

WHAT TO AVOID IN YOUR GRADUATE DRAMA THERAPY APPLICATION

(with thanks and a tip of the hat to Drew C. and Karen M. Appleby, 2006)

Essay of Intent:

- Avoid revealing excessive personal information about yourself that crosses professional boundaries.
 - We are looking for people who already have an understanding of clear and appropriate boundaries!
- Avoid making excessively altruistic statements.
 - We know you want to help others or you wouldn't be interested becoming a drama therapist.
 - If you do have an interest in working with a particular population(s), type of institution(s), or drama therapy method(s), please include this and your reasons why you have that (those) interest(s).
 - If you don't know yet (which is perfectly permissible), write about your strengths and weaknesses and explore how they might lead you in a particular direction as you will be doing a variety of practicum and internships in graduate school.
- Avoid inappropriate humor or attempts to appear cute or clever.
- Avoid statements that show you haven't done any research on this program OR drama therapy in general.
 - We want people who have made a commitment to the field and to studying at the graduate level.
- How is this program a perfect fit for you? Support your claim with specific evidence.
- Avoid insincere flattery and hyperbole.
- Avoid any type of spelling or grammatical errors!
 - Demonstrate your attention to detail!
 - Have at least 2 other people proof-read your essay for you after you have proof-read it several times yourself!
- Avoid writing in a vague or disorganized manner or make unsupported statements.
 - This will show that you are capable of Masters level writing.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses at this time?
- What resources do you have to succeed in graduate school? How will you handle the responsibility and pressure?

Letters of Recommendation:

- Choose your recommendation letters writers carefully!
- Ask former professors who know you well or employers who have seen you work with others in a theatrical or a helping arena.
 - No letters from family members or significant others.
 - No letters from people who do not know you well.

- Ask your references to use their professional letterhead with address, phone number, and email clearly indicated in case we want to call them for more information.
- Ask your reference to talk about your strengths and weaknesses.
- Ask your writers to include their assessment and specific examples of your abilities to:
 - Succeed academically at the graduate level,
 - Present yourself well verbally and in writing,
 - Work well with others on a team,
 - Take initiative, work independently and be a self-starter
 - Respect co-workers and other peers,
 - Succeed in one or more areas of drama/theatre,
 - Demonstrate clear personal boundaries,
 - Possess potential aptitude for and commitment to a career in drama therapy
 - (but only if your letter writer knows about therapy, in general, or drama therapy, in particular).
- When your reference talks about you, have him/her rate your abilities, using a specific comparison group in relation to you and your qualities.
 - For instance, instead of saying, “Billie Joe was one of the best students I ever had.”
 - Say, “In the 800 students I have taught in Creative Drama over the past ten years, Billie Joe ranks in the top 10%.”