

HANDBOOK FOR PSYCH 445
UNDERGRADUATE PRACTICUM

Jennifer Luboski, Ph.D.

(composed July 2001)

Table of Contents

OVERVIEW	4
WHY DO A PRACTICUM?	7
Self-Assessment	8
Site-Assessment	12
Interview	13
GOAL-SETTING: EXPECTATIONS FOR YOU AND THE SITE.....	16
Ideas for Learning Goals.....	16
Rights	17
Responsibilities	17
PRACTICUM CLASS.....	19
Exercise: Preparing for Practicum Class.....	19
Offering Feedback.....	20
Receiving Feedback	21
Ethics in Class.....	21
JOURNALING	22
Field Journal (SOAP Notes)	22
The Critical Incident Journal Technique.....	22
Other Tips for Keeping a Journal.....	23
GETTING STARTED AT YOUR SITE	25
First Impressions	25
Enthusiasm Versus Experience.....	25
Role of the Practicum Student	26
Meeting Clients/Customers.....	26
Age and Experience Issues.....	27
Time Limits.....	29
What Not to Learn.....	29
MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR EXPERIENCE.....	30
Experiential Learning.....	30
Exploring Careers	31
Other Tips for Succeeding in the Practicum	33
HANDLING PROBLEMS AT YOUR PRACTICUM SITE	34
Work Assignments.....	34
Coworkers	35
You.....	36
Supervisor	37
ETHICAL AND LEGAL ISSUES.....	39
DIVERSITY ISSUES	49
Exercise: Knowing Yourself in Relation to Diversity	50
Ethnic Identity Development	52
“White” Identity Development	53
Exercise: Personal Cultural Identity.....	54

PSYCHOLOGY AND CAREERS	55
Career Related Liberal Arts Skills	55
Web Resources for Careers in Psychology	62
STRESS AND BURNOUT	66
Exercise: The Relationship Between You and Your Work	66
Sources of Stress	67
The Effects of Stress	68
Exercise: How is Stress Affecting You?	69
Burnout	70
Exercise: Self-Evaluation for Burnout	71
SELF-CARE	73
Time Management	73
Cognitive Self-Care	74
Physical Self-Care	76
Emotional Self-Care	77
Support	78
Positive Effects on Professionals	78
FINISHING THE PRACTICUM	79
Closing Cases	79
Finishing at the Site	82
Reflections on Your Practicum Experience	84
Concluding Remarks	87
REFERENCES	88

Handbook for Psych 445

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this handbook is to supplement your practicum work, helping you to make the most of this learning experience. It begins by reviewing the potential benefits of a practicum and why a psychology student might want such an experience. Once you have decided to pursue a practicum, it can be useful to know how to choose a site that is right for you. The handbook guides you through an assessment of your interests, needs, motivations, skills, and preferences regarding field work and matching them to a site. Interview questions are also provided to help you determine if the site is right for you. After establishing a tentative agreement to work at a particular practicum site, the next step is to set up a formal contract with the site. The handbook assists you in formulating learning goals and the objectives to meet those goals.

Because you will also be attending practicum class, the handbook reviews how to make the most of the classroom experience. Giving and receiving feedback effectively is essential to a successful class. Maintaining a supportive and respectful atmosphere will allow you to explore your strengths and weaknesses and to begin developing as a mature professional. One of the requirements of the class is journaling about your practical work. The handbook shows you different methods for recording your experiences and allows you to measure progress toward your goals.

At the same time that you will be starting to attend class, you will begin your practicum. The handbook covers issues that first-time practicum students can expect as they are getting started. You are given some suggestions on how to handle awkward situations that are a natural part of the experience. As you continue to work at your site, you will want to make the most of your short time there. The handbook guides you in making links between practicum, other classes, future careers, and your personal growth. Making the most of your experience also means that you might have to handle problems that arise. While problems are not expected, the handbook outlines potential problems and how you might deal with them.

You also need to be aware of ethical and legal issues, not only while you are doing your practicum, but also as you develop professionally. The handbook provides you with some resources as well as illuminating some common ethical principles used in the helping professions. Issues regarding diversity in the workplace, including your practicum, are more important today than ever before. The handbook directs you in a self-assessment of your own cultural identity and development. It touches on reasons why diversity issues are important in the workplace and how they may impact you.

Because this class and the practicum itself is meant to prepare you for life after your degree in psychology (or another major), one section of the handbook is devoted to helping you see the skills obtained from your academic training that may be useful in future jobs. It also provides you with a plentitude of web sites related to job searches and career information for psychology majors.

Whether you choose a career in the field of psychology or not, stress and burnout on the job can happen to anyone. The handbook directs you to evaluate how stress affects you in your life today and how you are addressing it. It reviews the sources and effect of stress; symptoms, stages, and causes of burnout; and burnout as a coping mechanism. It also helps you to identify ways of taking care of yourself cognitively, physically, emotionally, and through support and time management.

Finally, the handbook guides you in the process of finishing the practicum. It covers issues of termination with clients (geared especially for students who are in counseling-related practica), concluding professional and supervisory relationships, feedback, and transitioning from practicum to a job. Ending the practicum experience is also a time for reflection. The handbook provides you with questions to help you evaluate your progress and integrate what you have learned with your life.

The handbook will be used in a variety of ways in this class. At times you will be asked to read specific parts and be prepared for class discussion. There are self-assessments throughout the handbook that you will be asked to complete. At other times the handbook will serve as a reference, allowing you to skim a section and choose what you need. You can read the handbook from a computer, print out the entire document, or print out/download only what you want to keep. Although there will be no tests on the material, choosing to take advantage of the resources presented in this handbook will enhance your experience in this class.

WHY DO A PRACTICUM?

Regardless of classroom experiences and studying, there is no substitute for real experience. Sometimes it is the only way we can measure what we know and don't know. Many things you need to know in the "real world" have probably not been addressed sufficiently in your classes (Baird, 1999). Below is a list of possible reasons for a student to do a practicum (adapted from Stanton & Ali, 1987, p. 4). Perhaps one of them is the reason you are taking this class.

1. Employment: Practicum will help you stand out in the job hunt. It removes you from the position of "can't get a job without experience, can't get experience without a job" double bind. You will acquire practical skills that may enhance your opportunities for graduate school or employment.
2. Take charge of learning: You can design your own learning and get away from typical lecture courses. You can decide what to learn and how to learn it.
3. Put theory into practice: Practicum allows you to apply theories and knowledge learned in class to "real life." You have the opportunity to determine if the two match.
4. Awareness through increased community involvement: You can become aware of what others need and understand your role and contributions to society.
5. Personal growth: You can learn how to solve problems in unfamiliar situations, increase your self-confidence, and identify areas for improvement.
6. Helping hand to others
7. Experience a new environment: You can enter a new environment, face the challenges and problems of a work setting, and learn teamwork. Practicum provides an opportunity for analyzing and resolving challenges in real-world settings.
8. Research: Practicum allows you to explore old and new academic and career interests.

HOW TO CHOOSE A PRACTICUM SITE

Your reasons for doing a practicum may begin to help you choose a particular practicum site. A self-assessment will help you to narrow down the choices and find a site that is a good match for you. Your interests, goals, values, skills, motivations, preferences, and other requirements are all important to understand. It may be helpful to start your self-assessment by looking at broad categories and then zeroing in on specific needs and interests. Once you understand what you want and need, you will have to find a site that fits most of your criteria. This section contains questions to help you in your self-assessment, questions to consider when evaluating a potential site, and guidelines for interviews. Your answers to these questions will help you set goals for the practicum experience, so hang on to your assessment. Your practicum experience should help you to refine your self-assessment, which will clarify what you want in a future job.

Self-Assessment

Broad Areas (Stanton & Ali, 1987)

Personal Interests

- What do you like to do when no one tells you what to do?
- What are your hobbies?
- What do you do for entertainment?
- What courses interest you?
- What jobs/experiences have had an impact on you?

Academic Interests

- Why have you chosen your major?
- How might practicum clarify what you have learned in courses?
- How could practicum help you choose future courses?

Career Goals

- How do you want to spend your workday in five years? One year?

- What skills/experiences will you need?
- How will practicum fit into academic and career plans?

Criteria for Practicum Site

- What type of experience do you want? In what field?
- What type of organization do you want to work for?

Work Values

- What intrinsic and extrinsic rewards do you want?
- Is it important for you to work as a member of a team?
- Do you like to work under supervision?

What You Have to Offer

- You have skills, such as research and writing skills from papers, management skills from other jobs.
- Look everywhere to assess skills you could offer. Don't discard skills that seem useless.
- Consider your attitude or work ethic.

Specific Areas (Baird, 1999; Service-Learning)

What are Your Motives? (Place a “√” beside all that apply)

- Help people make changes
- Learn more about a career
- Learn skills related to career plans
- Get off campus
- Help other people
- Gain experience for your résumé
- Meet new people
- Try out what you have learned in the classroom
- Make good use of extra time

- Improve your community
- Explore something completely different from your regular studies
- Get involved in the community
- Learn more about yourself
- Course credit
- Work on serious social issues
- Learn something new
- Do something that makes you feel needed
- Learn specific skills
- Personal reasons

Practicum should be a balance between what the experience can do for you and what it can provide to others. Identifying your motives can help you understand what you want to provide and what you want to learn. This will help make the experience satisfying for you and the site where you work.

What Settings or Situations Suit You Most? (Place a “√” beside all that apply)

- Providing service directly to others (e.g., big brother, tutor)
- Indirectly (e.g., coordinating a service project, lobbying for legislation)
- Assisting in a group activity (e.g., teacher’s aide)
- Assuming leadership of a group activity (e.g., assembling a task force)
- Providing services of an assistance nature (e.g., reading to the blind, caring for the elderly)
- Providing advocacy services (e.g., surveying and reporting results to policymakers)
- Working in a highly structured situation (i.e., carrying out duties under supervision)
- Working in an unstructured situation (i.e., program fluctuates in attendance, needs, or physical resources, like a crisis counselor)

- ❑ Working in a situation where you often see results of your work (e.g., fund-raising)
- ❑ Working in a situation where results will probably not be visible for a long time (e.g., providing paraprofessional counseling)

Environments

- What size group of clients/customers? One-on-one? Small groups? Large groups?
- What size group of coworkers?
- What kind of supervision works best for you? Close supervision? Moderate? Need more independence?
- What personal qualities of a supervisor would work best for you? What style might be challenging but help you learn?
- Do you need structure and predictability?
- Are you better at following directions or being creative?
- Do you prefer quiet work or active work?
- Do you work better with set hours or flexible hours?
- Is it important for you to see immediate results from your work?
- How much appreciation and feedback do you need?
- How do you react to frustrating experiences?

What are Your Skills and Interests?

- List previous field experiences, classes, or skills training
 - List characteristics of each experience that gave you the most and least satisfaction
 - What type of treatment or work approach is most interesting to you?
 - Skills and interests (place a “√” beside all that apply)
-
- ❑ Organizing
 - ❑ Taking responsibility
 - ❑ Persuading
 - ❑ Making decisions

- ❑ Leading discussion groups
 - ❑ Meeting new people
 - ❑ Contacting people
 - ❑ Selling things
 - ❑ Helping people solve problems
 - ❑ Researching
 - ❑ Analyzing
 - ❑ Artistic activities
 - ❑ Outdoor activities
 - ❑ Domestic activities
 - ❑ Academic activities
 - ❑ Handy work
 - ❑ Work with animals
 - ❑ Medical skills
 - ❑ Presiding at meetings and events
 - ❑ Speaking to groups
 - ❑ Keeping records
 - ❑ Financial activities
 - ❑ Legal issues
 - ❑ Current events
 - ❑ Teaching
- What do other people notice about you or praise you for?

Other Preferences and Constraints

- What kind of learning experience do you want?
- What opportunities would be interesting?
- Who do you want to serve (e.g., age, handicap, culture, socioeconomic status)?
- Do you have concerns about the limits of your abilities or knowledge?
- How much time can you give and how can it fit into your schedule?
- Are there any geographical constraints (e.g., travel time, transportation)?

Site-Assessment

What Does the Site Have to Offer a Practicum Student?

- What services are provided and who are the clients served by the site?
- What are the learning opportunities, responsibilities, and expectations for students at the site?
- What is the reputation of site? What were other students' experiences at the site?
- Are there special training opportunities?
- Does the site provide a learning environment?

- Is the work interesting and challenging enough for you?
 - E.g., if you want direct contact with clients, but end up doing clerical work, this may not be the best match for your interests.
 - However, you need to know both rewarding and mundane aspects of the work.
 - Anticipate learning by observing (depends on site) and then gradually beginning to accept responsibility.
- Does the site have requirements for the type of student they will take?
- Do you have concerns about personal safety or other risks at the site?

Supervision

- Who will supervise you?
- What position does the supervisor hold?
- How frequently would you have supervision?
- What is the supervisor's approach to supervision?
- Will you be working with others besides your supervisor?
- What is your supervisor's training/experience?
- Will s/he let you take risks and make mistakes while learning?
- Will s/he guide and support you?
- Is this someone you think you can work with and who wants you to learn?

Logistical Concerns

- What days/times are available for students?
- Are there any required times?

