

DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION COUNSELING
INTERN HANDBOOK OF SUPERVISED CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

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Introduction

This manual gives an overview of the internship (RHAB 695, RHAB 696, or RHAB 697) requirements and procedures for your program of study in the Master of Science degree program in Rehabilitation Counseling at Virginia Commonwealth University. This document is intended to compliment other Department of Rehabilitation Counseling materials and publications (e.g., the **Handbook for Students** and the **VCU Graduate Student Bulletin**). This manual is subject to ongoing review and revision.

The faculty members of the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling have the ultimate responsibility and authority for the continued development, implementation, and oversight of the internship system. The Clinical Coordinator is a liaison for internship sites that provide training opportunities for Interns.

This manual deals with the philosophy and general expectations for all Interns enrolled in the Supervised Clinical Experience. Definitions of specific processes are provided so that Interns, On-Site Supervisors, and the Faculty Advisor have a common vocabulary to communicate experiences, expectations, and requirements for the Internship.

Also, the manual outlines the specific requirements, time frames, and responsibilities of the Interns, On-Site Supervisors, and Faculty Supervisors.

The Appendix contains the forms and formats used by the Interns to complete the requirements of the internship. As a potential Intern, you are urged to use the **Supervised Clinical Practice Checklist** (See Appendix) as an organizational tool to guide you through the requirements of your supervised clinical experiences.

Philosophy

As a central and culminating part of the Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling each Intern is expected to acquire a broad range of supervised clinical experiences in an internship. These are planned, integrated, sequential, and supervised experiences to ensure Interns are exposed to diverse roles, populations, settings, and types of interventions. Consistent with the mission and goals of the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling, the clinical training sequence provides a variety of professional opportunities for Interns by networking with rehabilitation, human services, and health care agencies throughout Virginia.

Supervised clinical experiences in a rehabilitation setting are required for all Interns. Clinical practice provides an opportunity for all Interns to develop techniques and skills in connection with the total rehabilitation process. It gives the Intern an opportunity to apply theory to the practice of rehabilitation counseling and case management.

Since the internship is one of the most important parts of the Masters degree curriculum in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling, each entering graduate student is urged to begin

thinking and planning for the internship. The internship is the only series of courses in the curriculum which the graduate student designs. All other courses are designed by the faculty, but you design this series in order to ensure this culminating academic experience provides the final “polishing” to produce a professional practitioner in the field of Rehabilitation Counseling.

The primary criterion by which a proposed internship site and internship experience is considered for approval is the value in providing the transition from graduate student to a professional practitioner. This is the primary reason approval is given only rarely for an Intern to satisfy the requirements of the internship while employed in a position at the internship site. If a student is working at an internship site and is going through an internship, the graduate student is neither fish nor fowl - neither a graduate student being educated in a work environment nor an employee.

A polished professional practitioner in an employed position has a position with expectations from supervisors and colleagues. The employee has a definite relationship with his supervisors. An Intern in a student placement at a worksite has different levels of expectations and is expected to perform differently by colleagues and supervisors.

The Department of Rehabilitation Counseling views the internship experience as an opportunity for the graduate student to try approaches and techniques which may or may not work in order to decide, personally, how to function as a professional practitioner after graduation. Employees do not have this degree of freedom in searching for professional identity. The types and degree of communications an Intern has with a supervisor are quite different than the communications an employee has with a supervisor. It is the confusion in roles, relationships, expectations, and communications which accounts for the rarity with which the Department approves engaging in these dual roles simultaneously.

Growth in knowledge, professionalism, and ethical practice occurs when Rehabilitation Counseling Interns are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning processes. Interns should be active in the process of receiving professional supervision, self-monitoring, and specific structured supervisory conferences. Interns should have exposure to didactic and experiential role modeling experiences, but are expected to develop self-assessment and self-monitoring skills, as well.

Objectives of the Internship

Supervised clinical experiences in a rehabilitation setting are required for all students. Clinical practice provides an opportunity for all Interns to develop techniques and skills in connection with the total rehabilitation process. It gives the Intern an opportunity to apply theory to the practice of rehabilitation counseling and case management.

The following objectives are appropriate for all Interns and should be achieved by Interns enrolled in a Supervised Clinical Experience. Achievement of these objectives is important for the development of rehabilitation counselors. Through the internship you will:

1. Apply and test academic/theoretical knowledge in a realistic rehabilitation setting;

2. Experience the realities of the therapeutic relationship and the part that self-understanding plays in this relationship;
3. Develop confidence in your ability (knowledge and skills) in an environment that provides consistent and appropriate feedback necessary for maximum professional growth and development;
4. Demonstrate high standards of professional ethics;
5. Develop an appropriate professional identity;
6. Acquire an understanding of facility structure, protocol, processes, as well as intra- and interagency working relationships;
7. Apply appropriate legal principles and utilize ethical decision-making skills in resolving ethical dilemmas;
8. Apply the principles of disability-related legislation including the rights of persons with disabilities to independence, inclusion, choice and self-determination, access, and respect for individual differences; and,
9. Demonstrate the satisfactory practice of rehabilitation counseling with individuals, groups, and/or families by
 - a. conducting individual counseling sessions;
 - b. developing and maintaining a counseling relationship;
 - c. establishing individual goals and objectives of counseling;
 - d. assisting an individual with crisis resolution; and,
 - e. facilitating an individual's independent decision-making and personal responsibility.

