



Alisha C. Thom, M.A.

Combined School and Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program

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The Emotion Regulation Intervention for Children (ERIC): A Pilot Study

Alisha Thom has been conducting research on students with disruptive behavior and poor emotion regulation skills since her second year in the Combined School and Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program. Alisha was nominated for the 2015 Graduate Student Research award based on the extent and value of her research activities and her initiative in pursuing research projects outside course-based requirements. As an example, her presentation, along with three colleagues, in February, 2015 at the National Association of School Psychologists conference received a standing ovation from the audience.

Most recently, Alisha and her colleague Angela Almeida developed a manualized emotion regulation intervention aimed at working with elementary-aged children with externalizing behavioral issues, including inattention hyperactivity/ impulsivity, anger, and aggression. The Emotion Regulation Intervention for Children (ERIC) is a 10-15 week group-based program. The first goal of the ERIC program is to help students exhibiting disruptive behaviors in school learn about and identify emotions. ERIC also provides training in a variety of coping skills and other evidence-based practices to help students' function more effectively when they experience unpleasant thoughts and feelings.

ERIC was piloted with elementary- aged students (2nd to 5th grade) in Irvington, an urban public school district in New Jersey. Teachers of the student participants were asked to complete the Behavior Assessment System for Children- Second Edition in order to assess behavioral changes. Findings from the study showed a significant decrease in both externalizing (e.g., hyperactivity, inattention) and internalizing (e.g., symptoms of depression and anxiety) behaviors as rated by classroom teachers over time.

Alisha has presented at multiple national conferences including: The National Association for School Psychologist Conference (NASP; 2014 and 2015), Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Conference (ABCT; 2013), and American Psychological Association Convention (APA; 2015). Alisha is a member of the Psi Chi Psychology National Honor Society and the Chi Alpha Epsilon National Honor Society. In May 2014, Alisha graduated with her Master's degree in Educational Psychology and is currently in the process of completing her doctoral degree.

Alisha will be moving forward with the ERIC project, by continuing to implement the intervention and collect data within urban school settings. After graduating in May 2017, Alisha plans to continue working with children who exhibit disruptive behaviors in school and hopes to continue research into ERIC and work towards dissemination and publication of the ERIC manual.