Interview

The following questions and topics are meant to be a guide in your quest for a practicum site. You might ask some of these questions over the phone when screening potential sites. You might ask other questions when you meet with the supervisor at the site. In any case, it is better

to know the answers to these questions sooner rather than later to prevent misunderstandings and disappointment. These questions may be redundant with the self-assessment and site-assessment questions above. Use either or both of the sets of questions to help you in this process.

Points to Communicate About You (Stanton & Ali, 1987)

- Why does this site interest you?
- How does it relate to your course of study, career plans, or other interests?
- What experiences do you have that relate to the practicum and how you could contribute?
- How does the practicum class interface with the practicum?
- What is your time availability?

Questions about the Practicum (Service-Learning; Stanton & Ali, 1987)

- Describe the organization and what my duties would be?
- How much flexibility in duties do I have at this site?
- Does the position require special skills, experience, or education?
- Are there any requirements in the hours I would be working?
- Who would be my immediate supervisor and how closely would I be supervised?
- Where does the department in which I will be working fit into the rest of the organization?
- Is there an orientation to the site? Who would be giving the tour/orientation?
- Am I expected to handle emergencies? Is there training for it?
- Are there any special rules I should know about?
- What is the general role and status of a student at this site?
- Are there any laws or legal limitations that apply to me (e.g., security clearance, confidentiality)?

Gather as much information as possible about the placement and working conditions. Once you talk to the site about possibly working there, be clear about what will happen next

(e.g., a date by which you will get back to them about whether or not you want to work there).

Take the responsibility for following up (Service-Learning).

GOAL-SETTING: EXPECTATIONS FOR YOU AND THE SITE

Once you have decided to work at a particular site, you need to establish with your supervisor exactly what you will be doing. You also need to set personal learning goals for your experience—that is, what you want to learn or take from the experience. Therefore, most activities and duties that you carry out at the site should lead to or accomplish your learning goals. Your duties/activities and learning goals should be objective, measurable, and observable. Be concrete about what you will do and what the result will be. Identify what duties you will perform, what skills and knowledge you will acquire. At the end of the semester you should be able to easily assess whether or not you reached your goals. Being as specific as possible in the beginning will allow you to measure your progress. Below are some examples of vague versus precise objectives (Service-Learning, p. 28):

Vague: I am interested in something related to women.

Precise: I will organize a series of workshops for women with drug problems (one each month for the next three months) and design a questionnaire to determine the socioeconomic characteristics of this population.

Vague: I am interested in the Environmental Division of the Health Department, and I want to learn as much as possible about it.

Precise: To study the effectiveness of the Environmental Division of the Health Department, I will compare goals of the agency with activities the agency carries out in its effort to curb air and water pollution in Fayette County during the next six months.

Ideas for Learning Goals

(Service-Learning)

- Skills acquisition (e.g., planning, decision making, oral and written expression, interpersonal skills)
- Field research (e.g., locating information and resources, fact-finding, using facts persuasively)

- Fulfilling broad learning goals (e.g., time management, accountability, gaining self-confidence)
- Reinforcing specific fields of study (e.g., applying knowledge)
- Career exploration (i.e., understanding the work in a particular field, becoming aware of job opportunities)
- Career or occupational development (e.g., counseling, community organizing, management skills, interviewing, learning about laws related to employment)
- Work experience
- Pre-professional training

When planning your goals and duties and when working at your site, consider the rights and responsibilities of practicum students. Use these as guidelines to make the experience satisfying for you and those at the site (Baird, 1999; Service-Learning).

Rights

1. To be treated as a coworker.
2. To be carefully interviewed and assigned.
3. To know as much as possible about the site (policy, people, programs, activities).
4. To receive orientation, training, and ongoing supervision.
5. To receive guidance and direction.
6. To be offered a variety of field experiences.
7. To pursue leadership roles.
8. To voice opinions and have ideas included in planning.
9. To do meaningful and satisfying work.
10. To be evaluated and receive letters of recommendations.

Responsibilities

1. To be open and honest.
2. To understand and fulfill time commitments and tasks. Being on time and dependable shows employment readiness.

3. To participate in evaluation when asked.
4. To share thoughts and feelings with staff, making learning objectives clear.
5. To respect confidentiality.
6. To seek honest feedback.
7. To be effective advocates for change when needed.
8. To be enthusiastic and committed. Irregular or infrequent attendance makes it harder to fully integrate into the routine of the site and to be involved in activities.

PRACTICUM CLASS

Practicum without a class would just be a volunteer position or a job. While you might learn something as a volunteer or an employee, the position might not be set up for learning and you might not have the motivation to learn. The class is designed to be a catalyst and motivator for learning. In-class supervision meetings are designed to be a place where students discuss learning experiences, personal reactions to practical work, and professional and ethical issues. Students receive additional supervision and feedback from the instructor and peers. It is also an opportunity to hear about various placements and careers. Trust, support, openness, honest feedback, safety, and willingness to explore and experiment are all ingredients that will make class effective and successful. Peer support is often cited as the single most important part of a practicum class. As a beginning toward developing a supportive class, each of you should explore several questions (adapted from Baird, 1999, p. 53):

Exercise: Preparing for Practicum Class

1. Am I willing to take some risks myself, ask for help, and be open about my questions, areas of competence, and feelings of inadequacy?
2. Am I willing and able to empathize with and support my peers as they deal with difficulties in their practica and in the class?
3. Am I willing and able to empathize with and support my peers as they deal with success and accomplishments in their practica and in the class?
4. As I imagine it and as I demonstrate it in my behavior, what is my goal in this class? Am I seeking to learn and help others learn, or am I (a) just trying to get the grade/credit, (b) trying to improve my status by showing what a good employee/professional I am? What is my real goal in this class?
5. Do I realize that it often seems easier to understand what is happening from the outside looking in? This means we must be gentle with ourselves when someone else points out something we had overlooked. We must also be gentle with our peers if we recognize something in their work that they had been overlooking.

6. When I have something to ask or say to another student do I act on this or am I passive and quiet? If I do act, is it in a way that conveys respect and empathy? If I do not speak up, is it because of my own characteristics or because I determined in this instance that my input or questions were not necessary at this time?

Offering Feedback

As part of this practicum class, you will be involved in sharing ideas, observations, and suggestions. Therefore, it's helpful to keep in mind guidelines for giving and receiving feedback.

- Offer feedback immediately. Do not wait until the end of class or until the next class.
- Give specific, not vague, feedback.
- Focus on concrete, objective behaviors.
- Be descriptive rather than judgmental.
- Focus on behaviors, not personal qualities.
- Be tentative rather than authoritative.

Feedback should also be positive and thought of as an idea-sharing session, rather than advice giving. Positive feedback should follow the same guidelines listed above.

Remember that being an outside observer is easier than being the student presenting a problematic situation. What seems obvious to you might be difficult for the other student to see when s/he is in the midst of the situation. Be careful not to let yourself become overly confident or feel superior to others if you see something that others do not. Another reason to be tentative about your feedback is that you cannot know everything about the situation. Phrasing feedback in a tentative manner respects the difference between you and the receiver of feedback and does not imply that you have all the answers. It will also allow the student who is receiving feedback to feel open to your ideas.

Sometimes the best feedback is an empathic response to a peer. Suggestions can be overwhelming at times. It can be helpful to hear from others that they recognize how difficult a

situation seems. Before giving feedback or suggestions, consider how your peer feels and what s/he most needs at that time.

Receiving Feedback

Receiving feedback is not easy. You are vulnerable when you reveal weaknesses, errors, or personal qualities that you might not want others to know about. It is also easy to feel that your perceived mistakes mean that you have let down or harmed your clients or customers. However, part of learning means that there will be things you do not know. If you do not feel you have to be perfect, it is easier to accept suggestions and observations that will help you improve. Most people have not been taught to hope that others will recognize their weaknesses. But the best way to learn is to identify areas of deficiency and seek to improve them. To put this attitude into practice, develop the habit of thanking people whenever they offer feedback.

Ethics in Class

Ethics are not only important in your work at practicum sites (this will be addressed later in the handbook), but are also important in the classroom setting. While class will be a place to share victories and defeats, it is not a group therapy session. It may be helpful at times to share personal information when it relates to your practicum work, but it is not required.

Protecting client/customer confidentiality is another area of concern. Whatever happens in class should be kept confidential, especially since you may be sharing your personal struggles in the practicum in addition to information about your work with clients/customers. Any information that might give away the identity of a client/customer (i.e., name, occupation, or other unique identifiers) should not be shared in class or should be disguised. If you cannot ensure that confidentiality will be maintained, do not share that case. Confidentiality is essential for your role as a professional.

JOURNALING

Keeping a journal of your practicum experiences is another catalyst for learning and is a requirement of this class. Journaling causes you to think about your experiences, giving you insight into the experiences and how you are feeling about them. It should not only be a log of events, but also a means for analyzing what you are learning, recognizing important events, and relating your goals and objectives to what you perceive you are learning and doing (Service-Learning). Journal entries could include such things as skills acquired and practiced, knowledge you've been able to apply from courses in psychology and related areas, ethical and professional concerns, personal reactions to experiences, and comments on personal and professional growth. Below are a couple of ways you can structure your journal entries to encourage learning.

Field Journal (SOAP Notes)

- Describe your feelings and perceptions about what happened—about your behavior and the behavior of others. This is your **S**ubjective account.
- Write an **O**bjective account of events, preferably at the end of a day on site. Just write the facts without making inferences or judgments.
- **A**ssess how the events relate to your work and learning goals.
- Outline actions for the next time you work at the site based on what you learned or any problems or needs. Use your journal to develop **P**lans.

The Critical Incident Journal Technique

(Stanton & Ali, 1987)

The field journal is a description of events as they occur, with no particular emphasis. With that method, you would probably sort events according to your own values or interests. While this approach can be valuable, essential elements of your experience might go unnoticed because they did not happen to interest you or seem important at the time. The critical incident technique is more structured.

First, preset objectives are used as criteria for determining what to include in the journal. The objectives would be based on your learning goals. Second, you choose incidents according to the change they produce in you or your perspective in terms of your learning goals. Third, this type of journal contains reflections on incidents that are not necessarily in a normal time sequence. Sometimes you may not realize the impact of an event until later in the practicum experience. Fourth, you use the process of recording and analyzing events to measure your progress toward your learning goals.

Steps for Organizing Your Journal

- Identify the event in detail
- Describe the details and circumstances around the event. What? When? How? Why? Where?
- List the people involved.
- Describe your role in the situation—what you did, how you acted.
- Analyze the incident. How did you handle it? Would you handle it differently next time?
- Analyze how the incident impacted you and why it's critical to you. How does it relate to your learning goals? What did you learn from it? How has your perspective changed?

While this approach may be more complex than others, your entries do not need to be long or arduous. It should help you to sift through your experience for what is important in terms of learning goals.

Other Tips for Keeping a Journal

(Baird, 1999)

- Remember to maintain confidentiality in your journals. Use initials rather than names.
- You might also consider keeping a log of the hours you spent on site and what you did each day. Some future jobs and graduate programs may ask for detailed information about tasks and reports you completed.

- Self-reflection is not about evaluating whether or not you performed well. It is about increasing self-awareness and understanding. Be as open and honest as you can.
- If you having trouble writing (Service-Learning)...
 - Do not put it off or wait until you are inspired. Just write something—do not evaluate it or wait for the right words.
 - If you are still stuck, talk about it to someone before writing.
 - Talk into a tape recorder. Transcribe it or just listen to it. Then write in your journal.

GETTING STARTED AT YOUR SITE

(Baird, 1999)

As you begin your semester as a practicum student, there are a number of issues that you should anticipate. You are in a unique position as a practicum student. You are neither a student nor a professional, but rather something in the middle. You have much to offer as a practicum student, but the ambiguous role, the limited time that you are there, and your relative inexperience can potentially confuse clients, customers, and coworkers. It can also incline them to want to work with you more or less than with a paid employee. The following section illuminates some of the issues you may have to face as a practicum student and gives suggestions on how to handle them.

First Impressions

Not only will you be forming an impression of the practicum site (staff, supervisor, clients/customers), but they will also be forming a first impression of you. Consider the nature of the setting, what you'll be doing, and what norms are for attire and conduct (how casual or formal it is). You might want to ask beforehand what the norms are for clothing. You are a guest at the practicum site; show respect for its customs and needs.

While you will be concerned with making a good first impression, others at the site may not be as concerned with how you perceive them. Due to the ongoing nature of their work, they may be busy or preoccupied. This does not mean that they are unwelcoming of students. Just remember that first impressions should not wholly influence your decision to continue working there.

Enthusiasm Versus Experience

Part of the reason that sites accept practicum students is their enthusiasm and new perspectives. For the most part, sites appreciate this and value the opportunity to be part of your training. However, your perspective and experience differs from that of the staff and clients/customers at the site. While you may be excited about learning something new every time

you are at the site, staff may have been there for years. They know the system and may not share in your enthusiasm. This difference does not mean that the staff is any less dedicated to the work. You may also find that some staff members do not reach out to make close contacts with you. If they are accustomed to students coming and going, making close working relationships may not make a lot of sense to them. It is helpful to understand these differences, or at least expect that they might occur, in order to prevent disappointment. Give some thought to how people at your site might have positive and negative ideas about a practicum student working at the site.

Role of the Practicum Student

Your role is somewhat ambiguous. It lies between student and professional. You have many things to learn, but you are also expected to carry out certain responsibilities. Staff and clients/customers may also be confused about your role and what can be expected of you.