Definitions

Supervised Clinical Practice (Internship)

The Internship or Supervised Clinical Practice is a planned, structured learning experience providing you an opportunity to apply, develop, and supplement the skills and knowledge developed in the academic setting. It is a training method that involves experiential activities to achieve the learning objectives. It involves learning by observing and participating under the guidance and direction of a qualified rehabilitation supervisor.

The Internship requires 600 contact hours. Interns typically complete the hours in one semester, but it may be divided over two semesters depending on either facility or Intern needs. Any other exceptions must be approved by your Faculty Advisor, the Clinical Coordinator, and the Departmental Chair. You must complete the justification form available from the Clinical Coordinator or your Advisor in order to get approval.

Internship Site

The internship site is an organization, facility, institution, or program (hereinafter referred to as “facility”) which provides a rehabilitation practice setting and appropriate supervision for Interns

enrolled in a Supervised Clinical Experience. All Internship sites must have executed an Affiliation Agreement with VCU.

Intern

An intern is a graduate student who is enrolled in the Supervised Clinical Experience courses (RHAB 695, 696, or 697). You will be participating in supervised, practical, professional activities in an approved site with people who have disabilities. Your participation provides you an opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to a variety of consumers and facilities.

On-Site Supervisor

The On-Site Supervisor is the individual responsible for you at the Internship Site. Responsibilities will vary according to the facility and your learning objectives. The On-Site Supervisor arranges for adequate facilities, provides a general orientation to the setting, participates in evaluations, and provides on-site supervision. Preferably, the On-Site supervisor or a professional staff member of the agency will be a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC). However, the On-Site Supervisor must be licensed or certified or otherwise approved by the Clinical Coordinator or Departmental Chair.

Faculty Advisor

A faculty member of the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling is appointed to each graduate student when accepted into the Department. Among many duties, the Faculty Advisor assists you in assessing career goals; giving guidance regarding career plans; and aids you in locating internship sites. The Faculty Advisor also is available if you have difficulties or concerns regarding your placement during the Supervised Clinical Experience.

Faculty Supervisor

The Faculty Supervisor may be: a faculty member in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling who is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC); or a doctoral student in an approved doctoral level course in clinical supervision who is under the direction of a Department of Rehabilitation Counseling faculty member.

The Faculty Supervisor will structure supervision around four issues:

1. your clinical work, assignments, or reports;
2. your professional development and goals;
3. the On-Site Supervisor's assessment and evaluation reports; and,
4. organizational and systems issues involving the site.

The Faculty Supervisor is assigned to provide individual supervision; assess, coordinate, and guide your activities; and provide a final grade of your progress. The Faculty Supervisor works with both you and the On-Site Supervisor. The Faculty Supervisor will have the following responsibilities:

1. To provide the internship site with appropriate information about you and your levels of competency.
2. To visit, as requested or as needed, the agency for conferences with you and the On-Site Supervisor. Conferences may serve the purposes of:
 - a. assisting you in integrating academic knowledge with clinical practice;
 - b. providing an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of your preparation;
 - c. exchanging information which may lead to a necessary modification of the Statement of Student Responsibility.
3. To ensure that Interns understand any facility requirement to procure or maintain appropriate health, accident, and professional liability coverage.

Evaluative Criteria

During your internship you will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. The Intern will demonstrate the ability to practice rehabilitation counseling in a legal and ethical manner and will show understanding of the history, philosophy, and structure of the rehabilitation delivery systems.

To demonstrate this criterion you might engage in the following tasks during your internship:

apply ethical principles and standards;

apply appropriate legal principles and use ethical decision-making skills in resolving ethical dilemmas;

demonstrate knowledge of the history, philosophy, and legislation affecting rehabilitation and the scope of services of various service delivery systems;
and

apply the principles of disability-related legislation including the rights of persons with disabilities to independence, inclusion, choice and self-determination, access, and respect for individual differences.

2. The Intern will demonstrate the ability to practice rehabilitation counseling with individuals, groups, and/or families.

To demonstrate this criterion you might engage in the following tasks during your internship:

- conduct individual counseling sessions;

- develop and maintain a counseling relationship;

- establish individual goals and objectives of counseling;

- assist an individual with crisis resolution;

- facilitate an individual's independent decision-making and personal responsibility;

- conduct group counseling sessions on adjustment and/or other vocational problems, when appropriate;

- involve, when appropriate, the individual's family/ significant others in the counseling sessions; and

- recommend strategies to resolve identified problems that impede the rehabilitation process.

3. The Intern will demonstrate the ability to practice rehabilitation counseling in rehabilitation planning and case management.

To demonstrate this criterion you might engage in the following tasks during your internship:

- determine the adequacy of existing information for rehabilitation planning;

- integrate cultural, social, economic, disability-related, and environmental factors in planning;

- plan a comprehensive individual assessment (e.g., personality, interest, interpersonal skills, intelligence, and related functional capabilities, educational achievements, work experiences, vocational aptitudes, personal and social adjustment, transferable skills, and employment opportunities);

- identify available personal and public resources with the informed choice of the individual to determine jointly, with the consumer, an appropriate rehabilitation plan;

facilitate with the individual the development of a client-centered rehabilitation and/or independent living plan;

establish working relationships with other service providers involved with the individual and/or the family, or client's advocate, including provision of consumer involvement and choice;

determine mutual responsibilities with other service providers involved with the individual, family, or client's advocate, including consumer involvement and choice;

develop a knowledge base of and refer individuals to other community resources, when appropriate;

assist individuals in identifying areas of personal responsibility including potential fiscal resources to obtain needed services;

serve as a consultant to other community facilities to advocate for the integration of individuals with disabilities within the community;

market the benefits and availability of rehabilitation services to potential consumers, employers, and the general public; and

identify and plan for the appropriate use of assistive technology including computer-related resources.

