

# Miranda Essa

RMHCI, MS, (they/them)

## Education

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### **Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology**

**2021- 2023**

University of Central Florida Orlando, FL  
Certification Track

Psy Squared Club Community Outreach Chair

### **Bachelor's Degree in Psychology**

**2016-2019**

University of South Florida Tampa, FL Minor:  
Applied Behavior Analysis  
Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society  
Summa cum laude

### **Study Abroad**

**Summer 2018**

University of College London - London WC1E 6BT, UK Two  
Global Citizens Project Courses  
Minority Mental Health Disparity Presentation

## Clinical Experience

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### **Devereux SIPP Inpatient Therapist**

**Nov 2023- PRESENT**

*Devereux Statewide Inpatient Psychiatric Program Florida* Orlando, FL

- Maintain a caseload of clients age 8-18, doing individual sessions, intake, and discharge planning
- Create and facilitate weekly groups including skills, processing, DBT, and yoga groups
- Facilitation of family therapy sessions
- Trauma processing with TF-CBT

### **LGBTQIA Victim Advocate/Crisis Counselor**

**July 2023- Nov 2023**

*Victim Service Center of Central Florida* Orlando, FL

- Maintained a caseload of intake and individual therapy with clients of all ages
- Weekly on-call crisis line advocacy
- Supported victims of sexual assault with forensic exams, legal support, and counseling sessions via phone, virtual, and in person sessions
- Facilitation of support groups for survivors and LGBTQ+ community

### **Clinical Counselor**

**Dec 2021- June 2023**

*Zebra Youth* Orlando, FL

- Maintain a caseload of assessments and individual therapy with clients aged 13 - 25
- Facilitate groups for gender exploration, Mindful Movement, and Skill Building
- Co-facilitate support groups for Parents of LGBT+ children

### **Clinical Psychology LGBT+ Support Group Intern**

**June 2020- Aug 2021**

*Veteran Affairs James A Haley Hospital* Tampa, FL

- Co-facilitate support groups for Transgender veterans
- Co-facilitate support groups for LGBT+ veterans

### **Certified Behavioral Health Technician**

**Mar 2017 - April 2019**

*Agency for Community Treatment Services* Thonotosassa, FL

- Maintained a supportive clinical role in a level 2 residential program for youth aged 12-18 with substance use and co-occurring disorders
- Completed supervision, documentation, scheduling, and basic medical assistance
- Created and facilitated coping skills, mindfulness, meditation, and yoga groups

### **Activities Therapist Intern**

**Aug 2018 - Dec 2018**

*Morton Plant North Bay Hospital Recovery Center Lutz, FL*

- Worked with both children and adults, ranging in age from 5 to 93
- Created and facilitated groups for emotion regulation and understanding
- Completed intake and release processes and documentation
- Ran Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) groups, pet therapy, and visitations
- Sat in and assisted with clinical family and individual sessions

## **Teaching Experience**

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### **Adjunct Professor: Interviewing and counseling skills**

**October 2023 – PRESENT**

*University of Central Florida Orlando, FL*

- Create lesson plans and completing class presentations
- Create rubrics and grade class materials, including midterms and finals projects
- Provide mentorship to teaching assistants

### **Graduate Teaching Assistant: LEARN research program**

**August 2021 – June 2023**

*University of Central Florida Orlando, FL*

- Organize lesson plans and class presentations
- Create rubrics and grade weekly assignments for multiple classes
- Mentor for the incoming first-year and transfer students interested in gaining research experience in STEAM and social sciences that are deemed high risk for college dropout
- Assist in planning and running multiple events such as research symposiums or summer research academy

## **Research Experience**

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### **Research Assistant with Dr. Berman**

**August 2021 - PRESENT**

*University of Central Florida Orlando, FL*

- Independent IRB study creating and validating the Gender Diverse Quality of Life Scale
- Created independent IRB research study culturally validating Transgender Veteran tool

### **Research Coordinator with Dr. Leonelli**

**June 2019 - July 2021**

*James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital Tampa, FL*

- Created independent IRB research creating Transgender Veterans Quality of Life tool
- Research coordinator for multiple industry studies
- Lead weekly meetings analyzing scientific publications and presenting new research
- Assistant Lab Manager (May 2020-July 2021)
- Assisted in the Development of Clinical Research and Education Center summer internship curriculum
- Mentor for incoming research assistants

### **Research Assistant with Dr. Menon**

**June 2019 - November 2020**

*University of South Florida College of Nursing Tampa, FL*

- Conducted research interviews on sensitive topics (i.e. sexual well-being in minority female cancer survivors)
- Qualitative analysis of focus groups completed with an inter-rater agreement

- Created codebooks and navigator training for multiple studies including cultural minorities (Native Americans, Southeast Asian women, immigrants, etc.)
- Helped to develop a web intervention targeting health behaviors in different communities
- Created flowcharts and presentations relating to networking and grant proposals

