



LAS VEGAS



Picture from <https://www.centennialhillsdentist.com/>

Stories and Lessons From the Frontlines of Rural Behavioral Health

I had the opportunity to sit down in person, with David Kale, LCSW, as he shared about his experience working as a Clinician in rural Nevada. David is the Clinical Director for Douglas County Rural Clinics.

Background and Career Beginnings

David grew up in Carson City within a family deeply rooted in service. His mother was a nurse, his father was a psychologist, and community involvement was a normal part of life. He recalls volunteering at retirement homes during the holidays and accompanying his mother to deliver a bed to a family she had met through work. At the time, he did not realize these experiences were shaping his future path in social work.

He initially pursued a degree in science and did not intend to become a therapist. However, after discovering that he was drawn more towards the behaviors of people, he ultimately changed his major, earning a bachelor's degree in Psychology with a minor in Chemistry. While exploring graduate programs, he was drawn to social work because of the variety and versatility the field offered.

During school he worked at the Crisis Line assisting those with suicidal ideation and those in major crises. There, he learned how to assess lethality and support individuals experiencing suicidal ideation. He later earned his MSW with plans to pursue a clinical path. During that time, Dale Capurro recruited him to work for Rural Clinics as a psychiatric case worker in Yerington.

After a few years in Yerington and a few other related jobs, David and his wife ended up relocating to Douglas County. He was hired as an LCSW at Rural Clinics and later helped develop the Douglas County Mobile Outreach Safety Team (MOST) program, where he worked for eight years. He eventually transitioned into a Clinical Director role to focus on management, teaching, and mentoring.

Current Work and Role

David currently serves as the Clinical Director for Rural Clinics in Douglas County, Yerington, and Hawthorne. He also provides clinical supervision for an LCSW intern. His responsibilities include ensuring clinic operations run smoothly, supervising staff, overseeing clinical services, making final decisions on complex cases, and facilitating team meetings.

Decision to Work in Mental/Behavioral Health

David has always been fascinated by people and human behavior. He is drawn to understanding the intricacies of people and how their environment, family, personality, and circumstances can impact who they are.

His father's work as a behaviorist in psychiatric hospitals influenced his interest in the field. He believes people can learn that they do not have to continue harmful patterns of behavior. While behavior can be predictable, each person remains unique, and every diagnosis presents differently in each individual. After many years of experience, he is now especially passionate about teaching and mentoring other clinicians. *Continued to Page 2...*



Upcoming Webinars

Macro Moves: From Social Work to Policy Analysis

March 24th, 2026

12:00-1:00pm

[Register](#)



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Challenges in Rural Areas

David often worked where he saw the need was greatest. Larger communities had more resources, but rural areas frequently lacked access to care. He found purpose in working with individuals who struggled to receive services due to financial barriers, limited insurance coverage, or stigma. He believes strongly in serving those who are most underserved.

Working in a rural setting also requires versatility. He has worked with individuals of all ages and with a wide range of diagnoses. The role demands creativity, problem-solving, and persistence in connecting people to limited resources. While challenging, it also provides broad and meaningful experience.

Successes and Impactful Experiences

He recalls working with a client diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder who had been hospitalized approximately five times per week. Through consistent use of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) skills, hospital visits were reduced to about once per month. The client, who had previously struggled to access services due to behavioral challenges, learned to communicate needs more effectively and regulate emotions.

In another case, he worked with a man whose severe alcohol use had led to serious injury. After losing contact with him for a time, he later encountered the man in the community. The man shared that the support he received from David and his team had saved his life, explaining that being met with care and consistency motivated him to make changes.

Trainings that have been Invaluable

Training in suicide assessment and referral through the Crisis Line work has been essential. Dialectical Behavior Therapy and a strong understanding of its principles have also been highly valuable. Additionally, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), particularly the work of Steven Hayes, has significantly influenced his clinical approach.

Advice for BSWs and MSWs

David encourages students to connect with professionals in their areas of interest and seek opportunities to shadow experienced practitioners. Learning directly from those in the field can provide valuable insight early in one's career.

For students interested in clinical work, he strongly recommends experience with a Crisis Line. Working with individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts or acute crisis builds confidence and teaches that structured processes exist to guide effective intervention, even in the most challenging situations.

Full List of Crisis Lines - https://suicideprevention.nv.gov/SP/Crisis_Hot_Lines/

Social Work Scholarship Recipient Check-In



Rebecca Garcia is a MSW student at Grand Canyon University working at the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in Clark County. Rebecca has been with the scholarship program since Fall 2025.



Can you share a bit about your background (where are you from, etc.) and why you decided to go into social work?