4. The Intern will demonstrate the ability to practice rehabilitation counseling by using knowledge of vocational and career development.

To demonstrate this criterion you might engage in the following tasks during your internship:

facilitate consumer involvement in determining vocational goals and capabilities related to the world of work;

utilize career/occupational materials and labor market information with the client to accomplish vocational planning;

explore occupational alternatives and develop career plans;

understand career development theories and the importance of work to individuals;

identify the prerequisite experiences, relevant training, and functional capacities needed for career goals selected; and,

determine and resolve job adjustment problems through the provision of post employment services.

5. The Intern will demonstrate the ability to practice rehabilitation counseling through the identification and utilization of assessment information.

To demonstrate this criterion you might engage in the following tasks during your internship:

Utilize existing or acquired information about the existence, onset, severity, progression, and expected duration of an individual's disability;

determine an individual's eligibility for rehabilitation services and/or programs including the need for services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment;

evaluate the feasibility of an individual's rehabilitation or independent living objectives;

review assessment information to determine appropriate services;

consult with professionals in other disciplines;

assess the unique strengths, resources, and experiences of a consumer including career knowledge and interests;

interpret assessment/evaluation results to the individual and/or family member;

assess the individual's capabilities to make decisions;

determine an individual's vocational or independent living skills, aptitudes, interests, and preferences; and,

assess an individual's need for rehabilitation engineering/ technology services throughout the rehabilitation process.

6. The Intern will demonstrate the ability to practice rehabilitation counseling in job development, placement, and job retention.

To demonstrate this criterion you might engage in the following tasks during your internship:

obtain and use labor market information;

identify and contact employers to develop job opportunities;

evaluate work activities through the use of job and task analyses;

modify and restructure jobs and use assistive devices, where appropriate;

consult with experts to increase the functioning of individuals;

educate prospective employers about the benefits of hiring persons with disabilities including providing technical assistance with regard to reasonable accommodations in conformance with disability-related legislation;

assist employers to identify, modify, and/or eliminate architectural, procedural, and/or attitudinal barriers;

review available data to determine potential person/job match;

teach appropriate job-seeking and job retention skills;

provide support services to facilitate job retention; and,

establish follow-up and/or follow-along procedures to maximize an individual's independent functioning through the provision of post employment services.

7. The Intern will demonstrate the ability to practice rehabilitation counseling by using information from rehabilitation research.

To demonstrate this criterion you might engage in the following tasks during your internship:

obtain and apply information from professional literature and research in rehabilitation counseling; and

participate in agency or community research activities, studies, and projects.

Other Requirements

Interns should observe the following additional requirements:

1. Maintain regular attendance at the internship site as specified in the plan. Absences must be made up so that the contact hours are completed.

2. Adhere to specific rules, policies, and procedures of the on-site facility (time schedules, confidentiality, dress standards, etc.).
3. As required by the agency, obtain acceptable auto, health, or accident insurance; and if required, demonstrate a suitable physician's certificate of health status.
4. Participate in training programs offered by the agency.
5. Demonstrate involvement in as many aspects of the rehabilitation process as allowable by the agency. Any significant deviation from the Statement of Student Responsibility must be reported to and approved by both the On-Site and Faculty Supervisor. The Faculty Supervisor will have the authority to grant reasonable waivers for deviations. However, it is your responsibility to maintain satisfactory progress acceptable to both the On-Site Supervisor and Faculty Supervisor.

Clinical Coordinator

The Clinical Coordinator is the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling faculty member responsible for assisting you in locating appropriate placements for the internship, coordinating development of new and existing facility relationships, and maintaining communication with Interns regarding internship requirements. Additional duties include approving your internship arrangements, maintaining internship information resources, and maintaining a roster of current placements.

Procedures and Requirements

Readiness to Participate in Your Internship (RHAB 695, 696, or 697)

Readiness to participate in an internship also is determined by your completion of at least **24 semester hours** of academic instruction, including successful completion of RHAB 691 and the 100 hours of practical experience which are part of the requirements for that course. Again, you are required to contact your Faculty Advisor during the semester prior to registration for RHAB 695, 696, or 697. This gives you and your Faculty Advisor an opportunity to ensure you are appropriately prepared for beginning an internship.

Please note that Certificate program Interns must have completed **6 hours** of instruction and have the permission of the Certificate Program Director in order to enroll in RHAB 695, or 697.

All internship arrangements should be finalized **60 days prior** to the onset of the semester that the internship begins. The Department of Rehabilitation Counseling or VCU has no commitment to honor arrangements made after this deadline. Registration or enrollment in RHAB 695, 696, or 697 **does not** represent an agreement by The Department of Rehabilitation Counseling or VCU that a clinical placement may proceed.

RHAB 611 and RHAB 691 are required prerequisites for enrollment in the internship. The following are recommended.

RHAB 525 Introduction to Rehabilitation

RHAB 612 Group Counseling Approaches in Rehabilitation

- RHAB 633 Principles and Practices of Case Management in Rehabilitation
- RHAB 640 Medical Aspects of Disability in Rehabilitation
- RHAB 642 Psychiatric Information and Assessment in Rehabilitation

Site Selection

You are responsible for locating an appropriate internship site. You should consult with your Faculty Advisor, the Clinical Coordinator, or the listing of approved affiliated internship sites to assist in identifying prospective internship sites. You should begin the process of internship site selection by consulting with you Faculty Advisor and the Clinical Coordinator. These discussions should focus on the clinical experiences you are looking for in the internship.

