Practice Evaluation Assignment

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**Client Systems**

I evaluate my clients at Macomb Family Services by assessing their social emotional development through the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) and the Ages through Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). These assessments require either a caregiver or a teacher to answer questions about the child’s social emotional development. These assessment tools allow professionals to assess if there is a problem in the child’s behavior or if they are acting as a child their age would typically act. The assessments are given based on the child’s age so that the questions will match the appropriate milestones that the child should be reaching, which give the parent or caregiver ideas about what the child should be trying to do at their age.

**Client System Impact**

I can measure my impact on clients by using a pre- and post-DECA to see if there is significant improvement in their child’s behavior. Parents and teachers should begin to see improvements in challenging behaviors after eight visits from our social emotional consultants according to our funding grant, and therefore we are only allowed a maximum of ten visits per client. Finally when closing a case, we also ask the staff that worked with the client if there have been any changes in behaviors.

**Skills**

The skills that are most needed to work in my field placement are public speaking, the ability to work with children, and organization. Public speaking skills are needed at my internship because we facilitate Positive Solution workshops and participate in outreach around the community. Being able to communicate with parents and other Early Learning Community professionals is crucial to the success of the internship. The Positive Solution workshops teach an intern facilitation skills as well as public speaking skill, and while these are skills that can be improved at the agency it’s still necessary for them to have a basic level of comfort initially.

Another skill that an intern would need is prior experience working with children. It is impossible to do this internship without knowing how to be around a child. Parents trust the interns to provide them with the skills and techniques needed to positively change their child’s behavior so they want to see a confident interaction between their child and the intern. While an intern without child experience could work in the Play and Learns to feel gain confidence, it would take away time from learning about the social work positions at the agency. There are many instances where an intern at Macomb Family Services will have short interactions with children while their parents are watching so it is important that the parent feels like the intern is having a positive connection with the child.

Lastly, a student intern at Macomb Family Services needs to be organized and self-motivated. As an intern I am given the freedom to fill my day with calls and visits with my clients. Therefore, I need to always know where I am with my client contacts. I also have to make sure that I am reaching out and contacting the right people in my client’s life because my supervisor does not help me with calls. By being organized, I am able to best perform my job at the agency. My supervisor is not the most organized person so my position requires me to be organized so that I do not miss anything that she forgets to tell me.

**Population and Field**

After working at my internship for the last six months, I have realized that this is not the area of social work that I want to work in. I knew going into my social work education that I would not want to work with children and my internship has reconfirmed that this is not the job for me. I enjoy the part of working with the children however I have a really hard time of seeing the things that are done to children. I knew that I could not work with children after my reaction to seeing my first potential child-sexual assault case. I had a really hard time moving on from this case and this is not something that I could work with on a regular basis. I have a lot of interest in working with women that are human trafficking victims or with clients on hospice.

**Improvement as a Colleague**

I could improve as a colleague by expanding my education in the area of social work. My field education has surrounded me with many excellent social workers, which has shown me that I need to continue my education so that I can be as knowledgeable as my colleagues. I also feel like I could attend more conventions and seminars to learn more best-evidence practices that my agency could use. I need to be more confident in my abilities so that my colleagues do not have to tell me that I am capable. I think that this will also come with experience because I am still nervous because most things are still new experiences.

**Experiences at the Agency**

My experiences at my internship have showed me that I have a strong interest in working in more of a macro setting than a mezzo/micro setting. I have really enjoyed the outreach part of my field experience and was more frustrated with the individual work because a lot of the time it was a failure of a system that leads a client to our office, not a problem with the client themselves. I do not want to try to make clients work better in a broken education system; I would rather fix the system so that the clients have a chance to be successful on their own. One experience that I enjoyed was participating in the Positive Solution workshops because it gave me the opportunity to experience doing outreach and it taught me the skills to facilitate a group.

**Values of Social Work**

My field experience has allowed me to put my social work values into practice. I have witnessed several ethical dilemmas that have reinforced the values that were taught to me in my social work classes. I saw social workers respond both correctly and incorrectly to these dilemmas which have taught me a lot about the kind of social worker that I want to be. I have learned that people can get away with making unethical decisions in this field which ultimately harms clients and breaks their trust. My field education has also shown me that great social workers who stand up for the values of the profession also exist in the career and these co-workers have become my role models.

**Personal Stress**

I handle my personal stress from my internship by prioritizing self-care in my life. I focus on making sure that I am physically, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically healthy in my everyday life. I do this by keeping track through a self-care assessment that I created at my field placement. By keeping track of the self-care activities that I participate in on a weekly basis, I am able to clearly see when I am neglecting an area of my health. To keep myself stress-free I regularly spend time with my friends and my boyfriend. I have found that laughing with someone I care about does more to my overall happiness and stress levels than any relaxation technique. I have participated in several relaxation techniques throughout the year as well though. Yoga and meditation are great relaxing activities that take my mind off of the stress of my internship.

I also dealt with the stress of having an internship while going to school this year by participating in causes that I believe in. I spent a lot of time this year volunteering at homeless shelters and nursing homes. By volunteering with the people, that one day might be my clients, I was able to see the impact that my education could have on the people who are suffering. It was a great thing to be able to be reminded of why I needed to learn the things that I have and how it would directly impact the community. I also gained skills in event organizing through the Social Work Club which has given me additional opportunities for my future career, which decreased my stress level about being able to get a job after my degree. I think that the constant reminder of self-care in my classes from my professors really helps me prioritize my health and created a routine of taking care of myself. My supervisor often talks about how she deals with the stress of the career which helped me think of ways to help myself deal with stress. She jogs with a friend every day before she comes into the office and travels often since that is her passion in life. By sharing this part of her life with me I was able to have a role model for handling stress in the social work profession.