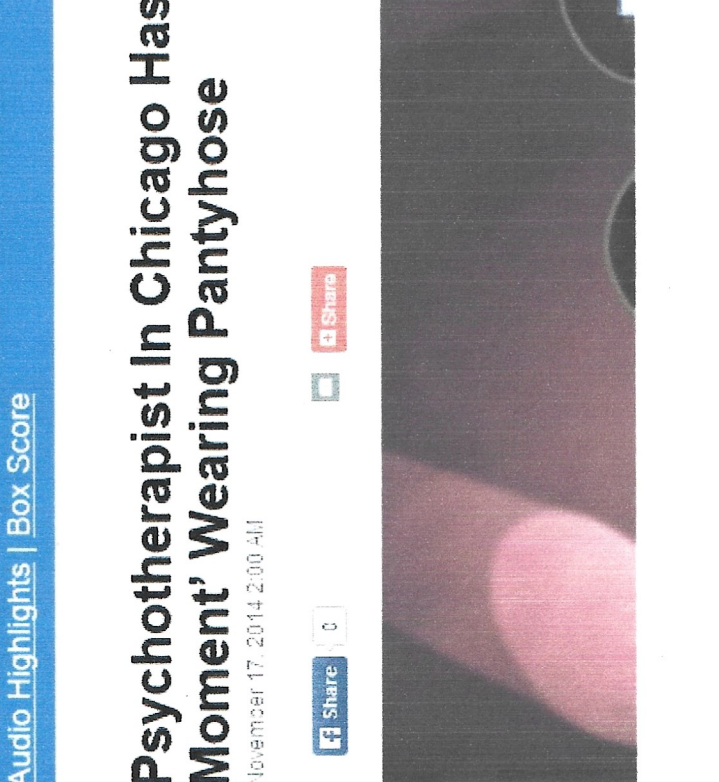
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When Pat Windsor, LCSW started her grad school internship, the last thing she was thinking about was how her partyhose would be a distraction

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Photo Courtesy of Pat Windsor.

"I was sitting in on a group watching one of the other therapists and different members in the group," said Windsor. "I had my legs crossed. I noticed that one of the group participants was running his hand down my leg, and I almost freaked out."

After composing herself and talking with the therapist she was shadowing, she said she had three of Oprah Winfrey's "Aha Moments" — wear pants, be prepared to deal with different mental health conditions and treat patients like people instead of case studies.

"You go downtown," Windsor said. "You may see homeless people or people who are mentally ill. People shrug away from them."

But the therapist she shadowed would ask about the group's family, their everyday activities, and give them elbow greetings.

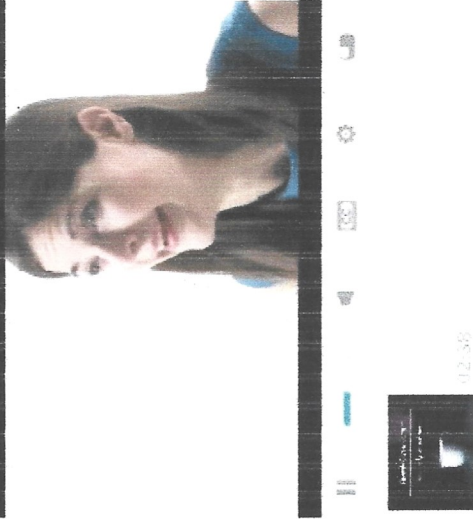
"It felt really comfortable. I got to know the clients, and I started doing that. I noticed I got a different response from the clients then."

Windsor holds a bachelor's in Psychology from Roosevelt University and a master's in social work

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"It felt really comfortable. I got to know the clients, and I started doing the public got a different response from the clients then."

Windsor holds a bachelor's in Psychology from Roosevelt University and a master's in social work from the University of Illinois in Chicago. Although she attributes the field practice internship as one of the most valuable tools for her 24-year psychotherapist career, she also recommends writing classes.

"[English] helps with writing skills because of Social Services," she said. "We do an awful lot of writing, and I've come across students that I've supervised or people with whom I've read their writing, and some of the writing is not college level."

She regularly uses a thesaurus and other writing resources to add variety to her own work. She also recommends that students expand their studies.

"Social Services has transformed a few times," she said. "For 13 years, I worked at a community mental health agency. A lot of mental health agencies are closing because their funding has been changed or removed. With my previous experience in doing employee assistance programs, I'm able to do training and counseling and still do some mental health."

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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