After decisions have been made regarding the appropriate types of experiences, you should search the internship directory for a site that offers those experiences and is logistically feasible. This directory contains information on all of the sites currently affiliated with the program.

You may explore the possibility of doing an internship at a site that has not yet affiliated with the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling, but which has the required resources to offer training experiences for internships. You must consult with the Clinical Coordinator before you contact a site that does not have a VCU affiliation. Once a site is identified, the Clinical Coordinator will evaluate the site and make the final decision regarding approval. You are not allowed to enter into a training contract with a site that has not completed the affiliation process.

If you currently are employed in a rehabilitation related position, under some limited circumstances you may be able use your current place of employment to partially fulfill the requirements of RHAB 695, 696, or 697. This must first be approved by the Clinical Coordinator. You should not assume that your work site would be accepted as an approved internship site. When current employment is approved as a Supervised Clinical Experience, the specific learning objectives developed by you and On-Site Supervisor must constitute **new learning** and must go well beyond the job duties currently being performed.

Arrangements for internship are required to conform to the following specifications:

1. You must visit and interview with the agency's On-Site Supervisor;
2. The Faculty Advisor or Clinical Coordinator must be advised and informed of all interviews;
3. The Affiliation Agreement between VCU and the agency must be completed prior to the start of your internship. You need to convey your site selection to the Clinical Coordinator as soon as it is identified to ensure the completion of the Affiliation Agreement; and,
4. The internship experience must be supervised by a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, or a similarly certified rehabilitation professional, or a rehabilitation professional whose scope of experience and depth of specialty supports you in balancing your own professional aspirations with the operations of the agency, program, or organization.

During your site selection keep in mind some sites, such as hospitals, may require you, at your own expense, to give proof of certain vaccinations, provide the results of a criminal background check, submit to an illicit substances check, and require you to provide medical evidence you are free of such conditions as AIDS, Hepatitis, and Tuberculosis. The rationale for these requirements lie in changes in the rules and regulations for employees of the hospital made by the accrediting body, JCAHO. The choice however is yours to make. If you choose to complete your internship in such a facility you must adhere to their requirements, but you may choose another internship site that does not require such expense on your part.

Internship Contracts (RHAB 695, RHAB 696, or RHAB 697)

Once a site has been identified and the Clinical Coordinator has approved that site, you and the On-Site Supervisor will complete the **Statement of Intern Responsibility** (See Appendix). This statement will be turned in to your Faculty Supervisor and should include specific learning objectives. Some specific expected competencies and objectives may be found in the Appendix of the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling **Handbook for Students**.

Specific goals and objectives will be formulated by you and the On-Site Supervisor, and approved by your Faculty Supervisor. These objectives will become a part of the **Statement of Intern Responsibility**. The **Statement of Intern Responsibility** (including learning goals and objectives) must be approved by the Faculty Supervisor and/or the Clinical Coordinator **no later than the end of the second week** of internship.

Switching Internship Sites

You have an ethical and professional responsibility to fulfill the contractual commitment unless: (1) you are explicitly relieved of the responsibilities by the agency, the Faculty Supervisor, and the Clinical Coordinator, (2) or the agency has not lived up to its obligations under the contract. In any case, problem solving prior to termination always should be attempted. If, for any reason, you are unwilling or unable to complete a internship at the original placement you must notify the Faculty Supervisor and the Clinical Coordinator immediately. Agreements clearly must be made by all parties involved before terminating the original placement. You will not contract with a new internship site without the explicit approval of the Faculty Supervisor and the Clinical Coordinator.

Dividing Time Between Two Placements

It is considered optimal to complete a internship experience in one setting for reasons of continuity, integration into an agency, and exposure to a given system. However, it may be necessary in some **rare** instances to divide the internship between two placements. For example, an Intern enrolled in an internship would spend 20 hours per week at Site one, for a total of 300 hours, during one semester and would then spend 20 hours per week at Site two, for a total of 300 hours during the second semester.

It is rarer for an Intern to divide time between two sites (i.e., 40 hours per week, 600 hours for the semester) during one semester. Approval for two site placements in one year must be granted in advance of the first placement by the Faculty Advisor, Faculty Supervisor, **and** Clinical Coordinator. If approval is not obtained, you may not split the internship experience.

On-Site Supervision

The internship site supervisor serves in a highly significant role and has many responsibilities for your training. With this individual, you will begin to demonstrate the knowledge and skills you have acquired through your academic training. The professional and personal relationship you establish with your site supervisor will set the pace, direction, and tone for your internship. His or her willingness to supervise you becomes a commitment to assist you in attaining and maintaining counseling relationships with clients.

Ronnestad and Skovholt (1993) noted that beginning Interns value a supervisor who teaches and provides structure and direction. Other researchers emphasize the importance of supervisor support of interns, which may include such items as assistance with the selection of clients and provision of relevant agency and client information (a guidance function) (Grater, 1985); establishment of a milieu that creates a sense of security for the intern (Rabinowitz, Heppner, & Roehlke, 1986); and the provision of encouragement and feedback as to progress (Worthington & Roehlke, 1979).

You must feel professionally and personally comfortable with your Supervisor and believe that this person will be a good role model. The time you spend together should provide ample opportunities for you to get to know each other and to assess your ability to work together. Even though the Supervisor maintains major responsibility for the integrity of the internship and for encouraging you as you pursue a career in counseling, your belief that he can work with you is vital. Ideally, the Supervisor and you share the hope that the internship will be a worthwhile and enjoyable experience for both of you. Any hesitancy you have should be discussed candidly with your site Supervisor or Faculty Supervisor so necessary accommodations can be made.