Another factor influencing your role is how previous practicum students performed at your site. If previous students did a good job, expectations for you may be high and positive. If the former student did not perform well, a negative attitude may be carried over to you. Being aware of these possibilities will help you to prepare for how you are treated.

You can deal with these potential problems by being honest with yourself and others about your strengths and weaknesses. Share what you know and ask questions when you do not know. You can also set the expectation to do your best. Do not expect yourself to meet unrealistic expectations. You are there to learn, not to prove what you already know.

Meeting Clients/Customers

Students or other community volunteers fully run some of the practicum sites. However, in others there is a mix of paid staff and volunteers. In this case, clients and customers may have different reactions to working with a practicum student. In most situations clients and customers readily accept student volunteers and relate to them as they do to other staff members. They understand the need to train future professionals and want to ensure that trainees have a good

experience. There will be some clients and customers, however, who will reject working with a student and will demand to work with a “real professional.” They can be intimidating and are able to make students feel unwelcome or incompetent. Whatever their reaction, your job is to understand them and serve them. Do not be overly flattered by someone who immediately trusts you and do not be deeply hurt by someone who is initially hostile.

Another concern about working with clients and customers is how to introduce yourself. The best practice is to be honest. Tell clients and customers that you are a practicum student, what your field of study is, and perhaps explain a bit about why you are at the site. Usually this is enough information. But if you are asked for more background information (e.g., how much experience you have), be honest about that. Your job is not to convince them that you are an expert. If the client or customer feels uncomfortable working with a trainee, s/he has a right to those feelings. It is not your fault.

Age and Experience Issues

Age and experience can influence how your clients and customers relate/react to you. If you are young and working with people near your age, they might expect you to relate to them as a friend rather than as a professional. At some practicum sites, the peer relationship is a key to providing effective services. At other sites where you might need to act in more of an authority position, this dynamic may cause problems. If they test or question your authority, you will need to be clear with yourself and your clients/customers that you are part of the staff and that you have the same responsibilities and authorities of staff. It may be challenging to do this without being defensive, but it’s necessary. A different type of problem can occur with older clients and customers who think that your youth prevents you from being able to help them. As a general guideline, you need not be defensive about your age, experience, or any other issue on which you might be challenged. You might want to acknowledge the importance of the client/customer’s concern and ask him/her more about the concern. Here is an example of how this might occur:

(Baird, 1999, p. 20-21) A male client has been court ordered to seek counseling because he has abused his wife and children. The

following dialogue takes place when the client meets a new intern who will be working with the client's primary therapist. The intern will also be observing interactions between the client and his family members:

Client (rather gruffly): So you're an intern from the college, huh?
How old are you?

Intern: I'm twenty-one. And you?

Client: Forty-two. Old enough to be your father. (Pauses for a moment looking over the intern. Then, with some hostility asks)
What the hell are you supposed to tell me that I don't already know?

Intern (calmly, but assertively and without being confrontational):
I'm not here to "tell" you anything. I'm here to observe and learn.

Client: Well I don't need any know-it-all kid telling me how to raise my family. I've got enough of those already.

Intern (still calmly): I don't think it's my job to tell you how to raise your family. But I might be able to listen to how things are going and maybe help you folks get things back together.

Client: Yeah. We'll see.

The student's response is professional. She does not attempt to elicit his approval on the spot and does not become defensive, counterattacking, or apologetic. She acknowledges his concerns and offers to be helpful, which is all that can be expected. While it is legitimate for

clients and customers to have concerns about age and experience, the real issue of importance is the problem or need the client/customer brings to your site. Your professionalism can help keep the focus where it needs to be.

Time Limits

While clients and customers can be resistant to working with a student on occasion, the reverse often poses more of a problem. Some clients and customers will want to form a strong bond with a practicum student due to their needs and because students are often approachable and enthusiastic. In fact, some supervisors will assign difficult clients or projects to trainees because they have learned that the enthusiasm and effort of students can sometimes be very effective. However, your time at the site is limited, which raises the question of which cases or projects you should take. First, you need to be clear with staff, clients/customers, and yourself about time constraints. Do not create unrealistic fantasies about what you can accomplish or should attempt. It is better to be realistic than to create false hopes that will lead to disappointment. Second, be selective about your involvement. There should be many tasks and duties that you can accomplish during your time there. Third, you do not have to avoid all long-term work as long as you take into account the time factor and include provisions for continuing your work after you leave.

What Not to Learn

While you are encouraged to be open to learning, it does not mean you should uncritically model everything you observe or accept everything you are told as truth. For example, in some sites, staff members constantly express negative attitudes toward clients, coworkers, or supervisors. It can be easy for students to adopt similar behaviors and attitudes without even realizing it.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR EXPERIENCE

Learning does not happen by accident. You cannot count on learning something from your practicum experience without putting some effort into it. Various techniques and activities will not only enhance your learning during your practicum, but will also help you articulate what you learn and understand how you learned it (Stanton & Ali, 1987). The following learning tips will enhance your experience at the practicum site, in the class, and in your journaling.

Experiential Learning

(Stanton & Ali, 1987)

One way of looking at experiential learning is through David Kolb's model. You engage in concrete experience (what you do at the practicum site). You reflect on your experience. Out of this reflection, you consciously or unconsciously form theories, concepts, and ideas about your experience. Following this idea-forming stage comes active experimentation. By applying your ideas to your experience, it changes your experience, which moves you toward new reflections, which gives you new theories, which you test, and the cycle continues. This is Kolb's learning cycle.

While you may not go through these stages rigidly, Kolb suggests that your thinking goes through each of these stages regarding your learning experiences. He suggests that everyone has strengths and weaknesses in relation to this model. Some people tend to be more reflective. Others are good at generating theories. Still others are more interested in action and testing out theories. What is your pattern?

Regardless of your pattern, the following three points about experiential learning are important:

1. You must be active in the learning process. You need to push yourself through the stages with which you are less comfortable. If you tend to run on automatic, just enjoying what you are doing, you may have to discipline yourself to do some reflecting and processing, to make sure that you are

- learning what you want to learn. If you tend to sit back, observe, and reflect, you may need to push yourself to become more active and take on challenging tasks.
2. You, the learner, are the one who determines what you want to learn. You need to give your experience focus, because there is a large amount and variety of phenomena to absorb. In some sense you are the professor of the course. Your coworkers, supervisors, instructors, and peers are additional resources.
 3. You are more conscious than anyone else of what you are learning and how to learn it. If you take active responsibility for the learning process, you will need to monitor your progress toward your learning goals.

Exploring Careers

(Stanton & Ali, 1987)

As a practicum student you have access to information and people who may not be available to you at other times. Take this chance to explore diverse careers and organizations (you can find more resources on this topic later in the handbook). You may find that there are more career options for students with your major. You will become better prepared to make important career decisions if you take this opportunity to explore yourself and your surroundings. Since everyone knows that you are a practicum student, do not be shy about talking to people about their work. Here are some sample questions (Stanton & Ali, 1987, p. 73-74):

Questions about a Particular Field

- How did you become interested in this field and start in it?
- How can someone pursue this interest?
- What training or education did you have? Where did you get it?
- How would you do it differently?
- What are your major responsibilities?
- What do you like most about your work? Least?
- What is your schedule?
- What skills do you use most often?

- Is there much pressure in your position?
- How is your performance evaluated?
- What are the major problems, frustrations and difficulties?
- What do you see in the future for this line of work?
- What are some of your other interests that you might pursue?
- What advice would you give to a person interested in this field?
- Who else is doing exciting things in this field?

Questions about a Particular Job

- What will I need to enter?
- What training is available?
- Are any particular aptitudes needed?
- What personal qualities are useful?
- What limits will the job pose on my free time?
- Will it affect my lifestyle off the job?
- What particular tasks will I have to do?
- Can I specialize in this job?
- How much responsibility would I be given?
- What would be my relationship with the boss?
- Would I be working alone or with others? How many?
- Would my co-workers be my age or older—or younger?
- Would all my co-workers be the same sex?
- Would I be dealing with customers, clients or patients?
- Would I meet new people constantly?

Questions When Pursuing a Specific Target/Job

- What do you consider ideal experience for this job?
- Was the previous incumbent promoted?
- Could you tell me about the people who would be reporting to me?
- What is the largest single problem facing your staff now?

- What are some of the best results people in this job have produced?
- Could you tell me about the primary people I would be dealing with?
- What are the primary results you would like to see me produce?
- May I talk with the person who last held this job? Other members of the staff?
- How do you see the firm changing in the next five years? Ten years?

Other Tips for Succeeding in the Practicum

(Baird, 1999)

In a practicum it is not what you know, but what you do. The usefulness of knowledge acquired in classes depends on what you do with it and how you relate it to what you are doing on the job. You may find at first a gap between theory and practice; this is normal. And because you never know what information and skills you will need on the job, it is good to know how to understand people and situations in general. You need to be flexible, think spontaneously, be ready for anything.

Although the practicum is different than a class, you are still there to learn. That means you should not expect or need to know everything. Be honest about what you do not know and ask questions. Your job is not to impress. You will get the most out of the experience by working near your learning edge. Challenge yourself where it is a little uncomfortable, but not where you are way beyond your knowledge and skill level.

Do not forget what you do know from courses—human development, culture, gender issues, community systems, personality, sociology, abnormal psychology, business and marketing, etc. Try to make explicit links between your experiences and your knowledge.

If there are ever problems, get help early. It does not matter if it is a simple question (how to log data) or a more sensitive problem (not getting along with a coworker or not knowing how to help a difficult client). Talk to the instructor of this class, the supervisor on site, peers/classmates, or other faculty. You are not expected to do everything yourself. Consulting with others is a fundamental principle of responsible professional conduct. It is not just for practicum students. This topic will be explored further in the next section.

HANDLING PROBLEMS AT YOUR PRACTICUM SITE

Making the most of your practicum might also mean that you will encounter and have to handle problems at your practicum site. Problems can happen to anyone, even if your practicum was planned thoughtfully. You may go through periods of frustration, boredom, disinterest, and disillusionment. While you should not expect problems (unless warned by another student or the instructor of this class), it is good to be prepared. Work assignments, coworkers, supervisors, and even you can pose potential problems for yourself.

Work Assignments

“Go fer” Work

Some of this is inevitable, but you do not want it to become your permanent job. This may happen if your role at the site is not clear. If you and your supervisor agreed on your duties and expectations for each other, then this should be less likely to happen. Consult your supervisor if your work is not challenging enough or if you feel exploited. Use the contract to remind your supervisor of mutually agreed upon duties. You should be able to develop a solution (Service-Learning; Stanton & Ali, 1987).

Additional Responsibilities

Before asking for more work, be sure you have shown you can handle it. Balancing work and learning means being aware of the balance between your needs as a learner and the site’s needs to serve clients or customers.

Pressure

It is your responsibility to meet deadlines. If the pressure to finish assignments on time is overwhelming you, let your supervisor know. Admit your limits.

Supervisors are not superhuman and cannot read your mind. They need to be told what and how you are doing and how you feel about it because they may be too busy to ask. It is your responsibility to speak up.

Coworkers

Resentment

Coworkers may resent students because of the special nature of the position that allows flexibility. They may disregard your work or act condescendingly toward you. Your supervisor should explain your role to employees. You can help by acting like a “regular” employee. Conversation with other staff members is the best route to good relationships. You and the staff person need to respect what each of you brings to your work. Remember that staff work full-time and may not have the same point of view as a student who works a few hours a week. You may have to work harder to prove yourself, that you respect that person’s work and expertise, and that you are committed to not only learning and gaining credits, but also to providing a service. Additionally, do not get caught up in internal struggles among staff members and do not take sides (Service-Learning; Stanton & Ali, 1987).

Overtime

You may sometimes feel pressure (implicitly or explicitly, perhaps from coworkers) to work more hours than you contracted for. While it may be a beneficial learning experience and may help the site where you work, you have to make the judgment about when enough is enough. If you find yourself confused about the hours you are to work, talk to your supervisor to negotiate a solution.

Communication

You may perceive that your ideas are not being heard. Check it out to determine if this is true or if you are not communicating clearly.

Discrimination

If you are truly being discriminated against because of a personal attribute, check this out with the people involved. Do not let the problem fester. If it cannot be resolved at the site, let the instructor of this class know. WSU and the Psychology Department do

not endorse this behavior. If a resolution cannot be obtained, then the relationship with the site may be dissolved.

Sexual Harassment

Inform the person who is harassing you immediately and politely about behavior that you find offensive. If it cannot be resolved this way, consult a supervisor or the instructor of this class. WSU and the Psychology Department do not endorse this behavior. If a resolution cannot be obtained, then the relationship with the site may be dissolved (Stanton & Ali, 1987).

Unfair or Questionable Practices (Service-Learning)

While this is a rare occurrence, if it happens consult your instructor. Discuss what you have observed, who is involved, separate objective facts from your subjective perceptions, and look at the situation from all sides. Consider the following:

Will you be able to effect a change?

Is there a group in the community who might respond to such a situation?

Should administrators in the agency/business be consulted?

Are there others you could consult?

Taking time for reflection before acting is imperative.

