

HDFS Spotlight: Natalie Olsen

HDFS Undergraduate Committee

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Natatie Olsen

Natalie Olsen's long-term interest in human development and mental health, led her to USU's Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) degree. She maximized her time by also minoring in Mental Health Advocacy and Awareness and earning her Certified Family Life Educator certification. The combination of these specialties has led her to a fulfilling career at the Certification & Skills Center on the USU Eastern Campus.

Natalie describes how completing her HDFS degree helped her learn about the importance of mental health and how people develop as they face challenges such as managing stress, and balancing school, work and family. She is now able to use that knowledge as she supports students in a more wholistic way. Through her work, Natalie runs programs that meet the needs of students who are working on university degrees, industry certifications, entering or re-enrolling in college and the workforce, or building their job skills.

Natalie's practicum experiences as a Victim's Advocate for survivors of domestic abuse strengthened her ability to better understand the challenges people face while helping them find the resources they need. She also interned as the Certification and Skills Center which led to her current position. She feels that these experiences helped her develop more compassion and empathy while strengthening her communication skills.

Natalie's advice to students considering an HDFS degree is, "You may already know the career you want to pursue but be flexible and open to the many career paths a degree in HDFS offers. Take advantage of practicum experiences to discover what you're most passionate about and use that to guide your career path."