The internship experience is similar to the counseling relationship in many ways; and you will want to work with a Supervisor whose therapeutic orientation, ideology, and style are similar to yours.

One of the key roles your Supervisor will perform is to providing feedback about your performance and progress. This feedback process will help you stay focused on the quality and the quantity of your services. As part of the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics, your Supervisor accepts the responsibility to help ensure that you develop into a competent counselor. By providing feedback and direction the On-Site Supervisor provides a great preparatory service in your professional development.

The On-Site Supervisor is an educator and an extension of your formal academic training. The site Supervisor's role is unique in that through role modeling your approach to the profession may be influenced significantly. Your Supervisor assists you in feeling comfortable in awkward or new situations. We hope you experience your Supervisor's humanity as well as his professional persona and that he allows you to witness someone who feels comfortable in letting you know the intricacies of the profession by his honest display of attitude, emotions, and behavior. You will find his support and direction key factors in the refinement of your journey into the counseling profession. The site Supervisor's task is serious; he has made a commitment to counseling itself by agreeing to supervise you.

You may find that the site Supervisor will share facets of the profession that you have not learned in textbooks. We anticipate that his experience, training, and skills will afford you the opportunity to

learn much about the field. Take all experiences as learning experiences; even the bad can be looked on (or as some say, re-framed) as a challenge and opportunity.

An issue Interns often have to address is how to interact with other mental health professionals at the site. Most likely, your Supervisor will ask his or her colleagues to expose you to their professional style, approaches, and theories. Through such exposure, you may find that, at times, their vantage point will differ from your Supervisor's. This can pose a dilemma and, perhaps be confusing. Your Supervisor is aware that his orientation is not absolute. However, he will likely desire that you adhere to his directives, because ultimate responsibility rests with the Supervisor. He will be more than willing to discuss with you any differences you have observed and, generally, will use such experiences as teaching tools. Ultimately, by internal (sometimes unconscious) reflection you will decide where all these bits of information, observations, and various approaches fit you as a therapist. In the interim, you will save yourself much frustration and cognitive dissonance by relying on this Supervisor to achieve your professional goals and objectives. Work closely with your Supervisor to make the internship experience an enjoyable, educational, and personally rewarding opportunity. Do not hesitate to share with him where your interests lie and what you like and dislike about the experience, including agency ambience, clients, and staff. Being candid with your Supervisor can make this experience an optimal one, enhancing your learning and your relationship.

As noted previously, this is the final stage of your academic endeavor and the pinnacle of a course of study. Among the thoughts that might occur to you is, "Do I really want to be a counselor?" Don't be concerned about such thoughts. It is our experience that this may be a reflection of self-doubt. Be willing to explore thoughts with your Supervisor. Integrating your formal education with practice may cause you to realize that the counseling field may not be exactly what you thought, were told, or read it would be. Believing something about the profession without validating it does disservice to yourself, your colleagues, and, above all, future clients. Use the placement as the arena for solidifying your beliefs and attitudes about the profession. Because your Supervisor and university academic advisor have worked with you up to this point to establish your professional goals and objectives, it is most appropriate to discuss this key factor as well.

Oftentimes, separating your professional and personal involvement with your Supervisor is difficult, because the nature of the placement can cause blurred role boundaries. Your Supervisor adheres closely to the ACA Code of Ethics, so his or her personal side can influence the tone, atmosphere, and ethos of the placement. Exposing his or her shortcomings as well as strengths can only serve to reinforce the uniqueness and value of your relationship. Further, being a person first enhances the value of the quality of interaction.

It is a rare Supervisor who does not learn from his or her Interns. For example, your current involvement in the academic arena may serve to augment his or her knowledge base. Your Supervisor may take pride in helping to shape and mold your career, certainly a powerful personal learning experience. The relationship you share can leave a positive and lasting impression on you both.

Prior To The Internship

Now, let's look at this special relationship as it develops from beginning to end. A number of tasks need to be achieved when you first meet with your Supervisor. He or she will need to know your university and state licensing or certification requirements as well as your personal goals. The placement can influence your belief about the counseling profession itself. Thus, it may be helpful for the Supervisor to require definitive, objective, and measurable goals. Additionally, the On-Site Supervisor has the responsibility to gain an understanding of who you are, especially as an aspiring counseling professional. Because the Supervisor is aware of the placement site's policies and procedures, he or she will gauge the appropriateness of a match and the potential for successful completion. It is not unusual for the Supervisor to conduct a somewhat formal interview with you to gain an understanding of why you chose this site, what your career objectives are, and what you would like to achieve in professional relationship with him or her. Your level of understanding regarding theories of counseling, techniques, and the counseling field in general will also be of importance. The Supervisor will assess whether the melding of book knowledge from your academic training can occur at this specific site. In addition to examining your academic foundation, your Supervisor will also take into consideration your personal attributes.

No two training sites have the same mix of personnel, client population and agency standards and ethos. For these reasons, the Supervisor, as presumed expert of his or her professional domain, must make the final disposition regarding your acceptance.

