Supervising Social Work Interns:

Best Practices for Agency Field Supervisors
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Agenda/Topics to Be Covered

- Mission of Field Education
- Who’s Who
- Why are we doing this?
- Core Competencies
  - Council on Social Work Education 2015 Competencies and Practice Behaviors
  - Learning Plans
- Orientation and Supervision
  - Field Handbook
  - Student roles
  - Supervisor roles
  - Task supervisor
  - When Problems arise
  - Gatekeeping
  - Turning Students into Professionals
The Mission of Field Education

• In field, the focus turns from the acquisition of knowledge to the application of knowledge.

• Students are provided with opportunities to apply the social work knowledge and skills obtained in the classroom to actual practice situations.

• When a student completes field he/she should be ready to enter the profession.
Who’s Who?

Agency Field Supervisor
& Task instructor
Agency

BSW & MSW Students

Field Liaison/
Seminar Instructor

Intern

University Faculty
Why are we doing this?

CSWE has new Competencies!
Demands of Agency Supervisors

- Munson (2002) indicates that few supervisors are **JUST** supervisors. Rather they balance the demands of agencies, clients and requirements of the field with the needs of students or supervisees.
Eliminate Stress

• We hope this training helps clarify expectations, and eliminate some of the stress associated with field education.
Learn to be Social Workers

• Help them learn to be Social Workers! Not just do a particular job or work in a particular agency.

• This involves creating learning opportunities for students to integrate theory and practice.
• The Agency Field Supervisors assist students in applying the core competencies, social work knowledge, values, and skills they have learned in class to an agency (or practice) setting.
Signature pedagogies are elements of instruction and of socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline – to think, to preform, and to act ethically and with integrity....

The intent of field education is to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting....

Field Education is designed, supervised, coordinated and evaluated based on criteria which students demonstrate the Social Work Core Competencies.”
2015 Core Competencies of Social Work Education

- **Competency 1:** Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- **Competency 2:** Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
- **Competency 3:** Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
- **Competency 4:** Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
- **Competency 5:** Engage in Policy Practice
- **Competency 6:** Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- **Competency 7:** Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- **Competency 8:** Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- **Competency 9:** Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

CSWE 2015 Core Competencies (page 7-9)
2015 Core Competencies with integrated behaviors (examples)

2) Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

- apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences;
- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

5) Engage in Policy Practice

- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
- apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
Student Learning Plan (SLP) example

• How is the student going to demonstrate they have mastered the competencies of our profession?

# 5 Engage in Policy Practice

• Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;

The student has to identify how they are going to meet this competency while in the agency.

students will write specific activities for each practice behavior
# How to Grade Interns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RUBRIC</th>
<th>1 Unacceptable</th>
<th>2 Developing</th>
<th>3 Acceptable</th>
<th>4 Commendable</th>
<th>5 Exceptional</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The intern has not met the expectations in this area, and appears unmotivated to make changes that would meet their learning plan expectations in the near future</td>
<td>The intern has not as yet met their learning plan expectations in this area, but appears motivated to continue to focus and likely will meet the expectations within the timeframe of this placement</td>
<td>The intern has met their learning plan expectations in this area</td>
<td>The intern is functioning above their learning plan expectations in this area</td>
<td>The intern has excelled in this area above &amp; beyond any expectations of a beginning-level social worker</td>
<td>Not applicable, as the opportunity to demonstrate competence in this area was not available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grades

• Your intern is learning to apply the knowledge and skills he/she acquired in the classroom, therefore we expect to see 2’s & 3’s.

• It is simply a Snapshot of where the intern is, at the time of evaluation.

• A “5” does not mean an “A”

• A 5 would mean that the intern is ready to be one of your co-workers without any additional instruction or practice.
The Faculty Field Liaison has the responsibility of assigning the grade for the course. The grade that is assigned will be based on:

- intern logs
- ethical and professional behavior
- Synthesizing course work and practice (seminar participation, assigned papers, as well as other assignments)
- the faculty supervisor’s overall evaluation of the student’s performance in placement in conjunction with the Agency Field Supervisor’s evaluation (your input is valuable and desired)
Generalist: BSW I & II and MSW I

- Generalist practice is broadly defined.

- This foundation field placement is designed so that students can demonstrate the Core Competencies at the generalist level of social work practice.

- Social work roles typical of generalist practice include: case manager, advocate, broker, educator, community organizer, group worker and individual counselor.

- Assigned tasks often include preparing psychosocial histories, developing service plans and implementing broad based interventions congruent with the multi-variant client needs.

- The parameters for practice are usually determined by the identified client needs, the mission and function of the agency, and level of training and skill of the student. He/she works under supervision and relates to the client and delivers services in ways which convey respect while honoring and promoting the dignity of the clients served.

