

## **CRITERIA FOR PERFORMANCE: FIRST SEMESTER**

The following material describes the expected levels of performance to be achieved by the end of the first semester field practicum.

### **I. FUNCTIONING WITHIN THE AGENCY AND COMMUNITY**

#### **Structural Components of the Social Agency System**

The student has a beginning understanding of the structural components of the agency as a whole, i.e., boundaries, linkages, hierarchy, and differentiation of tasks. At this stage of the learning process the student:

- analyzes and discusses agency structure from an intellectual approach viewing it as an outsider, particularly if the student is attempting to understand a large bureaucratic system or has limited life and employment experiences.
- shows elements of detachment on the one hand but also attempts to find a niche within the structure and to begin to tie in the knowledge acquired in courses in Social Welfare Policy and Services.
- shows an interest in expanding knowledge, is curious about the operations within the structure and comfortable about asking questions.

#### **Operational Procedures of the Agency System**

The student has a general idea of the operations of the overall program within the setting. Although these may be vague and even overwhelming, the student:

- identifies and lines up the actual and potential resources within the system that are available for various types of clients.
- is more related to and concerned about policies and procedures pertinent to the specific "subunit" within which he or she is involved.
- can explain the basic policies and procedures to clients, community and other social agencies.

### **The Community Served by the Agency**

The student is seen struggling to relate to the needs and demands of the community with what is available within the agency. The student:

- is concerned about the at-risk population groups within the community and can identify the service resource allocation gaps within the geographic area and own agency.
- is beginning to formulate some conclusions based on meaningful facts about the real and potential obstacles to groups who are discriminated against.

The student can question appropriately the agency's involvement in changing or revising social policy, and its attempts to keep current with community (local and broader) changes. The student:

- wants to offer ideas and suggestions, but may need help with an objective presentation.
- is aware of activities and programs in the community, or within the agency, which are concerned with decreasing discrimination and injustice.
- in some instances, may be actively involved with community groups working toward change.

### **Resources Systems Available to Clients**

The student has been eager to learn, throughout the semester, about resource systems available to clients. The student:

- has developed a good roster of social agency resources which would be helpful to clients.
- can discuss, with the field instructor, feelings of frustration or discouragement in dealing with problems encountered with the resource system's procedures.

## **II. WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT**

### **Administrative Procedure**

The student is clear about expectations of the agency in terms of work performance and is able to take responsibility for following through on administrative procedures. Time sheets and statistical reports may create frustration, and the student may be critical about the time and energy invested in completing the necessary forms. In spite of the frustration, the student:

- accepts the need for such detail to facilitate the smooth operations of the program and completes such tasks with efficiency and accuracy.
- follows the agency hours as a regular employee of the agency.
- is clear about the importance of the field instructor being informed of his or her daily schedule.

### **Recording Skills**

The student's process recording has improved to the point where:

- they are completed in a reasonable amount of time and effort.
- they are turned in to the field instructor sufficiently in advance of the weekly conference to insure study and evaluation by the field instructor.

The student is aware of the importance of prompt recording for agency purposes. The student:

- is still working on clear, concise written presentations but has gained considerable direction, review and feedback from the field instructor.
- sees agency recording as necessary and valuable to meeting the client's needs but also in terms of own learning and professional development.
- drafts letters, memos, reports in accordance with the regulations of the agency.
- rewrites letters, reports, etc. less frequently and skill is developing.

### **Organizational Skills**

The student demonstrates organizational skills in the management of case assignments:

- there is good capacity to set priorities, to initiate contacts within the agency on behalf of the clients, and to follow through on suggestions, ideas, and information from these contacts.
- there is demonstrated ability to make community contacts related to the needs of the client with a fair amount of ease and to follow through in meeting these needs.

### **III. LEARNING**

#### **Responsibility for Own Learning**

Learning is a visible process for the student reflected in:

- responses to new ideas and knowledge in a thoughtful, critical manner and attempts to incorporate this knowledge in working with clients.
- the process to integrate theory from classroom courses and readings.
- attempts to engage in the learning tasks and freedom to take some risks.
- increased sharing of ideas and appropriate questioning of agency personnel.

#### **Learning Through Process Recordings**

Process recording has proven helpful to the student's learning, and development of skills are reflected in this written exercise. The recordings have helped the student:

- to be more consciously aware of using self in contacts with clients.
- to recognize one's own thoughts and feelings in the intervention process.
- to begin to take responsibility for evaluating own strengths and for identifying areas that need to be developed.

#### **Learning Through Field Instruction**

The student has adjusted to field instruction as an educationally directed method of learning/teaching:

- roles are clearer although not entirely established.
- it is easier for the student to accept constructive criticism and to use it in the development of knowledge, skill, and self-awareness.
- reinforcement and feedback from the field instructor is seen as an essential part of the change process.
- productive use is made of the supervisory conferences, and there is follow-through on ideas and suggestions resulting from conferences.