Once you are accepted, however, our ideal Supervisor will outline for you any forms you need to complete prior to starting the placement. The Supervisor may also suggest specific readings, including pertinent agency orientation materials, such as policies and procedures. Perhaps you will be asked to review your theories and techniques as well as to start solidifying a therapeutic orientation based on your knowledge of the clinical population. You may also be asked to prepare audiotape or videotape role-play demonstrations so the Supervisor can establish a baseline of your knowledge and skill level. The Supervisor may also want to discuss with you how you feel personally about working with certain clinical populations to examine if there are any personal issues that may impede your ability to be effective and efficient with clients. Professional involvement will not be void of the personal feelings, attitudes, and beliefs that are a part of your individuality-part of who you are.

As the final preparations are made for your placement, the Supervisor will explain in depth the agency's policies, procedures, mission statements, and other information relevant to your placement. Specific attention may be given to past involvement of Interns at this site and how they fit into the overall functioning of the organization. The Supervisor helps you to understand how you will be perceived during your placement and what specific parameters will be in place, how you will "fit" into the organization. Your Supervisor will be an advocate for you and has agreed to shoulder the responsibility to have you integrate successfully into the treatment milieu and the organizational structure. The routine and seemingly mundane tasks of completing the necessary academic course forms, including registration, and Intern/Supervisor agreements should be done at your earliest convenience. Watch for university and agency deadlines! For those individuals governed by specific licensure and/or certification requirements, understanding these standards including the prompt filling out of any necessary forms, is vital to receive, proper experiential credit.

During The Internship

Because internship is a great opportunity to put your skills and knowledge to use, our exemplary Supervisor will provide you with the chance to use them to the fullest. The ideal is, to have you experience all the clinical aspects possible within the organization. What better way to delve into the “real world” of counseling than to practice one’s skills in all areas of clinical services.

Barring any sensitive issues for which clients may prefer not to have you present, it is appropriate and a valuable learning experience to “shadow” the Supervisor in all of his or her clinical- activities. By observing the Supervisor, including the eventual participation in services, you will gradually become acclimated to the setting and begin integrating your book knowledge with clinical practice. Shadowing provides both of you the opportunity to assess the scope of your knowledge and level of comfort as you aspire to independent work with clients. When you accept the responsibility of independent client contact depends on a consensus between you and your Supervisor as to your readiness. Further, unfortunately, our clients do not always fit into our plans as to when and what types of techniques or approaches we would like to “practice” with them. Feel comfortable to discuss with your Supervisor your perceived readiness to accept more responsibility and to use your knowledge and skills. Take note of how it feels to put your knowledge to use.

One critical issue to address throughout the internship is what treatment approach to use with your clients’ Before you solidify your approach, review with your Supervisor your “philosophy of humankind” (see chapter on self-assessment). Perhaps you have previously dealt with this personal philosophical stance in your theoretical studies, but now you link these theories with your belief system in a practical setting with contact with fellow human beings, who are, for the most part, suffering. We believe that your philosophy of humankind has an effect on the way you approach and treat your clients, and, for that matter, people in general. For many Interns this will be the first time they closely examine how their beliefs can influence their dealings with clients in vivo. Once you have begun to formulate, review, and refine your philosophy of humankind, our ideal Supervisor can guide you in the selection of a philosophically and theoretically congruent treatment approach. For example, existential approaches tend themselves more to freedom of choice, whereas analytically and behaviorally oriented approaches appear to be deterministic.

Throughout the internship your Supervisor will be scheduling both formal and informal supervision conferences with you. During these meetings you will be reviewing your internship goals and objectives to assess adherence progress, and any necessary modifications to them. He or she will provide you with constructive feedback as to the quality-of your performance. Including recommendations for improvement. You will generally be formally, evaluated midway through the placement and again at the end. Your academic advisor may be part of this process as well. Particular attention may be given to how well you feel you become part of the agency treatment structure and the overall treatment plan. Your Supervisor will validate your perceptions of those two areas. In addition, your Supervisor may help you consider whether a specific clinical population or treatment specialty may be indicated and elaborate on any areas in which you are demonstrating competency (see chapter 2, Developing Competencies and Demonstrating Skills).

At the Termination of The Internship

Your Supervisor has served in a highly significant role and maintained a considerable amount of responsibility throughout your internship. One of the most, enjoyable tasks of the Supervisor is to

assist you in bringing closure to your placement experience, Your Supervisor has worked closely with you by investing time, knowledge and skill to help you become a competent counselor in training. He or she will be eager to share impressions and recommendations with you as to your clinical competencies, skills, and knowledge base. The Supervisor will provide feedback as to how well you were able to translate your academic foundation to the practical work situation. His or her input, guidance, and direction can have an influence on your career focus. This is a responsibility in which the Supervisor takes pride. The completion of your final evaluation, often in concert with your academic advisor, will serve as the formal appraisal of your efforts. This formal document presents measurable, objective, and observable data, as to your clinical strengths, weaknesses, general impressions, and overall recommendations. You should have ample opportunity to respond to the evaluation and, if necessary, get clarification on its content.

Evaluation Requirements

Internship Grading and Evaluation

You will receive formal written feedback at both the mid-point and the end of each semester of your internship experience. Both your On-Site and Faculty Supervisor will complete separate **Internship Evaluation Forms** (See Appendix). The Mid-term and End of Term Internship Evaluations will consist in part of your:

Application of his academic/theoretical knowledge in a realistic rehabilitation setting;

Development of therapeutic relationships in a productive environment;

Demonstrating high standards of professional ethics;

Developing an appropriate professional identity; and

Demonstrating an understanding of agency structure, protocol, processes, and intra- and interagency working relationships.

At the end of the internship experience, you will complete a **Self-Evaluation Report** and an **Intern's Evaluation of the Internship Site** (See Appendix) reflecting on your internship experience and your professional development. These evaluation forms must be completed at the end of the internship experience and turned in before the end of the semester. Failure to complete these evaluations will result in a final grade of "F".

