

Field Education News

March 2017

Spring is upon us. Despite the erratic winter temperatures, the daffodils, hyacinths and crocuses will prevail! The spring semester is more than halfway over. Begin anticipating with your student the end of your student's field placement. Now is a good time to start reviewing challenges and triumphs. Keep in mind the last day of field placement is May 13, which is also when field evaluations are due. Please let us know if your student will need to extend field hours into June. Make sure to connect with us, 444 2143, if you'd like a student for the fall or if someone you know would like to take SIFI.

Focus on: Those Tricky competencies: While all competencies apply to the work in every agency and population in some way, not all Field Instructors readily recognize how what they do relates, and miss the opportunity to make the necessary and important connection for themselves and for their students. This disconnect is reflected in student evaluations when Field instructors rate N/A for these competencies. Therefore, it is necessary to specifically focus on the following trickier competencies.

Competency 3: Advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice. Agencies are created and exist to empower, strengthen, advocate and provide resources for particular populations. This, in and of itself, is a reflection of efforts to advance human rights and justice! Agency work does not exist in a vacuum. In reviewing assignments in supervision with your student, consider: What are the specific ways that your agency does this? How does the work the student is doing address this? What are the societal deficits that your agency is fighting against? What are the experiences of your agency's clients in their world outside the agency? How do you work to strengthen, empower and advocate for them? Answers to these questions can guide you toward rich conversations with your students about this competency.

Competency 4: Engage in practice informed research and research informed practice. Research shapes how we think about and work with clients. Conversely, our interactions with clients, their responses to our interventions and results of our evaluations of services spark ideas for research. This becomes a loop that continues to freshen and update social work practice. It is important for our students to understand this, to be familiar with existing research and recognize patterns that lead to research. Consider: What specific theories guide our practice? What is practice wisdom and how does this spark the next research study? How does what the student is learning in the classroom mesh with what is happening at the agency?

Competency 5: Engage in policy practice. Conscious awareness and discussion in supervision of how policies on all levels impact agency life and work, as well as clients' experiences, enrich the students learning experience with you. The intended goals and the unintended consequences of federal, state and local policy are important to explore. Even at your agency, do the policies reflect the original intent? Do they somehow contradict the agency mission, or complicate the process for the client? Are they in sync with local, state or federal policies? Does your agency advocate for policy changes? Dig a bit deeper to connect the dots for yourself and your student.

Field Education Facts: The School of Social Welfare has updated our mission statement. Check it out. <https://socialwelfare.stonybrookmedicine.edu/mission>

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Martin Luther King

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