

BSW SW 410 AND SW 411 SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS

Asking for Help

All clients coming in for agency services are in a position to be asking for help from someone else. The purpose of this assignment is to develop an awareness of what it means to ask for help. The goal is for the student to have an increased understanding of what it is like to be in the "helpee" role and to depend on and need someone else.

Write up an experience in which you had to ask for help. The assignment is to be typed and include, but not be limited to, the following information.

1. A brief description of what you were asking for, why you were needing to ask for this help, and of whom you were asking help.
2. Your FEELINGS about the need to ask for this help, your feelings about the process of asking. Comment on the feelings about yourself and also your feelings about the person from whom you are sought help
3. Afterwards, what were your feelings about the help that was given or not given? Also, describe your feeling about the person from whom you asked the help and why you felt as you did.

Taking On The Role Of The Client

This assignment is best done during the week the student begins at their placement agency. This assignment is to be typewritten.

Students spend up to an hour in the waiting room of the agency. * Students imagine they are a client waiting to seek help from this agency. Write up this experience and include, but do not feel limited to, the following:

- How does the agency waiting area sound, look, smell, feel to you?
- What "messages" are given off by the environment (interior and exterior), the staff, and the professionals?
- What are your feelings about the environment?
- How do you feel about being there?
- Speculate on how you might feel if you were coming to this agency for the first time seeking services as a client.

*If there is not a waiting room or equivalent at the student's agency, students are encouraged to spend an hour in the waiting room of the Family Independence Agency, a hospital emergency room, or the Family Health Center on a clinic day. Discuss other options with your faculty liaison.

Defining And Describing Agency Services

The purpose of this assignment is to help you understand your field agency in respect to the kind of problems it deals with, its functions, its structure and processes, and its service provider role within the community. It is suggested that you discuss the assignment with your field instructor before attempting to answer the questions.

Assignment A:

- Describe a brief history of your field placement agency.
- Describe the primary sources of funding for your agency.
- What are the major social problems your agency deals with?
- Within what general field of social work practice or social welfare is the agency identified?
- Is the agency public or private? What do you base this on?
- What service does the agency offer? What service does your particular unit within the agency offer (if applicable)? Are the services that are provided the primary purpose of the agency or secondary to some other services provided (e.g., public assistance, medical services, educational, etc.)?
- What type of clients does your agency serve?
- What are the primary referral sources to your agency?
- What is the educational background of staff of the agency, i.e., what professions and disciplines are represented?
- What is the role of social workers in your agency?

Assignment B:

- What other services exist within the community to solve the same social problems your agency deals with?
 - How are the services interdependent, i.e., funding, exchange of clients, information, etc.?
 - What problems arise between the service providers?
- What organizations compete for your service?
- Identify the organizations that provide legitimacy for your agency (e.g., United Way, an accreditation organization, etc.).
- What is the organizational structure of your agency? (Chart out. Be able to show where you fit in.)
- Describe how the agency evaluates the effectiveness of its outcomes.
- Identify the sources of data (e.g., consumer, program, financial, etc.) the agency uses that will answer important questions to their funders/donors about their consumers, programs, or services?
- How diverse is the staff, board of directors, and volunteers?
- What qualifications would you need to be considered for employment at your agency?

Developing A Learning Contract

The purpose of contracting is to identify the expectations of all units involved in field education and to focus the learning. An important aspect of developing contracts is phrasing the objectives in behaviorally specific language, i.e., language that spells out what behavior defines what is desired/expected as well as indicates what will be the means of measuring the attainment of the behavior.

Goals are created to provide direction and continuity in the learning process and to prevent needless wandering. Objectives are the concrete steps leading to the established goals. The basic formula for written objectives, as presented by Kirst-Ashman and Hull in Understanding Generalist Practice, is “WHO will do WHAT by WHEN.” Both goals and objectives must be clear, specific, and measurable. This involves three criteria: objectivity (what can be seen and measured), completeness (provide enough information), and clarity (any reader can understand).

In addition, the learning contract goals and objectives must include information on work performance, conditions, and standards. Performance incorporates what has to be done. Conditions identify the circumstances and time frame, both duration and frequency, under which the task performance will take place. Standards involve evaluation criteria and outline how well the task must be performed to demonstrate competency.

All learning contracts should include the following categories with the specified information:

Identifying Information

This section is to include the student name and contact information, and the agency name, address and phone number, the primary field instructor's name and direct phone number also needs to be included. The name and contact information of the secondary field instructor is also needed if there is one. The time frame the contract covers needs to be clearly specified, including semester/session covered by the contract as well as the days and hours the student will be at the agency.

Assignments

This section should identify specific assignments at the agency that the student must complete. These assignments may be those required by the faculty liaison, those related to the student's interests, and those requested by the field instructor. Timely completion of the required safety checklist, how the student will be oriented and how safety will be incorporated into the field placement must be included in this section.

Agency Requirements

This section includes the agency's expectations regarding confidentiality, computer use, record keeping, policy and procedures, dress code, and any other substantive requirements or expectations of the agency. Any behavior which will be evaluated by the field Instructor and is not already a part of the student's evaluation (see appendix) should be included in this section.