You

(Service-Learning)

Frustration

If you are feeling frustrated by your work, first identify its source. Discuss the problem and your feelings with your supervisor or instructor to help you arrive at an appropriate solution. It may be due to unrealistic expectations, lack of skills, or incompatibility with the person or situation you are trying to change. Or it may be due to a source outside of you, such as difficult coworkers or difficult clients/customers.

Boredom or Disinterest

If you are feeling bored, locate the source and get supervision. It may be due to repetition, frustration, or incompatibility of the work with your interests.

Disillusionment

Disillusionment may be a natural stage of involvement in your work. Many students go through cycles of disillusionment, depression, rejection of the setting, self-examination, and acceptance in their adjustment to the setting. Whatever the stage, discuss it with your supervisor or the instructor of this class.

Supervisor

(Baird, 1999)

Although most students have a positive supervisory experience, conflicts are not uncommon. If this occurs and you think it should be dealt with, you may have to be the one to raise the issue. If the conflict is related to how you work together in supervision, then resolution is very likely. If you have differences in the way you think your work should be carried out, it is most likely to be resolved. However, if there is a personality conflict between you and your supervisor, trying to resolve it may not be successful and may make things worse.

There are several principles that may help you with conflicts more effectively. First, approach the situation as an opportunity for learning, a part of the practicum experience, rather than an event that inevitably interferes with learning. You may learn how you react to conflict, what tends to promote conflict, and how to resolve conflict. Believing that conflicts should not happen and that you should not have to deal with it may be an attitude that prevents successful resolution. Anger, fear, or avoidance will not help you solve the problem.

Second, identify what the conflict is really about before raising it with your supervisor. The surface content of the conflict does not always reflect the real problem. For example, a student and her supervisor have a disagreement about times she should work at the site. On the surface it may look like a scheduling conflict. In reality, she is reluctant to change her schedule

because she does not feel she is getting the best learning experience to begin with. She is doubtful that coming in at a different time will improve her experience.

Third, ask yourself what role you might be playing in the conflict or situation. If it is difficult for you to look at your part, get an outside perspective. Do not look to the other person to reassure you that it is not your fault. You want an objective perspective. Similarly, you might try to see the situation from your supervisor's perspective.

Fourth, how would you like the situation to be different and what would have to occur to satisfy you? By considering what you want, you will be more able to articulate the problem and your wishes for change. This approach is better than coming to your supervisor in anger and with vague complaints. Your maturity will show that you want to solve the problem.

Finally, sometimes the solution to the problem does not satisfy everyone involved. If this is the case, sometimes a change in supervisor or placement is the best solution. It does not have to be a negative experience if you and your supervisor have made efforts at resolving a situation. In this case, it would be advisable to consult the instructor of this class to help mediate and find alternative solutions.

ETHICAL AND LEGAL ISSUES

(Baird, 1999)

Because practicum experiences are a key step in becoming a professional in a particular field, it is vital that you understand and adhere to standards of professional ethics. Not all ethical standards are identical for all professions, but most share basic principles. Below are *some* references for the ethical guidelines for several of the leading professional organizations (dates are omitted, as ethical guidelines and codes are occasionally updated):

American Counseling Association. ACA Code of Ethics.

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Code of ethical principles for marriage and family therapists.

American College Personnel Association. Statement of ethical principles and standards.

American Psychological Association. Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct.

American School Counselor Association. Ethical Standards for School Counselors.

National Association of Social Workers. NASW Code of Ethics.

These general guidelines apply to anyone, including students, involved in applied work, research, teaching, and consulting. The professional organizations also often provide specific ethical guidelines for providers of services.

In addition to reading about ethics in your profession, you should maintain ongoing discussions of ethics with others (supervisors, instructors, peers) and plan to participate in continuing education. Mere knowledge of ethical codes does not guarantee ethical behavior. One study found that over half of the interns who had ethical violations had previously completed an ethics course. Ongoing study is also necessary because no ethical code can be written to handle every possible situation. You may find yourself in a situation where two ethical codes conflict with each other. Therefore, consultation is necessary.

In order for you to understand the legal relationship between your site and WSU, I have included a copy of the Affiliation Agreement. It outlines the responsibilities of all parties, including legal liability and insurance. It is a basic contract with which you should be familiar.

**Washington State University Student
Affiliation Agreement
Contract No. 12295**

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into between Washington State University (WSU) Department of Psychology, located at Pullman, Washington, and (“Training Site”), located at (hereinafter referred to sometimes as "Party" or "Parties".)

RECITALS:

WSU's curriculum for educating undergraduate students in psychology includes an optional, practical learning experience; and

Training Site has suitable clinical experiences and facilities available for the practical learning experience of such students; and

It is mutually beneficial to WSU and Training Site to have WSU students participate in their practical learning experience at Training Site

THE PURPOSE OF THIS AGREEMENT is to set forth the duties and responsibilities of the Training Site and WSU with respect to the practical learning experiences provided at the Training Site for students who are enrolled in WSU's course of study (the “education program”). As consideration for the mutual covenants and agreements contained in this document, WSU and Training Site agree as follows:

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- a. WSU and Training Site agree that contemporaneous with or following execution of this Agreement, and within the scope of its provisions, WSU and Training Site may develop letter agreements to formalize operational details of the practicum. These details include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Beginning dates and length of experience (to be mutually agreed upon at least one month into the semester);
 - Specific days, hours and locations for the clinical education program;
 - Specific learning objectives and performance expectations for students;
 - Specific allocation of responsibilities for the WSU faculty Liaison, and the Training Site clinical education Supervisor, and others, if any, referenced elsewhere in this Agreement;
 - Deadlines and format for student progress reports and evaluation forms.

Any such letter agreements will be considered to be attachments to this Agreement, will be binding on the Parties when signed by authorized representatives of each party, and may be modified by subsequent letter agreements signed by authorized representatives of each party.

- b. WSU and Training Site will jointly plan the practicum and jointly evaluate students. Exchange of information will be maintained by on-site visits when practical and by letter or telephone in other instances.

- c. WSU and Training Site will instruct their respective faculty, staff and students participating in the practicum to maintain confidentiality of student, client, and patient information as required by law and by policies and procedures of WSU and Training Site. WSU shall direct its trainees to comply with the policies and procedures of Training Site, including those governing the use and disclosure of individually identifiable health information under federal law, specifically 45 CFR parts 160 and 164. Solely for the purpose of defining the trainees' role in relation to the use and disclosure of Training Site's protected health information, such trainees are defined as members of the Training Site's workforce, as that term is defined by 45 CFR 160.103, when engaged in activities pursuant to this Agreement. However, such trainees are not and shall not be considered to be employees of the Training Site.
- d. There will be no payment of charges or fees between WSU and Training Site.
- e. Parties will follow all applicable laws, regulations, and policies.
- f. Students while engaged in the practical learning experiences provided pursuant to this Agreement shall retain the status of students working towards the fulfillment of their degree requirements. Students are not employees or agents of WSU while so engaged.

2. WSU'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. WSU will provide, upon request, information to Training Site concerning its curriculum and the professional and academic credentials of its faculty for the students at Training Site.
- b. WSU will designate an appropriately qualified and credentialed faculty member to coordinate and act as the Liaison with Training Site. WSU will notify Training Site in writing of any change or proposed change of its Liaison.
- c. WSU will be responsible for instruction and administration of the students' academic education program, and will have the final responsibility for grading students.
- d. The WSU Liaison will meet with the Training Site practicum Supervisor Preceptors only as needed to discuss and evaluate the practicum. These meetings will take place in person if practicable, otherwise by telephone conference. WSU is responsible for arranging and planning the meetings.
- e. WSU will provide the names and information pertaining to relevant education and training for all students enrolled in the practicum to be placed at Training Site, per the request of the Training Site. WSU is responsible for supplying any additional information required by Training Site as set forth in this Agreement, prior to the arrival of students. WSU will notify Training Site in writing of any change or proposed change in a student's status.
- f. WSU will obtain evidence of current immunizations against diphtheria, tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles (rubeola), mumps, rubella (or a positive rubella titer), and of hepatitis B immunization status for those students who will be in contact with patients/clients. For each student born after 1956, WSU will maintain on file records of

positive titer or of post-1967 immunization for rubella and rubeola. At the time of immunization, students with no history of exposure to chickenpox will be advised to get an immune titer. WSU will require yearly purified protein derivative (ppd) tuberculosis testing or follow-up as recommended if the students are ppd-positive or have had bacilli calmetti guerin (BCG). WSU will provide, upon request, information to Training Site regarding student status concerning the above requirements.

- g. WSU will comply with and ask that students comply with the policies and procedures established by Training Site. WSU will notify each student of his/her status and responsibilities pursuant to this Agreement.
- h. WSU will encourage each student participating in the practicum to acquire comprehensive health and accident insurance that will provide continuous coverage of such student during his or her participation in the education program. WSU will inform students that they are responsible for their own health needs, health care costs, and health insurance and coverage.

3. TRAINING SITE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Training Site will provide students with a desirable practical educational experience within the scope of services provided by Training Site. Training site will designate in writing administrators/preceptors, if any, to be responsible for the practicum, and will designate in writing one person as the Practicum Supervisor. The Practicum Supervisor will maintain contact with the WSU-designated Liaison to assure mutual participation in and review of the practicum and student progress. Training Site will submit in writing to WSU the professional and academic credentials for the administrators/Preceptors and/or Clinical Education Supervisor.
- b. Training Site will provide students with access to sources of information necessary for the practicum, within Training Site's policies and procedures and commensurate with customers'/students'/patients'/clients' rights, including library resources and reference materials.
- c. Training Site will make available to students basic supplies and equipment necessary for service to customers/students/patients/clients and the practicum. Within the limitation of facilities, Training Site will make available office and conference space for students and, if applicable, WSU faculty and WSU Liaison.
- d. Training site will submit required reports on each student's performance and will provide an evaluation to WSU on forms provided by WSU.
- e. Training Site retains full responsibility for service to customers/students/patients/clients, and will maintain the quality of customer/student/patient/client care without relying on the students' practical training activities for staffing purposes.
- f. Training Site will have the right to take immediate temporary action to correct a situation where a student's actions endanger customer's/student's/patient's/client's service/care. As soon as possible thereafter, Training Site's Practicum Supervisor will notify WSU of the action taken. All final resolutions of the student's academic status in such situations will be made solely by WSU after reviewing the matter and considering whatever written

factual information Training Site provides for WSU. However, Training Site reserves the right to terminate the use of its facilities by a particular student where necessary to maintain its operation free of disruption and to ensure quality of customer/student/patient/client care.

- g. On any day when a student is participating in the practicum at its facilities, Training Site will provide to such student necessary emergency health care or first aid for accidents occurring in its facilities. Financial responsibility for such emergency care, including care as described elsewhere in this Agreement, will be as follows:
 - Training Site reserves the right to bill students for the cost of initial first aid care.
 - At the student's expense, Training Site may provide follow-up care, testing and counseling, including HIV testing, and counseling associated with that testing, in the absence of any similar service being immediately available from WSU's health services.
- h. Except as provided in this Agreement, Training Site will have no obligation to furnish medical or surgical care to any student.
- i. Training Site shall consider that students are learners and will not replace Training Site personnel with students. Any service rendered by students is incidental to the educational purpose of the practicum.
- j. Training Site shall require students to adhere to the standards, policies, and regulations of Training Site during their practicum.
- k. Training Site shall require students to wear appropriate attire and nametags, and to conform to the standards and practices established by WSU during their practicum at Training Site.
- l. Training Site understands students assigned to Training Site will be and will remain students of WSU, and will in no sense be considered employees of Training Site. Training Site does not and will not assume any liability for students under any law relating to Worker's Compensation on account of this Agreement, but may choose to cover students as volunteers under RCW 51.12.035. Students will not be entitled to any monetary or other remuneration for services performed by them at Training Site, nor will Training Site otherwise have any monetary obligation to WSU or its students by virtue of this Agreement.
- m. Training Site personnel participating in the educational program provided pursuant to this Agreement are, and shall remain employees of the Training Site for all purposes, and shall not be deemed or considered to be employees or agents of WSU.

4. LIABILITY COVERAGE PROVISIONS

- a. Each Party to this agreement will be responsible for the negligent acts or omissions of its own employees, officers, or agents in the performance of this Agreement. Neither Party will be considered the agent of the other and neither Party assumes any responsibility to the other Party for the consequences of any act or omission of any person, firm, or

corporation not a party to this Agreement.

- b. WSU and its officers, employees, and agents, while acting in good faith within the scope of their official WSU duties, are covered by the State of Washington Self-Insurance Program and the Tort Claims Act (RCW 4.92.060 et seq.), and successful claims against WSU and its employees, officers, and agents in the performance of their official WSU duties in good faith under this Agreement will be paid from the tort claims liability account as provided in RCW 4.92.130.
- c. Training Site maintains professional liability coverage that provides liability coverage for its employees, officers, and agents in the performance of this Agreement, and further provides the means for defense and payment of claims that may arise against such individuals. Training Site shall provide proof of such insurance to WSU upon request.
- d. Training Site will accept placement of only those students who are insured against liability for actions or inactions occurring in the practical setting. Students participating in the practicum will be covered either by a student medical malpractice policy offered through Washington State University, or acquired by the student through another source. The limits of such coverage shall be, at a minimum, \$1,000,000 per occurrence. Certificates of such coverage purchased by the student will be provided to Training Site upon request. Should proof of insurance not meet with Training Site's approval and satisfaction, Training Site can refuse to accept any student for placement.