Professional Liability Insurance

Interns officially registered at the University and enrolled to participate as interns in Supervised Clinical Practice are covered through Virginia Commonwealth University, by the Commonwealth of Virginia's Risk Management Plan.

Certificates of insurance may be obtained by agencies from the Clinical Coordinator or requests may be directed to:

Risk Manager
Virginia Commonwealth University
Risk Management
327 West Main Street, P.O. Box 843075
Richmond, VA 23284-3075
(804) 828-7531

Virginia Commonwealth University does not provide you with insurance coverage for auto, health, life, sickness and accident, or worker compensation perils. Interns wanting such coverage during their internship must make individual arrangements with private carriers.

Developing Competencies and Demonstrating Skills

Your internship provides an arena for you to try your wings as a helping professional, with guidance and support close at hand. Many Interns feel a bit overwhelmed as they begin to interact with clients and staff members. You may have difficulty at first, as you try to remember counseling theory and techniques, to recall academic coursework concerning such areas as human development or multi-cultural issues, to keep in mind ethical guidelines, and to think about agency procedures, regulations, and policies—all while trying to attend to your first few clients! More than one intern has felt discouraged after the first week of trying to juggle all the responsibilities of the new role.

Your internship can be viewed as a time to build a framework of new professional relational skills on a foundation of the material you have learned in your counseling program courses, your own life experiences, and your personal values and philosophies. This framework is composed of new perspectives, understandings, abilities, and skills, added gradually and with care. Your goal is to construct a strong framework over a solid foundation, working diligently but patiently, and often standing back to take a look at the work you have accomplished so far.

During your internship, you will be developing some of the specific personal attributes and professional competencies that you will use during your professional counseling career. To help you delineate your goals, we have compiled the following list of skills for graduate-level internship Interns to work toward building. In reality, not all placement sites afford the opportunity to develop abilities in every area we have indicated. In addition, the quantity and scope of the competencies listed below reflect our, implicit belief that the process of becoming a professional counselor is development; you will continue to add competencies throughout your career.

Suggested Competencies for Interns

Communication Skills

A. Verbal skills

Interns will be able to express themselves clearly and concisely in daily interactions with agency staff members and other professionals.

Interns will be able to communicate pertinent information about clients and to participate effectively in interdisciplinary treatment team meetings and case conferences, while maintaining their identities as counselors within a multidisciplinary group.

Interns will be able to educate clients and to provide appropriate information on a variety of issues (such as parenting, after-care and other support services, psychotropic medications, stress management, sexuality, psychiatric disorders) in an easily understandable manner.

Interns will be able to communicate with clients' families, significant others, and designated friends in a helpful fashion. They will be able to provide, as well as to obtain, information concerning the client, while respecting the client's rights concerning privacy, confidentiality, and informed consent.

Interns will be able to communicate effectively with referral sources, both inside and outside the facility, concerning all aspects of client needs and well being (for example, housing, legal issues, Twelve Step programs, psychiatric concerns).

B. Written skills

Interns will be able to prepare a complete, written initial intake assessment, including a mental status evaluation, a psychosocial history, a diagnostic impression, and recommended treatment modalities.

Interns will be able to write progress notes, to chart and to maintain client records according to agency standards and regulations.

Interns will be able to prepare a written treatment plan, including client problems, therapeutic goals, and specific interventions to be utilized.

Interns will be able to prepare a formal, written case study.

Interns will be able to use computer skills to work with word processing programs and to maintain and search data-bases.

C. Knowledge of nomenclature

The Intern will acquire a thorough knowledge of professional terminology pertaining to counseling, psycho-pathology, treatment modalities, and psychotropic medication.

The Intern will be able to understand professional counseling jargon and will be able to participate in a professional dialogue.

Interviewing Skills

- A. The Intern will structure the interview according to a specific theoretical Perspective (for example, psycho-dynamic or behavioral theory), because a theory base provides the framework and rationale for therapeutic strategies, techniques, and interventions.

- B. The Intern will be able to use appropriate counseling techniques to engage the client in the interviewing process to build and maintain rapport, and to begin to establish a therapeutic alliance. This may include using attending behaviors, active listening skills, and a knowledgeable and professional attitude to convey empathy, genuineness, respect, and caring, and to be perceived as trustworthy, competent, helpful, and expert (Lewis, Hayes, & Lewis, 1986).
- C. The Intern will be able to use appropriate counseling techniques to increase client comfort and to facilitate collection of data necessary for clinical assessment, such as conducting a mental status evaluation, taking a thorough psychosocial history and eliciting relevant, valid information concerning the presenting problem, in order to formulate a diagnostic impression. Specific interviewing competencies may include observation, use of open-ended and closed-ended questions, the ability to help the client stay focused, reflection of content and feeling, reassuring and supportive interventions, and the ability to convey an accepting and nonjudgmental attitude.
- D. The Intern will develop a holistic approach toward interviewing by assessing psychological and biological factors, as well as environmental and interpersonal factors, that may have contributed to the client's developmental history and presenting problems.
- E. The Intern will strive to see things from the client's frame of reference and to develop a growing understanding of the client's phenomenological perspective.
- F. The Intern will be aware at all times of the crucial importance of understanding the client from a multicultural perspective and will be aware that sociocultural heritage is a key factor in determining the client's unique sense of self, world view, values, deals, patterns of interpersonal communication, family structure, behavioral norms, and concepts of wellness as well as of pathology.

