

PLEASE MEET MICHELLE HRUSKA – NE LAP COUNSELOR

Michelle recently completed her first six months as the LAP Counselor in September 2010. She is a Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioner and a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor. Michelle earned her Bachelor of Arts in Human Services degree from the College of St. Mary in Omaha and her Master of Counseling degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Michelle has ten years of experience in the substance abuse field working with children, adolescents and adults in dual-diagnosis treatment settings ranging from outpatient to residential treatment centers. She has provided alcohol/drug assessments and alcohol and drug counseling for individuals, families and groups.

According to Michelle, coming to the NE LAP has been a change from her previous position, “I’m used to being the counselor working with clients in long-term treatment to provide the necessary information to establish and maintain a healthy recovery. In addition, I worked with many families involved in the juvenile justice system that were mandated to attend treatment. All too often, the last place my clients wanted to be was sitting in the chair across from me. I tried to make it the best possible experience it could be for them by listening to what they were thinking, how they were feeling and how I could best help them at this time. I can apply this same approach to working with professionals in the NE LAP.”

“My experience thus far is that many of the professionals feel a great deal of shame for decisions they have made. They have worked hard in their chosen profession and cannot understand or accept what they have done. For many, I feel this is a starting point. When they attend the alcohol/drug assessment, it gives them an opportunity to tell their story. My hope is that they are able to move away from the guilt, shame and possible denial and gain some understanding and hope for the future.”

“I recently had the pleasure of running into a previous client who was an adolescent when I worked with him. He thanked me for all the work I did with him and for putting up with him on his bad days. I reminded him he did all the work, I just supported him when I could and challenged him when he needed it. I believe I am here to help support the professionals in the NE LAP program and challenge them when they need it so they can move on just as he did. The greatest feeling I experience as a counselor is when someone says ‘I get it’ and moves forward in their recovery and on with a healthy life.”

“I feel fortunate to have this opportunity to work with the NE LAP. I feel the program is a stepping stone for professionals that are seeking a better life for themselves and their families through an increased understanding of their addiction and their recovery. ”

If you are a licensed health service professional wanting more information about alcohol/drug abuse or addiction treatment or would like to schedule an educational presentation on alcohol/drug addiction and the health service professional, contact the NE LAP at (800) 851-2336 or (402) 354-8055 or visit our Web site at www.lapne.org.

September 2010