5. TERM AND TERMINATION

- a. This Agreement is effective upon execution by the Parties and will continue thereafter from academic year to academic year unless terminated as provided in this Agreement. However, Parties shall review this Agreement no later than three years from its effective date or earlier at the request of either party.
- b. WSU and Training Site will jointly plan student placement at the beginning of each academic semester, taking into account the needs of WSU for practical placement, the maximum number of students for whom Training Site can provide a desirable practical educational experience, and the needs of other disciplines requesting clinical placements.
- c. This Agreement may be terminated by either Party by one year's written notice to the other Party. However, such termination shall not become effective for the students then enrolled in the practicum at Training Site, if such termination prevents the completion of the requirements for their practicum.

6. PROVISIONS REGARDING BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS

- a. WSU has provided the opportunity to receive Hepatitis B (HBV) vaccine to all practicum students before assignment to Training Site. Training Site will provide personal protection equipment that is appropriate for tasks assigned to WSU's students.
- b. In the event a student sustains a needle-stick injury or other substantial exposure to bodily fluids of another or other potentially infectious material while participating in the practicum at Training Site agrees to provide the following services:

- Being seen by Training Site’s employee health service and/or emergency department as soon as possible after the injury;
- Emergency medical care following the injury;
- Initiation of HBV, Hepatitis C (HCV) and HIV protocol;
- HIV counseling and appropriate testing.

c. Training Site shall determine the source patient’s HBV, HCV and HIV status in the usual manner to the extent possible. Training Site does not accept liability for any illness or injury subsequent to such accidental exposure, except as otherwise provided in this Agreement.

7. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

This Agreement and any amendment attached hereto constitute the entire agreement between the Parties and supersede any and all prior oral or written agreements, commitments, or understandings concerning the matters provided for in this Agreement. No other understandings, oral or otherwise, regarding the subject matter of this agreement shall be deemed to exist or to bind any of the parties hereto.

8. MODIFICATION

The parties may modify this Agreement only by a subsequent written Agreement executed by the Parties. Any modification shall be effective only if written, signed and dated by the authorized representatives of each Party and attached to this Agreement.

9. ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

Any conflict or inconsistency in this Agreement and its attachments will be resolved by giving the documents precedence in the following order:

- a. This Agreement;
- b. Attachments to this Agreement in reverse chronological order.

10. GOVERNANCE

This contract is entered into pursuant to and under the authority granted by the laws of the state of Washington. The Parties’ rights or obligations under this Agreement shall be construed in accordance with those laws. The provisions of this agreement shall be construed to conform to those laws.

11. NOTICES

All notices, demands, requests, or other communications required to be given or sent by WSU or Training Site, will be in writing and will be mailed by first-class mail, postage prepaid, or transmitted by hand delivery or facsimile, addressed as follows:

For WSU:

For Training Site:

Dept. Name: Psychology Department
 Contact: Jennifer Luboski, Ph.D.

Name: _____
 Contact: _____

Title: Instructor
Address: PO Box 644820
Pullman, WA 99164-4820
Phone: 509-335-1592
Fax: 509-335-5043

Title: _____
Address: _____
Phone : _____
Fax : _____

Each party may designate a change of address by notice in writing. All notices, demands, requests or communications that are not hand delivered will be deemed received three (3) days after deposit in the U.S. mail, postage prepaid; or upon confirmation of successful facsimile transmission.

12. SURVIVAL

WSU and Training Site expressly intend and agree that the liability coverage provisions of this Agreement will survive the termination of this Agreement for any reason.

13. SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this Agreement or any provision of any document incorporated by reference, or any other agreement document or writing pursuant to or in connection with this Agreement, shall be held wholly or partially invalid or unenforceable under applicable law, such invalidity shall not affect the other provisions of this Agreement which can be given effect without the invalid provision, if such remainder conforms to the requirements of applicable law and the fundamental purpose of this agreement, and to this end the provisions of this Agreement are declared to be severable.

14. WAIVER

A failure by either party to exercise its rights under this agreement shall not preclude that party from subsequent exercise of such rights and shall not constitute a waiver of any other rights under this Agreement unless stated to be such in a writing signed by an authorized representative of the party and attached to this agreement.

15. INSPECTION

Training Site will permit, on reasonable notice and request, the inspection of clinical and related facilities by agencies charged with responsibility for accreditation of WSU.

16. HIPAA

University shall direct its students to comply with the policy and procedures of the Training Site, including those governing the use and disclosure of individually identifiable health information under federal law, specifically 45 CFR parts 160 and 164. Solely for the purposes of defining the students' role in relation to the use and disclosure of Training Site's protected health information, as that term is defined in 45 CFR parts 160 and 164, the students are defined as members of the Training Site's workforce, as that term is defined by 45 CFR 160.103, when engaged in activities pursuant to this Agreement. However, the students are not and shall not be considered to be employees or volunteers of the Training Site, nor are the students agents of the Training Site by virtue of this provision.

17. NON-DISCRIMINATION

Each party certifies that it will not discriminate in the performance of this Agreement on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation (to include gender identity), religion, veteran or military status, or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability or the use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a person with a disability, in compliance with (a) Presidential Executive Order 11246, as amended, including the Equal Opportunity Clause contained therein; (b) Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974, as amended, and the Affirmative Action Clauses contained therein; (c) the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended; and (d) Washington state civil rights and nondiscrimination laws. The parties further agree they will not maintain facilities which are segregated on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin in compliance with Presidential Executive Order 11246, as amended, and will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, regarding programs, services, activities and employment practices.

17. SIGNATURES

The Parties executing this Agreement below hereby certify they have the authority to sign this Agreement on behalf of their respective Parties and that the Parties agree to the terms and conditions of this Agreement as shown by the signatures below.

FOR WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY:

FOR TRAINING SITE:

Recommended by:

Name: _____
Date: _____

Name: _____
Date: _____

Approved by:

Official for Washington State University
Date: _____

DIVERSITY ISSUES

(Baird, 1999)

Learning to work with differences can be one of the main challenges and opportunities in your practicum experience. The sites may involve people of economic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds that are different than your own. As you interact with others, you need to be able to recognize how your background has influenced you and how others are influenced by their backgrounds.

Even if your site does not present many opportunities for working with diverse groups, your future work almost certainly will. There are three critical reasons for addressing issues of diversity in applied work: 1) traditional segregation limits knowledge of other groups of people; 2) there is a growing population of nonwhite persons in the United States; and 3) there has been and continues to be negative tensions between groups. Issues of diversity not only include race and ethnicity, but also economic means, religious beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities, and geographic regions. Given that our experiences are limited by people with whom we had contact growing up and that there are ongoing tensions and prejudices, we may have difficulty understanding the experiences, strengths, needs, and perspectives of others. You cannot simply dismiss diversity issues by thinking that they are unimportant or that everyone should just be treated the same. Although the “color-blind” approach may be supported by good intentions, it tends to ignore a major part of people’s lives and contributes to unrealistic views of people. Avoiding them does not make the differences between people go away or help you in your work when these issues arise. Practicum is a good place to start developing this awareness.

Cultural differences should not be seen as obstacles to applied work, but rather should be a tool for helping you to be more accurate and effective in your work with others. If you think about it, almost all of our work with others is cross-cultural. How often does it happen that you are working with someone who is exactly like you? It is more often the case that gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, region of the country, and/or race is different than yours (whether you

consider yourself part of a majority or minority group). Becoming acutely aware of similarities and differences is the first step in learning to work with diverse groups.

Not only is it important to recognize such differences between people, but it is also important to recognize that people cope with these differences in various ways. For example, a practicum student may think that it is best to address cultural differences with a client directly, while the client may wish to avoid bringing such differences to the forefront.

Exercise: Knowing Yourself in Relation to Diversity

(adapted from Baird, 1999, p. 83-84)

This exercise is designed to help you become more aware of your own cultural and personal background and characteristics. The following list identifies certain personal and cultural characteristics that have profound influences on how people understand the world and interact with others. For each characteristic, begin by describing yourself, then take some time to seriously consider how each aspect of yourself taken separately, and how all the aspects taken together, affect your understanding of yourself and others. Also give some thought to how these characteristics shape the assumptions you bring to your training as a practicum student. One way to enhance this understanding is to imagine how things you may have taken for granted about yourself are due at least in part to your ethnic or cultural background. For example, you might ask yourself, "Because I have [pink/brown/black/red/yellow, etc.] skin, I have experienced...." Or, "Because my family's economic status was...I have experienced...." Another approach to enhance your understanding is to imagine how your life might be different if you had other characteristics. For example, you might consider, "If I were of a different culture...." "If my parents were very (poor/rich) I might...." "If I were a new immigrant I might experience...." As a final yet critical step to this exercise, discuss your own responses with a peer or other person. If you have the opportunity, try to discuss this with several people who are much different from you. Learning how they have answered the items and contrasting those answers with your own can be enlightening:

1. My genders is _____ and this is how it influences my experiences and how I understand and relate to others.
2. My age is _____ and this is how it influences my experiences and how I understand and relate to others.
3. My physical appearance includes the following qualities (Describe these as accurately as you can and try to avoid oversimplifying or using racial terms):
Skin:
Hair:
Facial Features:
Build:
Other Features:
This is how those features influence my experiences and how I understand and relate to others.
4. The nationality and cultural background of my parents and grandparents are:
This is how the culture of my family influences my experiences and how I understand and relate to others.
5. With regard to economic resources, the family I was raised in was _____.
6. The religious orientation of my mother is _____.
The religious orientation of my father is _____.
This is how that background influences my experiences and how I understand and relate to others.
7. My mother's educational background is _____.
My father's educational background is _____.
This is how that background influences my experiences and how I understand and relate to others.
8. My own educational background is _____.
This is how that background influences my experiences and how I understand and relate to others.
9. My physical health and abilities are _____.

This is how that background influences my experiences and how I understand and relate to others.

10. My sexual orientation is _____.

This is how that background influences my experiences and how I understand and relate to others.

11. Other characteristics that have influenced my experiences and understanding of others are _____.

In working with people of different ethnicities and cultures, you need to be aware of differences, have knowledge of a person's culture, be able to distinguish between culture and pathology, and understand how culture influences your work with a person. Included in knowing a person's culture is knowledge of the history of that person's cultural group. However tolerant and empathic you may believe yourself to be, those qualities cannot erase the histories of oppression. While the past may not be your fault and cannot be changed, it has created present realities. We must take responsibility for the present without wallowing in the past or denying the past.

While it is important to focus on issues of injustice and inequality between different groups, stereotypical images may prevent us from appreciating the cultural richness and heritage of different groups. Areas where strengths can be found are in family, religion, school, art, and music. Seeing the negative side or disadvantages of a person's background is likely to arouse pity or guilt. If this is all one feels, it will be difficult to accord a person genuine respect as an individual and to identify resources from which one can draw.

Ethnic Identity Development

Racial identity and attitudes influence behaviors and dynamics of personal interactions. Your work with others will be influenced by your cultural identity and their cultural identity. Below is a model of ethnic identity development that applies to oppressed minorities:

Conformity: An individual in this stage prefers dominant cultural values.

Dissonance: An individual in this stage is confused about ethnic identity and begins to

challenge conformity.

Resistance and Immersion: An individual in this stage rejects the dominant culture and wholeheartedly endorses the minority culture to combat oppression.

Introspection: An individual in this stage has a conflict between personal autonomy and cultural beliefs; s/he questions a black-and-white stance.

Synergistic Articulation and Awareness: An individual in this stage resolves the conflict in Introspection, balances cultural identity and personal autonomy, and is objective about other values.

“White” Identity Development

Because members of dominant groups tend to take their position as the norm, comparing other groups with themselves, it can be enlightening for individuals from a dominant group to understand their cultural identity. Corvin and Wiggins proposed a four-stage model of white identity development:

Acceptance: They do not consider themselves racist, but have an implicit assumption of Whiteness as the norm. They deny cultural differences, which reinforces the assumption of white norms.

Resistance: An awareness of racism grows. They acknowledge racism as a problem, but their own racism is not fully recognized. They may not even realize that their observations about other groups are actually prejudiced.

Redefinition: They discover their own identity and increase awareness of personal values, some of which are racist. This stage includes an understanding of the advantages of being white. They are better able to work toward making changes.

Internalization: They are aware of their own racial identity, have internalized a multicultural perspective, and are committed to working with others to bring about change.

Others assert that white identity does not necessarily move through developmental stages toward a nonracist identity. Rowe et al. proposed types, as opposed to stages, that characterize racial attitudes. For example, the avoidant type prefers to avoid ethnic issues altogether. The

dominative type justifies the dominance of minority peoples by the majority culture. The conflictive type opposes overt discrimination but would oppose programs that reduce covert discrimination.

While learning about historical and current social conditions and about the concepts of ethnic identity development in order to understand others is important, it is not enough if it is just an intellectual exercise. The learning process needs to include a growing awareness of your personal biases and prejudices. It is not an easy or pleasant task, but it is necessary.

Exercise: Personal Cultural Identity

(adapted from Baird, 1999, p. 89)

You have just read about models of identity for individuals from majority and minority cultures. To make this more real, this exercise explores two issues. First, in relation to these models, where would you place yourself along the stages of development or how would you describe your identity type? Second, if you were interacting with a person from a culture or ethnicity different from your own, which stages of their development or which identity type might be easiest, and which most difficult for you to deal with and why?

