



University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

# ***Field Education Program***

## Field Instructor Training Module Seven

### Problems in Field Education

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## **Problems in Field Education**

When making the decision to become a Field Instructor most individuals see an opportunity to give back to the profession and to mentor the next generation of social workers. Agreeing to mentor a student is a great task and responsibility due to the time and effort involved in insuring that the student receives the best learning opportunity available. In most cases, the process is smooth with little or no complications. However, there are times when, despite the Field instructor's best efforts, problems arise.

Although it is difficult, every Field Instructor must be willing and ready to deal with student problems when they occur. It undoubtedly is the most difficult aspect of being a Field Instructor. Areas where problems may occur include: Professionalism, Personal Circumstances, Performance, and Relationships with others (Field Instructor, Clients, and Co-Workers/Fellow Interns).

### **PROFESSIONALISM**

Professionalism includes the following:

- A student's dress and grooming
  - Students dress and grooming should conform to agency expectations and should not interfere with their ability to intervene with clients or be taken seriously by clients and co-workers
- Attendance
  - Students should arrive to the placement site on time and should not have excessive absences
- Behavior and attitude
  - Students should have a positive attitude about the agency, field instructor, co-workers, fellow interns, and clients
- Identity with social work as a profession
  - Students should embody the 6 values of the social work profession and should demonstrate their commitment to those values through their performance and attitude
- Use of time
  - Students should make good use of their time by managing it in a manner that is conducive to completing tasks and assignments on time and by established deadlines
- Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics

- Students should have knowledge of and a complete understanding of the standards outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics and should demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through their conduct and performance

## **PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Personal Circumstances includes the following:

- Family of Origin Issues
  - Students should be aware of how their family of origin issues may impact their relationships at their placement site, as well as their interactions with clients
- Current Family Issues
  - Students should be aware of how their current family situation may impact their performance at their placement site
- Other Commitments
  - Students should insure that any other commitments outside of the internship do not interfere with their commitment to the agency and clients at their placement site
- Ability to Balance School and Work
  - Students should make the necessary arrangements to insure that they are able to effectively handle school and work in such a manner that neither is adversely affected by the other

## **PERFORMANCE**

Performance includes the following:

- Professional etiquette
  - Students should know how to communicate in a professional manner, demonstrate office etiquette, and conduct themselves in a professional manner when representing the agency and its clients
- Time Management
  - Students should manage time wisely to insure that they arrive to work on time, meet with clients when scheduled, complete paper work on time, and meet all established deadlines
- Quality of Work Product

- Students should produce work products that reflect the guidelines set forth by the agency and that demonstrate the knowledge and skills gained from their social work education
- **Work Place Behavior**
  - Students should conduct themselves in such a manner as to promote the dignity and respect of all individuals they come into contact with while carrying out the duties and responsibilities of the agency
- **Skill Level**
  - Students should demonstrate the knowledge, values, and skills of the social work profession gained from their social work education through their behavior, actions, and work product

## **RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS**

Students should maintain appropriate boundaries and adhere to the NASW code of ethics throughout the internship. In addition, relationship with others includes the following:

- **Field Instructor**
  - **Teaching Style vs. Learning Style**
    - Students should work with Field Instructors to insure that the Field Instructors teaching style and their learning style complement each other and should discuss any issues or concerns with the Field Instructor
  - **Supervisory Meetings**
    - Students should work with Field Instructors to insure that the supervisory meetings occur on a consistent basis and that they are prepared for the meetings with questions, client issues, and concerns
- **Clients**
  - **Establishing Rapport**
    - Students should work with the Field Instructor to build on the knowledge and skills necessary to build and maintain rapport with clients
  - **Maintaining Therapeutic Relationship**
    - Students should work with the field instructor to build on the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain a healthy, therapeutic relationship with clients

- Utilizing Appropriate Treatment Techniques
  - Students should work with the field instructor to build on the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to effectively intervene with clients
- Managing Client Case Effectively
  - Students should work with the field instructor to build on the knowledge, skills, and tools to effectively manage clients from the initial intake to the termination of services
- Co-workers/Fellow Interns
  - Team Work
    - Students should demonstrate an ability to work well with others
  - Carrying own Weight
    - Students should demonstrate an ability to carry their own workload
  - Consultation
    - Students should consult with their field instructor and others to insure they receive proper supervision and support during their internship
  - Collaboration
    - Students should collaborate with their field instructor and others to insure they receive relevant information, appropriate instructions, and necessary resources to work with clients

## **PROCESS FOR HANDLING STUDENT PROBLEMS**

- Provide student with immediate feedback addressing the problem
- Be clear and concise, giving specific information about the problem
- Inform the student about what needs to be done to correct the problem
- Set a timeframe for the student to address the problem
- Follow up with the student after set timeframe to provide additional feedback and make any adjustments necessary
- Document all interventions with the student to correct the problem
- Address area of growth in advanced practice behavior learning plan and accurately evaluate during the evaluation periods

- If attempts at resolving the issue are not successful, please contact the Field Education Office for assistance.
- ***Please notify the field education office immediately of any recurring problems with students or any problem involving sexual harassment, discrimination, or illegal behavior. Please do not wait until a scheduled site visit or a written evaluation to bring up serious, ongoing issues.***