#### Research Assistant with Dr. Sanocki

June 2019 - June 2020

University of South Florida Psychology Lab Tampa, FL

- Ran multiple IRB studies, collected informed consent, and debriefed participants
- Assisted in training new research assistant
- Attended weekly meetings that involved critically analyzing the results of studies and discussing solutions when confounds presented themselves

#### Published Papers

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**Essa, M. E.**, Stuckey, A. L., Branch, R., Poisson, Z., Thompson, K. C., & Berman, S. L. (2025). Transgender Health, Resilience, Inner Well-Being, Vitality, and Empowerment (THRIVE) Scale: Development and Validation of a Novel Gender-Diverse QOL Scale. *Social Sciences*, 14(7), 439. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14070439>

Kue, J., Piñeiro, B., Gutierrez, A., **Essa, M.**, Szalacha, L., Moffatt, S.M., Muegge, C., Candito, D., Ashraf, N., & Menon, U. (2024). A qualitative study exploring barriers to colorectal cancer screening among firefighters. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. Advanced online publication. doi: 10.1097/JOM.0000000000003095

#### Presentations and Panels

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UCF Summer Research Academy

July 2022

- Participated in Research in Graduate School and Beyond Panel July 21st 2022
  - Facilitated Self-Care and Wellness for Researchers Workshops July 21st and 23rd
- Minority Mental Health Disparity Presentations Summer 2018

#### Posters

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**Essa M.**, Thompson K., Branch R., Berman S., (2023, March) *Creating the Gender-Diverse Quality of Life Scale, a Mixed Methods Pilot Study*

- Poster Presented at the 2023 Student Scholar Symposium
- Poster Presented at the 2023 Southeastern Psychological Association conference

**Essa M.**, Cruz M., Do J., Jones N., Berman S., (2022, March) *TRANSVERSE: Development of the Transgender Veteran Quality of Life Scale*

- Poster Presented at the 2022 Southeastern Psychological Association conference

**Essa M.**, Cruz M., Joglekar R., Do J., Gonzalez S., Zoble A.; Jones N., Shealy, S (2021, October). *Development of a Self-Report Measure to Assess Challenges and Well-Being of Transgender Veterans: Cultural Validation via Transgender Veteran Focus Groups*

- Poster presented virtually at the 2021 WPATH annual national conference

**Essa M.**, Carter, J., Chabalowski, B., Lakmala, P., Papadopoulos, A.S., Szalacha, L., Menon, U. (2020, February). *Perceptions of Colorectal Cancer Screening Among First Responders*.

- June 2020 - Poster presented virtually during the 2020 SMH Annual New Knowledge and Innovation Conference
- May 2020 - Poster presented virtually at the 2020 Moffit Virtual Scientific Symposium,

Tampa, FL.

- February 2020- Poster presented at the meeting of the 2020 USF Health Research Day, Tampa, FL.

Carter, J., **Essa, M.**, Chabalowski, B., Lakmala, P., Papadopoulos, A.S., Szalacha, L., Menon, U. (2020, February). *Tailored Messages Aimed Towards Firefighters for the TIMS© Intervention*. Poster presented at the meeting of the 2020 USF Health Research Day, Tampa, FL.

## Memberships

SEPA: Southeastern Psychological Association	2022- Present
USPATH: United States Professional Organization For Transgender Health	2021- Present
WPATH: World Professional Organization For Transgender Health	2021- Present
Psy Squared: Masters level psychology students in action	2021- 2023
• Community Outreach Chair	

## Training

Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and supervision	2023 – 2025
Dialectical Behavioral Therapy Trainings	2023 – 2025
Aspire Sexual Health and Conversations with Minors	2023
Changes in WPATH Standards of Care: Adolescent & Family Assessment	2023
Changes in WPATH Standards of Care: Adults	2023

## Certifications

<b>TF-CBT: Trauma Focus Cognitive Behavioral therapy</b>	In process
<b>SBIKP: Social/Behavioral Investigators and Key Personnel</b>	2018 – Present
<b>MHFA: Mental Health First Aid</b>	2017 – 2021
<b>CBHT: Certified Behavioral Health Technician</b>	2018 – 2020
<b>NAPPI: Non-Abusive Psychological and Physical Intervention</b>	2017 – 2019

## Skills & Seminars

**Languages:** English (Native), American Sign Language (Conversational)

**Seminars Attended:** Affirming Care for LGBTQ+ clients, Creative Brain Seminar, Motivational Interviewing Seminar

**Volunteering:** Victim Service Center Outreach 2023 - 2025, Election Poll Worker 2019-2024, Psy Squared Community Outreach Volunteering 2021- 2023, Scouts of America Volunteer 2016-2021