PSYCHOLOGY AND CAREERS

When you decided to take this course, you had a reason for wanting practical experience that probably related to future goals. No matter how far along you are in your education, you are probably thinking about what you would like to do after you graduate. Some of you are more certain than others. This section will begin to help you to see how your undergraduate education can be applied to future endeavors. There are general skills you have acquired from your broad education that will prepare you for jobs and graduate education. The analysis of these skills may help you to develop a stronger résumé and a stronger sense of your abilities. Skills that are somewhat more specific to psychology and related fields also have broad applicability. Web resources are provided to help you see what you can do with a degree in psychology.

Career Related Liberal Arts Skills

Nine clusters were originally prepared by Paul Breen, San Francisco State University, in consultation with students, employers, and faculty members from 22 disciplines in the humanities and the social and behavioral sciences. They have been combined with skills identified by Appleby (2001).

Liberal arts skills are defined as transferable, functional abilities that are required in many different problem solving and task oriented situations. They are performance abilities that can be acquired through informal life experiences or formal education and training. Although the specific subject matter of academic disciplines is often a means for developing or refining liberal arts skills, the application of these skills is not dependent on the mastery of an academic discipline. Liberal arts skills are interdisciplinary abilities involving many areas of human development (e.g., cognitive, affective, social, psychological, and moral development). While the overt curriculum of psychology (or another field) leads to facts, concepts, and theories, the covert curriculum of liberal arts nurtures skills and characteristics that lead to lifelong learning skills.

The natural overlapping that is characteristic of many of the individual skills has not been eliminated. Instead, the skills have been grouped into nine clusters of related skills that are generally recognized as essential in a variety of careers.

Information Management

- Sort data and objects
- Compile and rank information
- Apply information creatively to specific problems or tasks
- Analyze complex problems or sources of information into smaller, manageable units and understand how these units fit together to form a whole
- Synthesize facts, concepts, and principles into new and creative ideas
- Understand and use organizing principles
- Evaluate information against appropriate standards to determine its value

Design and Planning

- Identify alternative courses of action
- Set realistic goals
- Follow through with a plan or decision
- Manage time effectively
- Predict future trends and patterns
- Accommodate multiple demands for commitment of time, energy, and resources
- Assess needs
- Make and keep a schedule
- Set priorities

Research and Investigation

- Use a variety of sources of information
- Apply a variety of methods to test the validity of data
- Identify problems and needs
- Design an experiment, plan, or model that systematically defines a problem

- Identify information sources appropriate to special needs or problems
- Formulate questions relevant to clarifying a particular problem, topic, or issue

Communication

- Listen with objectivity and paraphrase the content of a message
- Attend to, understand, and carry out instructions accurately and completely
- Use various forms and styles of written communication
- Speak effectively and persuasively to individuals and groups
- Use media formats to present ideas imaginatively
- Express one's needs, wants, opinions, and preferences without violating the rights of others
- Identify and communicate value judgments effectively
- Describe objects or events with a minimal of factual errors
- Convey a positive self-image to others (e.g., cover-letter writing, résumé production, and interviewing)

Interpersonal Skills

- Keep a group “on track” and moving toward the achievement of a common goal
- Maintain group cooperation and support
- Work as a team player, communicating clearly, acting responsibly, working well in groups, and cooperating rather than competing
- Delegate tasks and responsibilities
- Interact effectively with peers, superiors, and subordinates who may be different than you (e.g., based on age, culture, sexual orientation)
- Express one's feelings appropriately
- Understand the feelings of others
- Use argumentation techniques to persuade others
- Make commitments to persons
- Be willing to take risks
- Teach a skill, concepts, or principle to others

- Analyze behavior of self and others in group situations
- Learn the culture of the workplace through observation
- Demonstrate effective social behavior in a variety of settings under different circumstances
- Work under time and environmental pressures

Critical Thinking

- Identify quickly and accurately the critical issues when making a decision or solving a problem
- Identify a general principle that explains related experiences or factual data
- Define the parameters of problem
- Identify reasonable criteria for assessing the value or appropriateness of an action or behavior
- Adapt one's concepts and behavior to changing conventions and norms
- Apply appropriate criteria to strategies and action plans
- Take given premises and reason to their conclusion
- Create innovative solutions to complex problems
- Analyze the interrelationships of events and ideas from several perspectives

Management/Administration

- Analyze tasks
- Identify people who can contribute to the solution of a problem or task
- Identify resource materials useful in the solution of a problem
- Delegate responsibility for completion of a task
- Motivate and lead people
- Organize people and tasks to achieve specific goals

Valuing

- Assess the course of action in terms of its long-range effects on general human welfare

- Make decisions that will maximize both the individual and the collective good
- Appreciate the contributions of art, literature, science, and technology to contemporary society
- Identify one's own values
- Assess one's values in relation to important life decisions

Personal/Career Development

- Analyze one's life experience
- Relate the skills developed in one environment (e.g., school) to the requirements of another environment (e.g., work)
- Match knowledge about one's own characteristics and abilities to information about job or career opportunities
- Identify, describe, and assess the relative importance of one's needs, values interests, strengths, and weaknesses
- Develop personal growth goals that are motivating
- Identify and describe skills acquired through formal education and general life experiences
- Identify one's strengths and weaknesses
- Accept and learn from negative criticism or feedback to improve future performance
- Persist with a project when faced with failure unless it is clear that the project cannot be carried out or is not worth the time or effort needed to complete it
- Recognize when a project cannot be carried out or is not worth the time or effort required to complete it
- Do what you say you will do in a timely and competent manner, even when circumstances are less than ideal
- Generate trust and confidence in others
- Take risks
- Accept the consequences of one's actions rather than blaming failures on others or on circumstances

- “Market” oneself to prospective employers

Other Lifelong Learning Skills (Appleby, 2001)

- Reading with comprehension and identifying major points

People in management positions are always looking for ways to succeed in their positions. They do this by reading books, magazines, and trade publications. If you aspire to such a position, your ability to read and comprehend complex material quickly, to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information, and to identify major points are skills that you can acquire and strengthen in school.

- Writing in a particular “style”

Most academic disciplines require their students to write in a particular style, which has requirements for format, citations, references, etc. While most employers won’t ask you to write in APA style, most will require you to learn and use a particular style of writing. Some forms might be grant proposals, annual reports, employee performance appraisals, or formal requests for promotion. Your ability to write in the required style will make it more likely that others will respond to your request. Learning how to write in one style, such as APA style, helps you to pay close attention to the directions of a writing assignment, to follow those directions, and to produce work that accomplishes its goals.

- Taking accurate notes

Note taking does not stop in school. Jobs will also require you to take notes on information from supervisors or other employees with whom you’re working. Successful note taking requires practice. Listening for important points, summarizing and organizing information, and writing notes that are understandable at a later time are crucial skills.

- Mastering efficient memory strategies

College is the natural place to learn about your memory skills and how to use them. Students in psychology have an advantage because memory is a topic of many of their classes (e.g., cognition, learning, and human development). Employees who have poor memory skills are seldom promoted, receive minimal salary increases, and often lose their jobs.

➤ Submitting assignments on time and in acceptable form

Learning how to submit work that is complete, accurate, and on time will help you to be successful in your job. This is what you will be paid for, so it is important to establish good habits while you are in school.

➤ Behaving in a responsible, punctual, mature, and respectful manner

Failing to show up for work, showing up late, and acting in an immature or disrespectful manner often leads to termination from the workplace. Again, these are good habits to strengthen while you are in school.

➤ Managing stress and conflict successfully

Employees are often exposed to stressful situations and will have to work with less-than-perfect coworkers. Stress management and conflict management are essential skills for successful employees. College is a place where you can take courses specific to these skills and learn informally how to resolve conflict (e.g., learning to live with the “roommate from hell”).

➤ Organizing the physical environment to maximize efficiency

College is an ideal time to learn how to set up an organized and efficient workspace (e.g., a desk, a portable file, and a bookcase). You may have already developed a system to organize the materials for each of your classes so that you can locate important information when it is needed.

➤ Utilizing technology

People who are unable to use computers are likely to find employment in menial jobs. College classes require you to use word processors, databases, spreadsheets, statistical programs, presentation software, e-mail, and the Internet. Learn computer skills now so that you do not have to learn them on the job.

Web Resources for Careers in Psychology

Job Search and Career Information Web Sites for Psychology Majors (Prepared by Cindy Marczynski, WSU Career Services, 1999; updated by Jennifer Luboski, 2013)

- Occupational Outlook Handbook. <http://www.bls.gov/oco/> Maintained by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Use to find information about specific occupations.
- Data on psychologists' education and employment are available at <http://www.apa.org/workforce/index.aspx> and <http://www.apa.org/workforce/publications/>
- What You Can Do with a Major in Psychology <http://psychologymajor.org/>
- Online Psychology Career Center. <http://www.socialpsychology.org/career.htm> Provides current, detailed, and practical information on graduate school, how to get jobs and internships, academic and non-academic job listings, and a variety of “tips for psych students.”
- Finding Careers with a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology. <http://psych.hanover.edu/handbook/bachpsy2.html> All kinds of useful information geared toward finding a job and marketing your skills.
- Psych Web. <http://www.psychwww.com/> Excellent compilation of psychology-related resources, including a hot link to Marky Lloyd’s *Careers in Psychology*, which is an award-winning site filled with good sources of basic information along with hot links to graduate information and employment resources.
- APA Careers. <http://www.apa.org/careers/index.aspx> Web site provided by the American Psychological Association, which describes and profiles careers in a variety of psych-related fields—research, health, education, social services, and

business and industry. Also describes books and videos on psych careers and how to order them.

- Association for Applied Sport Psychology. <http://appliedsportpsych.org/> Career and employment information in the areas of health and sport psychology.
- NeuroPsych Central. <http://www.neuropsychologycentral.com/> Information and resources in the field of neuropsychology.
- Society for Clinical Neuropsychology. <http://www.div40.org/> A scientific and professional organization of psychologists, and students in training, interested in the study of brain-behavior relationships and the clinical application of that knowledge to human problems.
- Mental Health Net. <http://mentalhelp.net/> An information service for a variety of mental health issues, disorders, books, and professional resources. Similar sites include...
 - Dr. Bob's Mental Health Links. <http://www.dr-bob.org/mental.html>
 - Internet Mental Health. <http://www.mentalhealth.com/>
 - American Psychological Association. <http://www.apa.org>
- GRE Web Site. <http://www.ets.org/gre> For information on preparing for the Graduate Record Examination.
- What is Forensic Psychology? It's Not Silence of the Lambs! (magazine article) <http://www.psichi.org/?page=053EyeSpring01cHuss>
- The Career Path Less Traveled (magazine article) <http://www.apa.org/monitor/feb01/careerpath.aspx>
- Where are Recent Grads Getting Jobs? (magazine article) <http://www.apa.org/monitor/jun02/grads.aspx>
- A Psychological Force Behind the Force (magazine article on police and psychology) <http://www.apa.org/monitor/jun02/force.aspx>
- How to Find a Job with an Undergraduate Degree in Psychology (magazine article) <http://www.apa.org/gradpsych/features/2009/first-job.aspx>
- Good News For Bachelor's Grads (magazine article) <http://www.apa.org/monitor/jun02/goodnews.aspx>

- More Students Blend Business and Psychology (magazine article)
<http://www.apa.org/monitor/jun02/blend.aspx>

Psychology Career Exploration (Morgan & Korschgen, 2001)

General Career Searching on the Web

- Monster: <http://www.monster.com/>
- USF's Career Services: <http://www.usfca.edu/career/>
- Monster college: http://college.monster.com/?wt.mc_n=monstertrak
- CareerBuilder: www.careerbuilder.com
- Pathways to federal careers for recent grads:
<http://www.usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads>
- The National Assembly of Health and Human Services Organizations:
<http://www.nassembly.org/>

Salary Information

- Occupational Outlook Handbook: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>

Many of these sites are best for industry-based jobs. Human service and nonprofit jobs are listed primarily in newspapers. Some of these sites have links to newspaper listings.

Psychology-Specific Sites

- American Psychological Association (APA)—check out the material from the Research Directorate as well as the areas designated for students:
<http://www.apa.org/>
- American Psychological Society (APS):
<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/>
- Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology: <http://www.psichi.org/>
- For general and social psychology: <http://www.socialpsychology.org/>

- Linda Walsh's site at the University of Northern Iowa:
<http://www.uni.edu/walsh/linda1.html>
- Psych Web: <http://www.psychwww.com/>
- Hanover College: <http://psych.hanover.edu/gradframe.html>

STRESS AND BURNOUT

Whether your current practicum or your future job is in a helping profession or in the business arena, stress is an issue that affects all of us. How does our work affect us? How do we balance personal and professional roles? How can we manage all of our roles and interests without falling apart? This section describes the causes and effects of stress and burnout (Baird, 1999).

