

My daughter Katie struggled in school most of her years. She was diagnosed with a language processing disability and received language therapy throughout elementary and high school. She worked hard to compensate for her disability and set goals for which she has attained. Katie went on to complete her Bachelors Degree in Behavioral Health and Human Services and a Master's Degree in Social Work from UNE. This took many years since she also worked full time while attending school and raising a family of three children.

Katie has been working in the mental health field for the past 14 years. Some as a Psychiatric Assistant at Maine Medical Center's Outpatient Psychiatry where she supported populations struggling with substance use, mental health issues and homelessness. She is currently working as a Clinical Intake coordinator at a growing private practice that supports employees throughout Maine. Katie is in charge of all the intakes. Because of her caring nature, some clients ask if they can see her. Unfortunately, she is unable to see clients and cannot live up to her full potential without the License.

Like me, Katie struggles taking standardized tests. Her challenges are even more so with her language processing disability. To see the slight nuances in the questions on the test is difficult for her and she second guesses her decisions. She failed the test and has a mental bloke about failing again. The world is missing out on a great therapist all because of a test. Unfortunately, all of her education did not prepare her for the test. She studied an entire book before taking the exam, and yet nothing she studied was on the test. The exam does not

measure the caring, knowledgeable, ability of anyone wanting to become a licensed social worker and it deprives those individuals the opportunity to thrive in their passion for helping others. After hearing the testimony of many others who did not pass the test, you know that the only ones that benefit from the failures are the makers of the test itself. The expense is not easy to come by for an underemployed Social Worker.

I do feel that yes, once they are licensed, they should keep up to date with their knowledge through articles, classes or readings but a test does not define the capability of a person to work with clients. In a time where there is such a great need for Social Workers, this test has hindered many compassionate Social Workers from helping in the professional capacity that meets their qualifications.

My 97- year old father has always been Katie's biggest cheerleader. This is part of a letter he wrote to her in the past month.

You know how deeply I respect you for the detailed plans you made for your education now so many years ago. You carried them out on schedule even while working full time. Your work ethic was exceptional. Your "bosses" awarded you with high praise. They wanted to keep you in their employ. In short, you became accustomed to total success – then a couple of years ago you flubbed a test.

Understandably it was a devastating, unfamiliar event in your life – you put up a mental block and grew fearful you might fail next time. As I look at it, it is a perfectly natural state to be in.

Her Grandfather went on to encourage her to try again. He too sees the test as a block to unleashing Katie's full potential.