I'm originally from California but have spent many years in Nevada, where I built both my career and my family. My path into social work is also personal. As a young person, I experienced being an at-risk youth myself, which gave me a deep understanding of how important support, guidance, and stability can be during difficult seasons of life. Those experiences shaped my desire to advocate for people who are facing crisis or challenging circumstances. Over time, working closely with individuals and families helped me realize how powerful empathy and support can be during some of the hardest moments in a person's life. Social work allows me to combine compassion with action, helping people stabilize while also advocating for stronger systems of care.

Where do you work and what is your role? What part of your job do you enjoy the most?

I currently work with the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services on the Mobile Crisis Response Team, where I supervise psychiatric caseworkers who respond to behavioral health crises involving youth and families in the community. The part of my job I enjoy the most is supporting my team and helping people navigate moments of intense distress. Crisis work can be challenging, but it also allows us to step in during critical moments and connect individuals and families with the resources they need. Continued on Page 3...

Rebecca's Rapid Fire Questions

- Talking, Texting, or Emailing? **TALKING**
- What is a cause that is important to you? **DOWN SYNDROME**
- What is your go-to snack? **PROTEIN**
- A night out or a night in? **NIGHT IN**
- Most used emoji? 😊



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What is a challenging area of your work?

One of the most challenging aspects of crisis work is recognizing how complex trauma and violence can affect individuals, families, and communities.

Often the situations we respond to involve layers of stress, mental health challenges, and difficult life circumstances. It requires patience, compassion, and collaboration with many systems to help stabilize a situation and move toward long-term support.

What is a topic you are learning in school or in your practicum that has really captured your attention?

One topic that has really captured my attention is trauma and how it affects human behavior and development.

Learning more about trauma-informed approaches has helped me connect what I see in the field with the theory we study in school. It reminds me that many behaviors we see during crises are often rooted in deeper experiences that require understanding, not judgment.

What is the best advice you've received that has helped you in your work/career?

The best advice I've received is to lead with empathy while maintaining healthy professional boundaries. In this field, we care deeply about the people we serve, but we also have to protect our own well-being so we can continue doing the work long-term.

What are your plans after you graduate with your MSW?

After completing my MSW, my goal is to continue working in areas that address trauma and violence, including large-scale or community-level trauma. Through my work, I've seen how deeply traumatic experiences can affect people and entire communities, and I feel called to be part of work that supports healing and resilience. At the same time, I reserve my footsteps to the Lord and trust that He will guide where I am meant to serve and how my work can be used to help others.

RESOURCE CORNER



Social Work Podcasts

Take advantage of your commuting time by listening to these social work related podcasts.

- **Light Up the Couch (Clearly Clinical)** - Free podcast. CEUs can be earned through a paid membership.
- **Mentally Flexible** - Tom Parks, LCSW, explains how to use Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).
- **Social Work Talk** - NASW Podcast exploring topics that social workers care about with experts and practitioners.
- **The Social Work Podcast** - Jonathan Singer, Ph.D., LCSW, covers social work, direct practice, human behavior in the social environment.



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PLANTING THE SEEDS	STRENGTHENING THE ROOTS	BRANCHING INTO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
For Current College Students	For Post-Graduates & Professionals	For Those Exploring This Field as a Career
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about diverse behavioral health careers Hear from professionals & recent graduates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Navigate job offers, licensing & ethical practice Build confidence in your Career path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discover pathways in & entry points Leverage your skills & life experience

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PREP SERIES: CAREER PATHWAYS

For the next few months this newsletter will share tips and techniques for resumes, interviewing, and overall career planning.

ATS and AI When Applying to Jobs

The key thing about writing a resume for employers that might use AI or systems to identify candidates, is to understand the job. The job description is the most important document and will tell you what exactly the employer is looking for. Take your time to read through the responsibilities and requirements and then tailor your resume to show that you have what they are looking for.

Applicant Tracking System (ATS) - a software that automates hiring administrative tasks.
Artificial Intelligence (AI) in hiring - Assisting candidates with keywords/resume writing and HR with screening for candidates.

Tips

- Understand what the employer is looking for from the responsibilities and requirements in the job description.
- Print out the job description and highlight the keywords listed in the responsibilities and requirements sections (or use AI to identify the keywords). Look at the years of experience, schooling, technology, and experience expected. Any of those areas that you match should be in your resume.
- Tailor your summary statement, skills list, and work history making sure to use keywords from the job description.

Using AI to Write Your Resume

When using AI to assist you in writing your resume there are a few things to remember.

- At some point a human will read it. Look at your resume from both AI and the human perspective.
- Make sure your resume represents you and not a fake version of you. You need to be comfortable with the content written by AI. The best writing style for a resume is concise and to the point. Flowery or overly-complex language is not necessary.
- Everything on your resume needs to be true. In the process of tailoring your resume to a job, AI might add things that either aren't true or are exaggerated. Read through your resume to make sure that nothing on your resume is false.
- Cover letters and thank you emails will be covered in future newsletters, but in regard to AI, please take the time to personalize your cover letters and thank you emails. It makes an impact on the employer and can set you apart from other candidates.