Exercise: The Relationship Between You and Your Work

(adapted from Baird, 1999, p. 116)

1. In what ways do you think your work affects you emotionally? How do you feel at the end of a day at practicum/work? How do you feel on days when you are not at your site/job?
2. How does your practicum/job influence your ideas about the clients/customers you work with? About people in general? About people who are close to you? Society?
3. How does your internship/job affect you physically? What kinds of physical demands or limitations do the activities of your work impose on you? Do you experience any physical responses to working with stressful clients, customers, colleagues, or supervisors?
4. How does your practicum/job affect your close personal or social relationships?
5. Having considered how your practicum is affecting you now, how do you think you would be affected if you were a full-time professional in your field?
6. What personal qualities do you think will help you in dealing with the stress of your work? What personal qualities do you think make it difficult for you to deal with the stress of your work?
7. How will you be able to recognize if you are being affected adversely by your work?
8. How might you cope with a situation in which you come to recognize that you are under excessive stress and your professional effectiveness or personal wellness is being harmed?

Regardless of how you answered these questions, you will be affected by your work. At the same time, what happens in your life away from work will influence your performance as a professional. Compounding this is that you will not always have control or be aware of how you will be influenced by work and life. Your awareness and wellness are key elements in your professional work.

Sources of Stress

(these lists are not exhaustive)

Client/Customer Behaviors

- Violence or threat of violence
- Abnormal behaviors
- Flirting
- Discontinuing services
- Lack of motivation
- Resistance to working cooperatively with you
- Personal impositions
- Verbal attacks
- Failure to show up for appointments or follow through with their part of the agreement

Your Experiences

- Inability to help someone feel or do better
- Criticism from supervisors
- Professional conflicts
- High workload
- Giving presentations based on your work

Your Cognitions/Beliefs

- Stress-Producing Beliefs
 - You should always work at peak levels of competence and enthusiasm

- You should be able to handle all emergencies and help every client/customer
 - Lack of client/customer progress, success, or satisfaction is your fault
 - You should not have to take time off
- Keeping stress levels down requires balancing professional distance with the ability to identify with your clients/customers in order to help them; thus, it requires flexibility. Also, if you are able to maintain boundaries between yourself and your work, stress will be reduced.
- You need to know yourself. Everyone differs as to how tight the boundaries need to be between work and self. Do you need to leave work behind at the end of the day or do you thrive on handling emergencies or situations any time of day or night? How much do you value work versus personal, family, or recreational activities? Stress, like pain, is a relative concept. What may be stressful to you may not be perceived as stressful to another person. So, it is up to you to assess your own needs and preferences.

The Effects of Stress

Physical

Many careers that can be pursued with a psychology degree can be sedentary. While you expend quite a bit of mental energy, physical motion is minimal. Physical illnesses can be caused by inactivity. Possible problems are clogged arteries, atrophied muscles, weight gain, and low back pain. The effects of this type of work setting are cumulative and can affect both professional and personal functioning.

Another problem with limited activity is that physical problems can develop from tension stored in muscles. You may notice that part of your body (e.g., shoulders, neck, jaw, back, forehead) becomes tense during difficult situations during the practicum or during your job. If you can be aware of muscle tension you can self-monitor and relax.

Work-related stress can also affect internal systems causing gastrointestinal or cardiovascular problems, for example.

Close Relationships and Families

Working long hours, not taking time for recreation and private time with loved ones can cause significant stress on your relationships. In psychology, much of the work you might do on your practicum or job may be relating to people—providing counseling, teaching, solving problems, etc. If you are tired of communicating all day, you may feel reluctant to share personal feelings with your partner or listen to your partner. It may feel overwhelming. You need to be careful not to dump your stress on your family.

Exercise: How is Stress Affecting You?

(adapted from Baird, 1999, p. 122)—apply this to practicum, work, and school

1. How many days a week do you finish the workday feeling drained and lacking in energy or motivation to do much else?
2. How many days each week do you finish the work day feeling like you have been successful and have enjoyed your work that day?
3. When was the last time you did something with just you and your significant other? With one or more good friends?
4. How often in the past month have you not done something with your significant other or friends because of work conflicts or effects?
5. Do you feel you listen as well to your significant other or close friends as you would like?
6. Do others feel you listen as well to them as they would like?
7. What are you doing to take care of your physical health?
8. If you were a counselor and had yourself as a client, what would be your advice or exploration regarding self-care?
9. What forms of self-care are you not doing and why?
10. How often in your personal life do you experience anger or other feelings to a greater degree or with greater frequency than you would like? Could this be related to stress at work?

11. How is your intimate relationship with your significant other? Could work be affecting that?

Burnout

Symptoms

Burnout is a term that describes responses by people who work in committed activities and whose involvement, effectiveness, or productivity begin to deteriorate. Symptoms include emotional distancing from clients/customers and coworkers, decreased empathy, cynicism, low self-esteem, exhaustion, sleep problems, stomach pains, and other physical complaints. Symptoms have attitudinal, emotional, and physical components.

Stages

Burnout is a process, not an event; it happens gradually over time. Burnout is not just frustration, but rather is associated with apathy, which reduces the possibility for positive change. Apathy or withdrawal may be understood as avoidant learning. One learns that it's more "rewarding" to withdraw than to try to make changes in clients or in a workplace that is unpleasant and frustrating. Awareness of the connection between negative situations and withdrawal may be an important clue in determining key factors in burnout.

Causes

Individual Factors

Personality characteristics associated with burnout are lack of clear boundaries between self and work, extreme degrees of empathy, exceptional levels of commitment, and a fragile self-concept. Being poorly trained for a job or feeling unprepared, vulnerable, insecure, and like a failure can contribute to burnout. And even though an individual may be trained in the skills for a job, s/he may not be prepared to handle the stress. Another key factor is hopelessness or helplessness. Many people in the field of psychology are attracted to helping

others. When problems cannot be solved, the individual's motives and intentions are stifled.

Organizational Factors

The way a business or agency is organized and managed can serve to increase or decrease burnout. Lack of autonomy and funding sources are examples of organizational factors that can cause stress and burnout. Positive features include organizational flexibility, staff autonomy, a variety of tasks, supportive colleagues, and breaks during stressful times.

A managerial style that falls between authoritarian and laissez faire can also prevent burnout. An authoritarian style does not allow for enough autonomy or self-direction of staff. Managers with this style tend to give instructions without explanation. At the other extreme, laissez faire approaches fail to provide staff with sufficient direction, guidance, or support.

Additionally, financial compensation does not necessarily mediate the effects of burnout. Even if staff are paid well and are satisfied with their jobs, they may still experience burnout. Money cannot make stress and burnout disappear.

State of the World

Psychology-related practica and jobs can bring you into contact with aspects of life that are difficult to handle emotionally and that seem unsolvable. You may go into your work with idealistic motivation, so it can be easy to succumb to the perceived hopelessness of monumental social problems.

Exercise: Self-Evaluation for Burnout

(adapted from Baird, 1999, p. 126)

- What personal characteristics do you have that could contribute to burnout?

- What personal characteristics do you think might help you prevent burnout?
- What features of your current practicum setting or possible future settings do you think would contribute most to burnout for you?
- What practicum setting features could help prevent burnout?

Burnout as a Coping Mechanism

While most of the focus has been on burnout as a negative aspect of work, another perspective is possible. The negative view overlooks the importance of burnout as an opportunity for growth and change. Students and professionals may avoid acknowledging burnout because it is perceived as a weakness and stigmatizing. Organizations may have similar responses to employees who show signs of burnout. However, students, staff, supervisors, and organizations would benefit from the perspective that burnout is a sign that something is not working and could be improved. Moreover, the workplace may not be the source of burnout. Other factors in the individual's life may be contributing, such as limited energy, resources, and abilities. Burnout is a form of coping and will exhibit itself where it is safest to do so (e.g., at work, home, other relationships).

SELF-CARE

Taking care of yourself as a professional is one of the most important tasks you will face in your career. It can be vital to both your personal health and your professional effectiveness. Here you will learn how to manage stress through time management, healthy beliefs, physical care, managing emotions, finding support, and identifying positive aspects of your work (Baird, 1999).

Time Management

Having too much to do and time management problems are primary sources of stress for students. During your practicum you will be trying to balance your work with school, jobs, family, friends, and other demands. If your time is not managed well, you probably are not taking care of yourself in other ways. One way to cope with time-related stresses is to do “unscheduling.” Begin by planning self-care, then schedule work and other activities around it. This forces you to rethink your priorities. It is similar to the financial advice of saving 10% of your paycheck before paying the bills or spending on entertainment.

Keeping track of how you spend your time will help you to better understand how not to waste time. You may realize that you need to allocate more time for particular activities, which will reduce stress. Tracking your time will also allow you to see what is missing in your schedule, such as self-care. Along with prioritizing weekly activities, be sure to allocate time for special time demands, such as exams and papers. Do not assume that you will borrow time from another activity to get those tasks done; make it a part of your schedule.

While it may be easy to set up a schedule, it may be more difficult to follow it. It is a good idea to allow yourself some open time to deal with unexpected circumstances. However, you should still keep to your schedule and priorities. This requires the ability to say “no.” You may want to help others or you may be looking for opportunities to succeed in school or your potential career. While these activities are commendable, it is important to learn how to set priorities and make decisions. There will always be more work to be done than one person can

do. You do not have to do it all. It is not only important to say “no” to demands that would cause undue stress, but also to say “yes” to activities that would reduce stress. Identify what you enjoy doing and make it a regular part of your schedule.

Cognitive Self-Care

Stress can be exacerbated by beliefs you hold about yourself, your clients/customers, the work process, and related social topics. Recognizing and coping with these beliefs can be an important element of self-care.

Cognitions about Yourself

Practicum students may have unrealistic expectations for their knowledge, efficacy, or feelings toward clients/customers. An example of such a belief is that practicum students should not make any mistakes. Or, they fear that others will negatively evaluate their lack of experience. Students may also want to be liked by all of their clients/customers, coworkers, and supervisors. Other beliefs among professionals include the need to be perfect, the belief that they are wholly responsible for the success of their clients/customers, and that they must always be available to clients/customers, coworkers, or supervisors. On the other hand, overconfident practicum students can make dangerous mistakes and are a source of stress and anxiety for supervisors. A balance between anxiety and confidence is required. Part of self-care is to check one’s cognitions about oneself as a person and a professional. If your beliefs about your skills are extreme in either direction, there is need for personal work.

Another potential problem for practicum students is anxiety about being anxious. Some students think that they should always be confident, that they should not feel nervous about their work. However, even seasoned professionals will acknowledge doubts about their work. Experienced professionals have learned to cope with the uncertainty of their work. In any case, do not be ashamed to admit that there are times when you are unsure what to do.

Cognitions about Clients/Customers

Inaccurate or unrealistic expectations for clients and customers can also create stress. When assumptions about how clients/customers are “supposed” to act, professionals can become angry or frustrated. Some assumptions are that clients/customers are there to get help, make changes in behavior, or to follow your suggestions in some manner; that clients/customers should need your help, but not so much that it interferes with your personal life; and that clients/customers should appreciate your work and should not be angry or hostile toward you. The most stressful cognition is that your clients/customers should be different in some way. Rather than wishing they were different, your job is to help them determine what they want or how they want to be, and then help them achieve that goal.

Cognitions about Your Work

Resistance to change by clients/customers is inevitable. Believing that change should be easy will lead to stress and frustration. People resist change because it is unfamiliar and uncertain. Anticipating resistance or reluctance will help you to be more understanding of your clients/customers and will allow you to help your clients/customers overcome their reluctance.

Another misconception is that you are responsible for your clients/customers changing or succeeding. So, if clients/customers do not follow through with your suggestions due to resistance and you think that you should be able to help them, it can be easy to blame them for not succeeding. This might be done in a way to cope with the frustration of not being able to help. This type of response will likely not help clients/customers. A more effective perspective is to think of your role as a catalyst for change, but not the primary agent of change. It is a process in which you must continually evaluate whether or not you have done your part. If you have done your part, then the rest is up to the client.

Cognitions about the World

Your work can influence how you perceive the world. If you continually work with difficult children, you may begin to think that all children are like that, for example. Or your practicum experience at a particular agency might influence your perceptions of the field you want to enter after graduation. You need to remind yourself that, while difficult situations are part of life, it is not all of life. If you find yourself developing a negative view of your work, seek out the other side of the picture from other sources.

Physical Self-Care

Physical Exercise

Physical activity can help overcome the effects of sedentary work and manage stress. If you have already incorporated exercise into your routine, continue what you are doing and guard that time. If you would like to exercise and cannot seem to find the time, reread the section on time management. If you cannot stand the thought of exercise, a few suggestions follow.

First, do not feel you must start a rigorous exercise program right off the bat. You are more likely to succeed if you start small and consider your needs. You might begin incorporating less strenuous forms of exercise throughout the day, such as taking the stairs, parking further from work or school, walking to work or school, etc. Get in the habit of stretching during breaks in your day. While these strategies will make a considerable difference in health, you may still need to do some aerobic activity. If you are at this point, take the attitude of doing the smallest amount of exercise that will allow you to notice health improvements. You do not have to have an exercise regiment that produces the most health improvements, especially when you are just starting a program.

Massage

Massage not only feels good, but it is a time during which you can stop giving to others and receive care for yourself. It can rejuvenate you physically and mentally. Not only is it a good way to relieve stress and tension, but it is also a good way to monitor where in your body you carry tension. A skilled massage therapist can help you identify

those places, work out the stress, and give you clues about where you keep stress in your body.