- Skills expected include the ability to communicate empathy, genuineness, and a positive regard when listening and interviewing, and the ability to utilize the planned change process and problem solving strategies in all phases of work with the client: engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation.
Advanced: MSW II (clinical)

- All MSW students complete an advanced field practicum.
- The advanced clinical placement provides agency based opportunities for clinical social work practice. The educational focus in the advanced practicum is in providing students with opportunities to demonstrate the Core Competencies at the advanced level of social work practice.
- Typically field agencies offer programs in specialized practice areas defined by a problem, such as substance abuse; or a population, such as children and adolescents at risk; or practice areas defined as health, mental health...
- The agency program may be even more narrowly defined by a highly specialized context, such as the use of a particular intervention model, e.g., the 12 Step Model in chemical dependency programs or a research role.
- The advanced practicum is grounded in the liberal arts, the generalist foundation, and the values that distinguish social work as a profession.
- The clinical practicum is advanced, reflecting the specialized knowledge, skills, and values of an advanced practitioner whose training which is both specialized and rigorous in its demands for practice grounded in sound science, technical skill and the art of therapeutic practice.
- MSW II field placements provide a mix of generalist and clinical activities, with the emphasis on the student developing therapeutic styles with clients while acquiring expertise within the specialization offered by the field agency.
- The ratio of generalist and clinical activities vary, depending upon the professional developmental needs of the individual student and the mission of the agency.
Orientation & Supervision

What do we need to know
Orientation and Supervision

• Students should first be oriented to the agency – Please explain dress code, policies and procedures and other important items about your agency.

• **Formal Supervision**
  We ask that as Agency Field Supervisors you set aside at least 1 hour per week to meet with students.

• **Teachable Moments**
  Students may need “checking in” time between Formal Supervision sessions for those teachable moments!
Supervision cont.

**Students role:**
- reflect on the tasks of the week
- Explore any conflictual feelings
- Exercise critical thinking skills
- Focus attention to the SLP Student Learning Plans including core competencies
- NASW code of Ethics
- Open to feedback

**Supervisors role:**
- Constructive, honest and direct feedback
- Focus on personal growth of the student - *Strengths and challenges*
- Student learning plans including core competencies
- Professional standards of Social Work
- NASW code of Ethics
- Utilize Task Supervisor
Task Supervisor

- A Task supervisor is someone within the agency that the Agency Field Supervisor assigns the intern to learn a specific skill or experience with a particular population.

- For example: If I worked only with adults with SMI and I was the AFS (agency field supervisor) for an intern. I could assign the intern to work with a child and adolescent therapist within my agency. I would remain the AFS but the student would get the experience of working with children.

- The Task supervisor and the Agency Field Supervisor would need to communicate with each other on the interns progress.
If Problems Occur

We are here to help
If problems occur....

• Prevention is best.

• However, if problems do occur it is best to identify them early and address them directly and honestly during supervision.

• Most students will correct any issues once it is addressed in supervision.

• Document the areas where students need to make changes.
  – Met with student to address concerns
  – Notify Faculty Field Liaison – meeting between student liaison and supervisor may need to take place if the issue is not corrected

• Liaison may need to involve the Director of Field

*** See field manual for more details
Some of the reasons for concern may include

**Unethical Conduct**

1. sexual misconduct
2. violation of the University alcohol and drug policy
3. physical or verbal assaults
4. Any violation of the **NASW CODE of Ethics**.

** Unsatisfactory Performance**

1. Violating agency policies regarding recordkeeping, attendance, tardiness, confidentiality or practice
2. Inability to cooperate in the learning process with field instructors and or professional colleagues
3. Inability to meet learning expectations
Some of the reasons for concern may include. (Continued)

- Failing/Inadequate performance in Field.
- Personal Problems, which interfere with student performance.
- Unprofessional Behavior: including unethical or illegal behavior.
- Negative Attitude: which impairs the student’s ability to actively participate in the learning experience.
- Inability to function in the role of a student.
- Inability to work within the framework of supervision.
- Failure to comply with policies of the school or placement agency.
Promoting Professional Qualities and Priorities

• We have a responsibility to educate, but we also have a responsibility to the Social Work Profession.

• As field supervisors you can help us ensure our profession is the strongest it can be.

• Ask yourself, would you hire this person?
Training Students to be Professionals

• We want to help students move from student to professional by the time they graduate.
TOOLS FOR AGENCY FIELD SUPERVISORS

• https://www.usi.edu/liberal-arts/social-work

• This is located on the USI Social Work web page.

Http://www.salisbury.edu/socialwork/Field Training/StudentSupervision/StudentSupervision.swf. (n.d.).


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