

Hi Brynn,

My name is Ashley Charwood. While I was working/interning at a mental health agency in Bemidji, for my Masters of Social Work internship, I decided to put my hair in braids. It was November 2018, and I wanted a protective style. My internship was about 1 week from being over.

I went to my internship with the new braids, and people noticed. Most made positive comments about my hair. One person called them dreadlocks, which they were not.

A few days before the last day of my internship, I went into my internship and my site supervisor asked me if I was going to be seeing any clients that day. I told her I did not have any plans to. She said, "Good, because I couldn't let you go out with your hair looking like that."

I asked her what she meant. She said I would "give clients a bad experience and would make them look bad." I asked her how. She said "landlords or employers might judge the clients differently with you going with them with your hair in braids. The person might not get the house or job because the landlord or employer would judge them based off you and your hair."

I said "I thought you would have told the employer or landlord that, "Hey, That's prejudiced. This is Ashley, she is professional and great with clients," maybe even telling them that they wouldn't want their clients living or working with someone who held those beliefs- instead of siding with a discriminatory landlord or employer.

The internship supervisor continued to say that in rural MN, people don't wear there hair like this, and commented that when I started the internship, I wore my hair more "flat." She also said that since I got my hair in braids, my personality changed, had I had been acting different.

We went back and forth where she made more damaging comments.

It was an uncomfortable experience, where I had to be aware of myself, my composure, and my emotions as to not be seen as an angry, defensive person.

Brynn, you are welcome to share this. Please reach out with any questions. I highly support the passing of the CROWN act.

-Ashley C.

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