Diagnostic Skills

- A. The Intern will acquire an understanding of the most commonly used assessment instruments, such as personality and intelligence tests, anxiety and depression scales, and interest inventories.

The Intern will acquire a familiarity with the validity and reliability of these instruments.

The Intern will be able to interpret data generated by these instruments and to understand the significance of these data in relation to diagnosis and treatment.

The Intern will be able to determine which assessment instruments would be most helpful in evaluating specific client problems or concerns.

The Intern will be aware of the limitations of assessment instruments when used with ethnic minority populations.

- B. The Intern will develop a working knowledge of the DSM-IV.

The Intern will be familiar with the organization of the DSM-IV and will be able to use this nosology effectively (for example, to find diagnostic codes or to trace clients' behaviors, affects, or cognition along the decision trees to ascertain potential diagnoses). The Intern will be able to understand the DSM-IV classification of disorders and will be able to identify particular constellations of client problems as specific DSM-IV diagnostic categories.

- C. The Intern will be able to review and consider all pertinent data, including interviews, medical records, previous psychiatric records, test results, psycho-social history, consultations, and DSM-IV classifications in formulating a diagnostic impression or preliminary diagnosis.

Treatment Skills

- A. Interns will be able to conduct therapy using accepted and appropriate treatment modalities and counseling techniques based on recognized theoretical orientations.

Interns will work toward identifying their own theoretical framework based on their own philosophy of humankind.

Interns will know how to make treatment recommendations, formulate a treatment plan, establish a treatment contract, implement therapy, and terminate the therapeutic relationship at an appropriate time.

Interns will be able to conduct the following types of therapy and will understand the underlying principles, issues, dynamics, and role of the counselor associated with each type of treatment:

- i. individual therapy
- ii. marital therapy
- iii. conjoint therapy
- iv. family therapy
- v. group therapy
- vi. crisis intervention

- B. Interns will understand that different client populations and different types of problems may best respond to varying therapeutic approaches and techniques.

Interns will be knowledgeable about various types of client populations and their particular problems and concerns, including but not limited to the following:

- children and adolescents
- adults
- the elderly
- chemically dependent individuals
- adult children of alcoholics
- gay and lesbian clients
- survivors of trauma and abuse
- eating disordered individuals

physically or cognitively impaired clients dual-diagnosed clients (for example, chemically dependent with a psychiatric disorder)
clients of varied ethnic backgrounds

Interns will be flexible and knowledgeable in determining population-appropriate counseling techniques and therapeutic interventions. Interns will have as many therapeutic tools available for use as possible (for example, play therapy, art therapy, behavioral techniques, role playing, gestalt techniques, directive versus non-directive techniques, stress management techniques, experiential therapy, hypnosis).

- C. Interns will be sensitive to the impact of multi-cultural issues on the counseling relationship and on treatment and will modify therapeutic approaches and techniques to respect multi-cultural differences and to meet multi-cultural needs.

Case Management Skills

- A. The Intern will acquire an understanding of the functions and goals of all departments, programs, and services within the agency and will be able to network with appropriate personnel throughout the social service system.
- B. The Intern will understand the roles, responsibilities, and contributions to client care of members in each department or program within the agency. The Intern will know which individual(s) to contact to help resolve various client problems.
- C. The Intern will acquire a thorough knowledge of community resources and will understand the agency procedures for referring clients to outside sources for help.
- D. The Intern will consider continuity of care to be a most important goal, beginning with the initial client contact.

The Intern will act as an advocate for the client in ensuring continued quality of care and access to social services. Advocacy will include, but not be limited to, exploring possible finding sources for care, such as mental health coverage on insurance policies or Medicaid or Medicare.

The Intern will be able to participate in all areas of discharge planning, including arranging follow-up visits with a mental health professional, communicating with insurance companies, and providing help with housing, transportation, vocational guidance, legal assistance, support groups, medical care, and referral to other services or agencies.

Facility Operations and Administration

- A. The Intern will be familiar with the organizational structure of the facility and will understand the responsibilities and functions of administrative staff.

- B. The Intern will understand the philosophy, mission, and goals of the facility, and will have a thorough knowledge of all policies and procedures of the facility, which are usually delineated in a comprehensive manual.
- C. The Intern should be aware of immediate and long-range strategic plans for the facility (for example, to hire an art therapist, to develop a chemical abuse program, or to add an additional building, as well as to evaluate and eliminate ineffective programs).
- D. The Intern will have an understanding of the business aspects of the facility (e.g. funding sources or budget allowances).
- E. The Intern will be aware of legal issues concerning agency functions, such as state or national licensure/certification requirements and safety regulations.
- F. The Intern will understand agency standards to ensure continued quality of care, including quality assurance and peer review processes.

Professional Orientation

- A. The Intern will be knowledgeable concerning all ethical and legal codes for counselors, provided by professional counseling associations as well as by state law, and will adhere to these standards.
- B. The Intern will be familiar with agency regulations and policies regarding ethical and legal issues and will adhere to these standards at the placement site.
- C. The Intern will be knowledgeable concerning legislation protecting human rights.
- D. The Intern will seek guidance from the **On-Site Supervisor** and the academic program supervisor with any questions concerning ethical or legal issues or professional behavior.
- E. The Intern will consider the four basic Rs for counselors (Carkhuff, cited in Lewis, Hayes, and Lewis, 1986) whenever acting in a professional helping capacity the right of the counselor to intervene in the client's life, the responsibility the counselor assumes when intervening, the special role the counselor plays in the helping process, and the realization of the counselor's own resources in being helpful to the client.

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