Student Professional Development

In this section, the student creates goals and objectives for the skills, activities, and professional knowledge base to be acquired, utilized, and/or refined. The evaluation (see appendix) should be reviewed and utilized as the reference point for the areas of student development. Consideration is given to the type of agency, the needs of the clients served, agency limitations and boundaries, and what the community needs from this agency. In addition, the student's learning style and the field instructor's teaching approach will need to be taken into consideration. Students use this learning opportunity to stretch themselves professionally and create goals that will take them beyond their current knowledge base and push them into new areas of professional experience. In this section, students will note the on-going use of the N.A.S.W. Code of Ethics as the guide for the development of their ethical competence.

Student Personal Development

This section should identify what the student hopes to acquire in terms of personal growth and development as a result of the field placement experience. Interpersonal skill development, such as appropriate use of confrontation, self-awareness, and boundary development are areas that all students should consider including. Student attitude toward placement, clients and the student's level of comfort/discomfort should be areas to explore during placement. If the student is aware of particular shortcomings or skills related to specialized interests, this is the place to identify them.

Supervision

This section includes goals and objective related to the interactions of the parties involved. Interaction between the student and the field instructor should include the following information:

- Established routine for weekly conference/consultation time.
- Use of weekly agenda prepared by the student.
- Standard review/evaluation dates.
- Procedure for dealing with conflict and problems.
- Statement of mutual participation.

Interaction involving the faculty liaison for the B.S.W. student includes conducting bi-weekly seminars (six in the first semester/session, seven in the second semester/session) to integrate classroom learning and facilitate professional discussion among students. In addition, the faculty liaison makes three visits to the agency during the placement; usually two the first semester/session and one the second semester/session. Additional visits are made as necessary. During these visits the field instructor, faculty liaison, and student review the student's progress and professional development using the goals established in the learning contract as the basis for evaluation. The faculty liaison and the field instructor may conference as needed to maximize student's learning and to facilitate problem-solving endeavors.

Additional Information

- The writing of the contract will reflect standards appropriate to the college level. Spelling, clarity, and conciseness are important considerations.
- A new or revised contract should be developed for the second semester. During the spring/summer sessions, an addendum to the contract may be appropriate.
- All parties who will participate in the evaluation process should sign the contract. If a student has a primary field instructor and a secondary field instructor, both people should sign the contract. When the final form of the contract has been approved by the faculty liaison, a contract signed by all parties should be given to all parties.

Daily Field Logs

Students are to complete a daily field log for each day they report to their placement. At the end of each field day, the student should take time to reflect on what has happened that day. Events and activities should be described briefly in the first column/section. In the second column/section, the student briefly describes reactions and feelings arising as a result of the identified event/s. This section involves personal perspectives and should make use of terms and words that will describe feelings and show evidence of increased self-awareness. Last, the third column/section encourages the student to analyze the experience, viewing it as a professional. Here the student demonstrates an understanding of the how and why of the event and shows evidence of the professional skill and knowledge base that has been utilized or enhanced.

The rationale for field logs include:

- Provide a method of communication between the student and the faculty liaison. The faculty liaison is able to determine if the student is having adequate, appropriate learning experiences and is able to spot problems at any point in time.
- Students begin developing good professional skills in documentation. Field logs done daily and timely set the stage for completing professional documentation timely.

- Students begin to develop an awareness of separating personal feelings from professional behaviors.
- Students begin to differentiate between personal statements and professional written documentation. Logs provide an opportunity to make initial use of professional terminology.
- Field logs provide a formal mechanism to assist in the evaluation of student performance.

See samples of field logs in the appendix.

Case Presentation

Students select an individual client, a group, a policy, or a situation from the field placement agency to present to the class. Following the general guidelines in the textbook Understanding Generalist Practice, by Kirst-Ashman and Hull used in Social Work 400 and Social Work 401, students will prepare an oral presentation of approximately 15 to 20 minutes to present to their peers. At the conclusion of the presentation, students will give feedback and engage in brainstorming regarding what further ideas and suggestions they have for working successfully with the situation presented (see example).

Resume And Cover Letter

Each student will be required to complete a resume when they do their initial field application. Students should update their resume each time a significant professional event occurs such as completion of the field placement, additional training, joining a professional organization and/or completing volunteer activities.

School Of Social Work's Field Education "Self-Rating" Scale

Students originally complete this professional and interpersonal skills self-rating scale as part of their initial field application for field placement. To assist students in understanding their own learning process, students complete this rating scale again at the conclusion of the field placement and then have the opportunity to compare their ratings as a concrete measure of learning. From this, students also have the opportunity to see areas in which they continue to need to develop and enhance their skills and knowledge base.

Self-Reflection Summary

The goal of this paper is to have students summarize and synthesize their field learning experiences and their concurrent coursework. This assignment requires that the student focus and write about their individual professional development over the course of the academic year (see example).

Course Folio For SW 401/402 And 410/411

The course folio is a collection of the student's work from the courses listed above. Work included in this collection will include the student's learning contracts, daily field logs, evaluations, any written assignments from the field and the concurrent courses. The course folio is not additional work; rather it is simply a collection of work already completed.