Monitoring Stress in the Body

Since most people cannot afford a massage everyday, you need to learn how to monitor physical tensions as they arise. One way is to do a mental body check to notice any signs of tension. Start at the top of your head and move down through your feet, letting go of tension with every exhale.

Healthy Eating and Habits

Just like exercise and relaxation, eating needs to be a healthy habit. Some people find that eating is a way to cope with stress. Others find that eating has the less priority than work. While poor dietary habits can be detrimental over the long run, it can also signal that you are not taking care of yourself. The use of alcohol, cigarettes, and other drugs are other unhealthy methods of coping with stress. If you find that your own use of these substances is increasing with stress, perhaps it is time to evaluate how work is affecting you and/or how your habits are affecting your work.

Emotional Self-Care

It is not possible or desirable to try to be emotionally unaffected by one's work, especially if you are dealing with people who have difficult problems. It is important that you learn to deal with the effects of your work constructively. As with physical tension, it is important to first acknowledge and identify emotional reactions to your work. You might do a brief emotional self-check. Awareness can lead to problem solving or relaxation, whichever is needed.

Another way to deal with emotions during the day is to let them go before moving on to a new task. It may help you to clear your mind and emotions to engage in a "cleansing ritual," such as taking deep breaths and stretching or by splashing water on your face or with some other ritual that lets you place a semi-permeable boundary between your emotions and your work. It is

worth developing your own rituals that you can use between work activities or at the end of the day to finish the work and leave it where it belongs.

Support

It is important to be aware of when you need support and guidance, as well as being sensitive to when others might need your support. Although it can be frightening to admit that you need help, it can also begin a dialogue that will be of invaluable help. Even if you do not think you need serious help, it can be helpful to just let off steam with peers who know what the job is like. It is different than talking about your day with friends or family and different than talking with your supervisor. It means having fun with colleagues that has little to do with work. While you are letting off steam, be careful not to break confidentiality by talking about clients in public (if that is part of your work); do not let laughing about a situation with a client or colleague become demeaning to them; and do not let your fun way of releasing stress become an unhealthy habit (e.g., drinking).

Positive Effects on Professionals

As important as it is to recognize the challenges of your work, the positive effects should not be forgotten. Rewards might include being able to help someone or a situation, opportunities for ongoing learning, working with colleagues who have similar goals, intellectual challenges, and personal growth. Other positive aspects include autonomy and responsibility for your work or the variety of tasks you deal with. You need to identify positive elements for yourself and your work. If they begin to wane and are outweighed by negatives, your motivation, effort, and effectiveness may begin to suffer. You also need to be careful not to depend solely on the rewards of your work to help you do the work. You cannot always depend on the success of your clients/customers to motivate you.

FINISHING THE PRACTICUM

As you approach the end of your practicum, there are many issues to consider and many tasks to accomplish. First, you will be ending relationships with clients and customers. How will they handle this transition? How will you react to leaving people you have attempted to help? What problems might you anticipate in this process? How can you ensure that the transition occurs smoothly? This will be especially important for students who are working in more of a clinical setting. Second, you will be ending relationships with supervisors and staff members. You will be giving and receiving feedback at this time and looking to the future. Last, you will have the opportunity to evaluate what you have learned and link it to previously learned knowledge and future career goals. This section will help you to understand and guide you through these issues.

Closing Cases

(Baird, 1999; Stanton & Ali, 1987)

The short-term nature of practica can prevent students from working with clients/customers from beginning to end. One of the challenges caused by this situation is dealing with forced terminations. You and your clients/customers will have reactions to the termination process, especially if work is left unfinished.

Understanding Client/Customer Reactions to Early Termination

Clients/customers may have many thoughts and feelings in response to ending their work with you. They may feel abandoned or that you have betrayed their trust. They may feel anxious, wondering if and how they will be able to manage without your help. Many may feel a sense of loss. It is likely that their reactions will be complex, filled many feelings, even if they only express one emotion. If you have been working with clients on more personal level and for an extended period of time, their reaction to the end of your work together will be influenced by past relationships and terminations.

Understanding Practicum Student Reactions to Termination

You must also understand your own reactions. The effects of termination will depend on your personality and particular relationship with each client. Letting go can be just as hard for you as it is for a client. You may experience feelings of guilt, frustration, sense of omnipotence (i.e., that only you can help a particular client), fear of inadequacy (i.e., that the next person will help more than you did), or a sense of relief at ending with some clients. Regardless of your feelings, you need to make the termination process productive for the client. Also, be aware of how your feelings about moving on in your life in general (e.g., graduating, starting a new job) may influence your emotional reactions as you are terminating with clients who may not be excited for you to leave.

Understanding Problems in Termination

One reason for understanding your and your clients' reactions to termination is to help you anticipate and avoid some of the problems that can come from poorly handled terminations. Responding defensively when a client expresses anger or making unrealistic promises to an anxious client will not be effective or helpful. Awareness of your own feelings will make it less likely that you will pass them along to clients.

Another approach that attempts to minimize the difficulty of termination is leaving little or no chance for clients to express their feelings. Some students might do this by announcing their departure at the end of their last day or by guiding the client to discuss only positive emotions. While this may be easier, it is not fair or therapeutic. It is your job until the end to do what is necessary to help the client, not to meet your own needs.

Toward Successful Termination or Transfer

Select clients at the beginning of the practicum for whom termination will not be detrimental. You and your supervisor should also be careful in selecting another employee or volunteer to take the case. Discuss the process of termination and your feelings about terminating with each client with your supervisor before addressing it with your clients.

When and How to Notify Clients

Since you know when you will be leaving the practicum site, let your clients/customers know of this date at the beginning of your work with them. Once the end is nearing, bring up the topic of leaving toward the beginning or middle of one of your meetings (not the last meeting) with the clients/customers. This is particularly important if you are working with children or others who do not understand what a practicum is or why you are on one. Do not let your discomfort delay the discussion. Also, do not impose your own feelings or assume what your clients will feel about your leaving. Present the information neutrally and allow your clients/customers to respond.

Issues to Address in Termination

Termination should address progress the client has made, unrealized goals and future directions for the client, and reactions to the termination process. You should address the cognitive, behavioral, and affective components of their response. Some questions you might ask:

- What did you like best about our work together? Least?
- What will you miss about our work together?
- What do you look forward to when we stop working together?

If your practicum site was a business, you might adjust these questions to fit a business relationship. Thus, you might ask customers questions that allow them to evaluate your services.

Transferring Clients to Other Coworkers

Just as terminating can be difficult for clients, so can transitioning to another staff person or practicum student. You need to be sure to deal with your own issues about termination so that they do not unduly influence your client and prevent a successful transfer. You also need to

spend sufficient time with the person taking your client so that you can share needed information without being rushed or incomplete. And, just as you discuss termination with your clients, you need to discuss their thoughts and feelings about meeting a new person. To the extent that you are able given time restraints, help the client transition to the new person.

Finishing at the Site

(Baird, 1999; Stanton & Ali, 1987)

Concluding the Supervisory Relationship

Reviewing Your Progress and Areas for Further Growth

You and your supervisor should review the evaluation form that they will complete and eventually return to the instructor of the class. Both praise and constructive criticism should be part of the evaluation process. You are encouraged to seek and welcome critical feedback, which is usually the hardest to hear. If this is difficult for you, you might want to prepare by imagining or anticipating what negative feedback your supervisor might have for you. Practice relaxing and listening attentively without being defensive as you imagine listening to the feedback. While you donot necessarily have to agree with all of the feedback, it is important to be open to all feedback.

Feedback to Supervisors

You can use the same process to give your site supervisor feedback; give both praise and constructive criticism. You might ask your supervisor what kind of information or feedback he or she is interested in so that you can determine how to best phrase your comments.

Ending the Supervisory Relationship

Depending on the nature of your relationship, ending may be very simple or quite emotional. Talking about the nature of your relationship

throughout the practicum helps to bring resolution, making it easier to move on.

Letters of Recommendation

Requesting Letters

Even if you do not anticipate applying for a job or graduate school in the near future, it is a good idea to request a letter of recommendation before you leave the practicum. It will be too difficult for the supervisor to recall you and your work months or years later.

If you did not do your best work, you might want to think twice about requesting a letter. Negative or mediocre letters can be damaging. And even if you think you did a good job at your practicum, do not take it for granted. Specifically ask your supervisor if he or she can write a strong, supportive letter based on the future goals you have. If you think the supervisor has any doubts or concerns, ask him or her about it so that you can make an informed decision.

Procedures for Seeking Letters of Recommendation

- Give two to three weeks advance notice between the time of your request and the due date.
- Fill in sections that request information such as reference's name, address, relationship, etc.
- Address and stamp envelopes, clipping them to corresponding forms.
- Provide clear instructions.
- Provide a brief summary of academic achievements, field experience, research, service, and other accomplishments. Note any other special points. You might also include the personal statement or letter of intent you wrote for the school or job.

- Contact the person several days before the deadline to be sure that the letter/forms have been sent.
- Let the person know whether or not you got the position.

Concluding Relationships with Staff

You should let people know a few weeks in advance that you will be leaving. The closer you worked with staff, the more personal your announcement should be. Work with staff to ensure the continuity of work with clients, customers, and projects.

Letters of Thanks

Most people who work with practicum students do so because they care about students and their training. They often do not get additional compensation for these added responsibilities. Therefore, it is essential that you express your gratitude and appreciation. Write a note even if you have said goodbye in person. You should send a card to your supervisor and anyone else with whom you worked closely; a card to all of the staff is sometimes all that is needed. Even if your supervisor was not “the best,” he or she should be thanked.

Reflections on Your Practicum Experience

Just as you have been journaling about your experiences throughout the practicum, self-reflection at the end of the practicum will allow you to make the most of the experience. It will help you to pull everything together. Below are self-assessments to assist you in this process. There is overlap in the questions. Use them in whatever way is useful.

Integrating the Experience with Your Life (adapted from Service-Learning, p. 57)

1. Why were you able to accomplish some objectives effectively?
2. Why do you feel you were unable to accomplish some objectives as well as expected?
3. Did you learn some things that were not specified in your contract? List these.

4. What recommendations would you make to future students undertaking the same kind of practicum? Pass these along to the instructor.
5. Can you recall any significant positive or negative experience that helped you learn something important? Describe what happened.
6. Did you learn any knowledge, skills or attitudes in the practicum that have caused you to want to modify your educational plans? In what ways?
7. Are any of the skills or knowledge you learned applicable to specific courses you have taken or intend to take? List the skills and courses.
8. Are those skills applicable to careers you are interested in? List the careers.
9. Did the experience suggest future kinds of employment for you? What kinds?
10. Has the experience affected your approach to work situations in any way? Explain how.
11. What new learning objectives have you acquired from the experience?
12. Are there specific academic courses you now want to take as a follow-up to your experience? Explain why.

Reflections on an Internship (Stanton & Ali, 1987, p. 82-83)

Personal Questions

1. Did you meet your learning objectives?
2. How have your academic and career goals changed?
3. What learning opportunities did you discover and take advantage of “on-the-job?”
4. Do you feel your work contributed to the organization and community? How?
5. Did you accept responsibility for your decisions and actions?
6. What impact did this experience have on your personal growth?
7. What new things did you learn about yourself?
8. What insights have you gained into the field of your practicum?

Work Performance Questions

1. How well did you work under supervision?
2. Rate your independent performance.
3. Did you accomplish your project goals?
4. What prior skills did you use in the practicum? List new skills and knowledge acquired.
5. How do your new knowledge and skills tie into past academic work? Future academic work?
6. How did you resolve your problems? Handle disappointments?
7. What approaches did you use on assigned tasks? Would you do them differently now?
8. Were you satisfied with your performance on assignments and projects?
9. How well did you accept constructive suggestions from others?
10. Did you meet deadlines? Use your time efficiently?
11. Rate the overall quality of your work.
12. Did you learn that you are not as good at some things as you thought? What failures did you have and what did they teach you?

Practicum Questions

1. Did the internship meet your personal expectations?
2. Was the organization open to your ideas? Did they use them?
3. How will your new skills and knowledge be useful in other practica? In permanent jobs?
4. Would you like a career in the field of your practicum?
5. Did the practicum increase your understanding of standard course material in that subject area? How?
6. How did the practicum improve your skills in problem solving and communication?
7. How much time and commitment was involved in the practicum?

8. Would you recommend the organization to other students?
9. How could this experience have been improved?
10. What was your greatest accomplishment?

Concluding Remarks

I hope that you have gotten the most out of your practicum experience and that this handbook has helped you along the way. Even if your experience was less than perfect, I am certain that you have gained knowledge about yourself and others and that your direction for the future is clearer. I also hope that you have enjoyed your experience and continue to find fulfillment in your work.

REFERENCES

Appleby, D. C. (2001). The covert curriculum: The lifelong learning skills you can learn in college. Eye on Psi Chi, 5 (3), 28-31, 34.

Baird, B. N. (1999). The internship, practicum, and field placement handbook: A guide for the helping professions (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Morgan, B. L., & Korschgen, A. J. (2001). Psychology career exploration made easy: Using the web to do the job. Eye on Psi Chi, 5 (3), 35-36.

Service-Learning: A guide for college students. National Center for Service-Learning/ACTION.

Stanton, T., & Ali, K. (1987). The experienced hand: A student manual for making the most of an internship (2nd ed.). Cranston, RI: Carroll Press.