



During the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) 2017 Annual Convention in San Antonio, TX, I was able to gain very valuable professional development as a graduate student and a school psychologist. Not only was I able to present my research at the national level, but I was able to hear and learn from many other graduate students, school psychologists, and professionals in the field.

I completed a paper presentation involving my applied research on how to best support military-connected children and families within the schools. My presentation was entitled, "Military Children: Building Awareness in Educators and Resiliency in Students." This was a huge opportunity for me to speak in front of a large audience of people from all over the country and to provide professional development in an area that I hold expertise in. This gave me the skills necessary to provide professional development in the schools as a school psychologist, which will be one of my jobs in the near future when I begin my full-time roll in the schools.

I was privileged to be able to listen to the keynote speak, Dr. Tererai Trent who has overcome significant adversity and who advocates for equal education for all children. Some of the valuable lessons she was able to provide during her session were about privilege in our country and how many students do not have privilege and are "handed a baton in the relay" that is their life and it is a baton that many times they do not want. This was so powerful for us as school professionals, especially with all of the changes that have recently taken place and the effect that it is having on multiple populations of students within our schools.

There were multiple sessions I was able to attend that focused on mental-health, crisis prevention and response, and multi-tiered systems of supports (MTSS) in the schools. These are all important areas that have been covered in my training program but that I was able to learn more about from other students and practitioners at the national level. To be able to hear what they have researched and the practices that they are



using in their schools was invaluable. Having the opportunity to discuss with others about what is working and changes they might have made if they were to do it all over again I think is the best way to learn and continue to grow as a school psychologist and as a professional.

Finally, I attended a mini-skills session that provided me knowledge on gender inclusive schools and how to better support LGBTQ students within the school setting. Topics included how to make schools for safe and supportive for this population of students, proper language and pronouns to use, and laws and policies that are in place in schools around the country that support or have a lack of support for this population of students. This was very beneficial to me as a practitioner because we are more and more working with this population of students in the schools and the amount of time that we can spend on specific populations of students is limited.

All of these discussions and sessions that I was able to attend with my classmates and with other professionals in the field have allowed me to grow as a school psychologist and will be of strong help for me next year as I complete my internship mostly as an independent school psychologist. Not only will they be of help next year, but the resources I acquired through this conference are materials and knowledge I will be able to keep throughout my many years as a psychologist in the schools.