#### **IV. DIRECT WORK WITH CLIENT SYSTEMS**

##### **Data Collecting**

The student has gained a theoretical understanding of the helping process and is beginning to demonstrate capacity to apply this approach to clients. Consistent skill in this area may be lacking, but there is good potential for continued development. More specifically, the student:

- is aware of the importance of relevant systems and biopsychosocial information.
- is able to pull factual information together and to assess and interpret the information in order to establish a plan for intervention.
- is aware of the need to identify other systems involved in the problem or potential problem situation and can explore these with a fair amount of comfort.
- is beginning to see the relatedness between the client and the problem situation, although may tend to become fascinated with the intricacies and analysis of the problem per se.

##### **Assessing and Planning for Intervention**

The student is beginning to make some connection between the presenting problems in the case situation and the underlying factors involved. More emphasis is given to the explicit or external factors but, with some struggling, the student can organize the factual data and begin to identify some of the underlying causes which created the current situation. More specifically, the student:

- is beginning to identify some of the effects of societal attitudes toward differences in culture, race, life styles, and the changing roles of women and families on the client and the current problems.

- an awareness of issues of social and economic justice and discrimination.
- examines own attitudes, biases and stereotypes.
- a beginning ability to note obvious discrepancies in client self-reported information, such as physical appearance, behavior and interpersonal interaction.
- a beginning ability to conduct a comprehensive generalist social work assessment, including engagements, goal setting, service evaluation, practice evaluation, termination and follow-up.
- looks for indications of how the client has coped with the problem situation and starts with plans for beginning intervention.
- can assess the willingness of the client to participate in the assessment process.

### **Intervention with the Client System**

There are clear signs that the student is able to use self appropriately in intervention with clients and can begin to use the skills of critical thinking:

- capitalize on prior development of observational skills, and use this skill effectively in client contacts.
- note obvious discrepancies in self-reported information such as physical appearances, behavior, and general interactions.
- listen to what the client brings to the interview, meeting or encounter, and is supportive in helping the client to discuss the problem(s) or needs.
- begins to make connections between the presenting problems, underlying problems, and the clients' efforts.

The student is continuing to learn to explain community resources to clients and to interpret the client's special needs, problems, and situation to the appropriate part of the resource system. If the client's need cannot be met within the agency or if supplemental help is needed, the student:

- is prepared to seek out information regarding environmental resources.

- is willing to explore the complex systems within the environment although may be overwhelmed or confused by the operations of some.
- helps clients with these linkages in order to meet their needs.

The student helps the client to feel comfortable in discussing the problem. This includes:

- conveying interest, concern and capacity to identify with the clients.
- willingness to invest efforts in learning about clients from different cultures, race or life styles despite discomfort in working with clients who are different from self.
- awareness of own feelings and the role they play in working with clients.
- cognizance of the need to be consciously aware of self in the interactions with clients.

### **Integration of Theory**

There are some indications that the student is beginning to integrate theoretical content from classroom and readings. The student:

- realizes that theory can be applied but is unclear as to how to use it and may need considerable help in sifting out appropriate knowledge that applies to the clients and field setting.
- sees more meaning in the interrelatedness of systems to the client's behavior.

## **V. PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Changes in Ways of Thinking, Feeling, Doing**

At this point it is extremely important for the student to demonstrate some capacity to change in ways of thinking, feeling, and doing. This frequently requires new approaches in the doing and the need for compromise. Although this may be difficult at times there is evidence that these changes and/or adjustments can be made. This is seen in:

- relationships with peers and with professional clerical staff and other members of the agency or unit of operation.

- aware of NASW Code of Ethics with specific attention to the rules of confidentiality, the “duty to warn” and the responsibility as a mandated reporter.

### **Management of Own Feelings and Attitudes**

The student is beginning to see that his or her ideas and thinking are both valid and valued. This is reflected by:

- demonstrating the ability to form professional relationships that are built on respect and regard, and that ensure personal dignity and individual worth.
- discussing feelings with the field instructor, and indicates a willingness to risk with questions, ideas and concerns as they relate to plans for the client with whom the student is working.

As the student continues to deal with the reality of the case situation, there is more evidence of being in touch with own feelings and attitudes regarding individual differences. There is:

- a basic respect for clients as individuals.
- interest in learning about differences related to race, gender, religion, ethnicity, age, class, disability and sexual orientation.
- openness to personal reactions and responses in dealing with clients in the helping process.

### **Profession Identification**

The student is becoming more realistic in terms of his or her concept of the professional person. There is still some tendency to idealize the professional person, and the student needs direction and support in order to gain a clearer perspective of ethical practice and role of the professional social worker. This includes evaluation of both positive and negative performance.

The student is curious about professional associations and is interested in how they relate to the agency, client and self. He or she may have joined the national professional organization because of an awareness of shared professional commitments but, as yet, is not ready to participate in the professional activities.