

## **Student Orientation to Field Placement**

### **ON CAMPUS**

During the first three weeks of the semester the student will be asked to attend an orientation to field placement. This may be conducted during class time (Introduction to Social Work) or in place of field placement days (Theory and Practice of Social Work I). In this orientation the purpose of field placement, behavior expectations, and social work supervision are described. Students have a chance to discuss their concerns about the placement. Expectations for the first few days in placement are discussed.

### **IN THE FIELD**

Students arrive at field placement both eager and anxious about this new experience. The experience the student has during the first few days of field placement sets an important tone for the year. As social workers, we are familiar with expectations of agency based practice, but students have had little experience with this type of work. It is important that students are oriented to the agency as soon as they begin their field placement.

Orientation and preparation for orientation takes place prior to the student beginning at the agency, during the first week and throughout the semester. Some of the issues that should be addressed in the orientation process are:

#### **Prior to student coming to agency:**

- Determine which office, desk space and telephone student will use;
- Stock desk space with supplies;
- Determine which clerical person is available for student work;
- Make list of agency staff and relevant phone numbers available;
- Determine the first day the student will begin;
- Assure that field instructor will be present and very available in agency on the day the student begins;
- Circulate memo to staff informing them of student's arrival;
- Develop a written schedule for the formal orientation sessions;

- Collect agency related reading material to make available to the student during the first few weeks of placement. Appropriate material should include agency brochures, annual reports, procedural and personal manuals, professional articles written about your type of agency and the client population;
- Make sure student has directions to the agency and knows where to park for the day;

### **First few days**

- Meet student as s(he) arrives at agency;
- Introduce student to clerical and receptionist staff;
- Arrange for key supervisory staff or administrators to meet with the student;
- Introduce student to staff - This could be an ongoing process. Meeting too many people the first day could be overwhelming;
- Tour agency - During the first week tour the key parts to which the student will be relating. Later on in semester the student should tour the whole agency;
- Develop a list of abbreviations, symbols, and technical terminology peculiar to your setting;
- Give student a listing of agency holiday schedule;
- Provide map of agency, city and county (especially if student is expected to make home visits);
- Discuss dress code and other agency rules of behavior;
- Show students how to obtain supplies and how to use the phone, copy machine etc;
- Establish a schedule of tasks, meetings, and expectations of student and field instructor for the first two weeks;
- Provide instructions for completing agency statistical reports, sample forms, outlines for recordings and dictating equipment;
- Meet with student several times during the first week or two. Inform the student of the person that s(he) can go to for questions in your absence. If you will be out of the office during the student's day at the agency assign a person to look out for the student;
- Arrange for student to observe each step that the client goes through with the agency. Observe what each staff person does and how each relate to the other;

- Meet with student to discuss potential assignments, process of supervision and expected student preparation for supervision (recordings);

### **ONGOING ORIENTATION**

- Provide student, via reading material or interviews with administrators, with information on history of agency, organizational structure, funding sources, budget, policies and programs, and organizational chart;
- Have student visit community agencies which are utilized by your program;
- Share a bibliography of programmatically relevant readings;
- Allow student to participate in staff or clinical team meetings; and
- Allow students to observe an agency board of directors or advisory board meeting;