



Roles and responsibilities, Encountering difficulties.

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(with acknowledgement to VU and UoM)



Overview:

- Context of field education
- Key players and roles
- Encountering difficulties
- Group discussion



Context of Field Education

- All social work students need to do 1000 hours of supervised field practice.
- In two different fields, different client groups, different methods of practice and different organisation/supervisor.
- At least one placement in direct practice.
- Supervision by qualified social worker who must have done training in supervision.
- Supervision for 1.5 hours per 35 hours
- 45 minutes of this must be one to one supervision
- Placements must be taken in two different years.
- Days on placement from 2 (min) to 5 days per week

Key Players

There are many different players, each with varying responsibilities in a social work student placement:

- Student
- The Placement Organisation
- Field Educator (Supervisor)
- Off-site field educator (supervisor not on premises)
- Task supervisor, with a qualification other than social work
- University liaison Social Worker
- University field education co-ordinator

Roles: Student

- Development of learning plan, in conjunction with field educator
- Willingness to work within the University's and organisation's field education requirements.
- Accountability to the placement
- As a representative of the placement organisation, respect its norms of punctuality, dress etc
- Willingness to pursue relevant theoretical material to complement placement experiences.
- Willingness to engage in self-evaluation and receive constructive feedback.
- Availability to attend liaison sessions, and other classes or meetings required by the University

The Organisation's Role

- Pre-placement interview of student, discussion of the key objectives of the placement, and determination of a suitable match.
- Provision of adequate organisational orientation for students on placement.
- Provision of staff time for field teaching, space and facilities.
- Willingness for students to participate in the organisational processes of the agency.
- Support for Field Educators

Roles: Field educator – on site

- The Field Educator has primary responsibility for facilitating the learning and educational progress of a student in field practice.
- Assists the student in the development of the learning plan, by providing information about possible placement tasks, exploring the links to the learning areas and exploring how the learning will be demonstrated –direct observation, discussion, presentation of notes or case discussion, feedback from colleagues
- Also responsible for assessing the student's performance and making recommendations to the University.
- An 'on-site' supervisor can be a social worker directly supervising the student or working in another area of the organisation but meets with the student weekly to provide the supervision

Roles: Field Educator-Off-Site

- The Off-site supervisor is a social worker who provides supervision to the student when no on-site social work supervisor is available at the agency.
- In this situation the student has a task supervisor (not a social worker) on-site and an off-site social worker to provide social work supervision.
- The role is the same, ie facilitates the development of the learning plan, provides the one to one direct supervision, and encourages reflection on the links between the learning areas outlined within the learning plan
- Needs to incorporate/meet with the task supervisor to get feedback about the student's progress on placement
- Both off site supervisor and the task supervisor attend liaison meetings to provide feedback to the liaison social worker

Roles: Task Supervisor

- The Task Supervisor is usually a staff member from a background other than social work
- responsible on a day to day basis for the student
- They are key to the placement and integral to the liaison visits and assessment

Roles: Liaison Social Worker

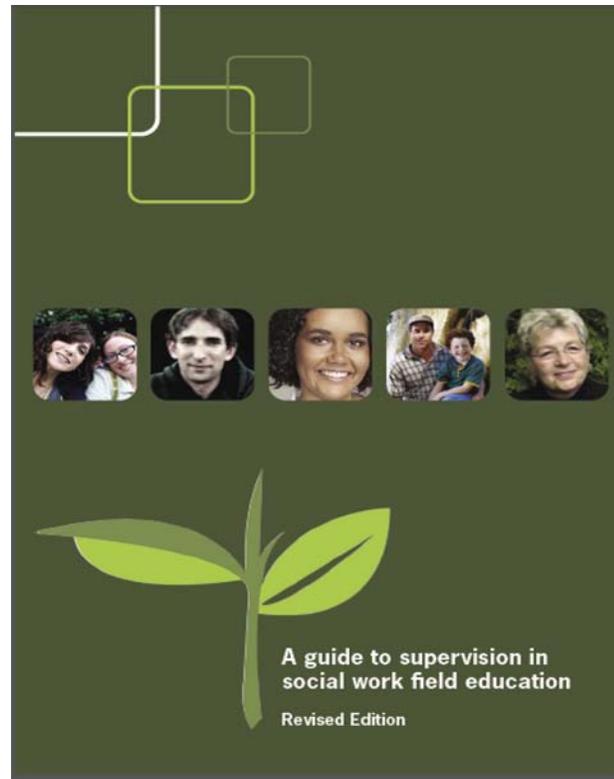
- Educational consultation-raising issues and liaising back to the University as needed
- Monitoring of student progress (review of learning plan, and mid and final placement report)
- Mediation and problem solving (respond to any difficulties which arise during the placement)
- ensure that the student is meeting the school's educational objectives and requirements in a timely manner.
- is the first point of contact for Students, Field Educators and Task Supervisors

Roles: University Field Education Coordinator

- Provision of training and support to the placement supervisors.
- Provision of guidelines for student learning
- Adequate pre-placement planning and liaison visiting.
- Feedback to Field Educators and students.
- Allocation of University Liaison staff.
- Ensuring adequate supervision is provided

Encountering difficulties

- <http://www.socialworksupervision.csu.edu.au/resources/docs/CSU-guide-social-work-field-education.pdf>



Encountering difficulties

- Identify and explore the problem as early as possible
- Provide timely and factual feedback
- Be supportive
- Develop a strategy
- Maintain confidentiality
- Document the process
- Seek support
- Review and evaluate the outcome

Encountering difficulties

- Being aware of all the consequences (academic, financial and personal) for a student;
- Having developed a closeness and rapport with a student;
- A lack of confidence to assess a student in the absence of reliable and useful criteria for evaluation;
- Fear that one's judgement might be biased;
- Difficulty describing the basis for a student's difficulties;
- Difficulty pinpointing evidence to back up concerns;
- A lack of support from agency and colleagues;
- Concern that a student's failure will reflect on one's teaching abilities;
- Fear about how a student might react to failing;
- Difficulty imposing one's professional standards and values on a student;
- Concern about being judged negatively by others.

Encountering difficulties

- What other reasons might make you reluctant to recommend an unsatisfactory result for a student?
- The experience of failure can create conflict and intense, mixed emotions. Think back to a time when either you or someone you know failed something that was very important.
- What emotions were you aware of at the time and afterwards?
- Was there any conflict and how was it managed?
- What assisted you to handle the situation?
- What did you learn from the experience that could assist you as a field educator?

Encountering Difficulties, early warning signs...

Personal	Interpersonal	Educational	Concerns with completing tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent high anxiety; • Extreme immaturity; • Extreme passivity; • Superficiality; • Inability to separate own problems from clients’; • Inappropriate behaviours, emotional outbursts; • Inappropriate dress; • Lack of punctuality; • Unethical conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detachment from or over-identification with clients; • Problems relating to peers; • Problems relating to agency staff; • Poor phone manner; • Poor communication skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to examine own behaviour; • Avoidance of having own practice observed; • Inability to accept/provide constructive feedback; • Inability to reflect on learning, identify learning opportunities; • Poor use of supervision; • Poor literacy skills, problems in recording, report writing etc. • Inability to articulate theory in practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems carrying out specific, concrete activities assigned by the supervisor early in placement; • Refusal/inability to follow instructions

Scenario

A student seems to be engaging well with clients and learning well at the agency. However, about half way through placement, attendance seems to be suffering. The student begins to arrive at placement late, makes vague excuses, sometimes turns up looking dishevelled, misses a day or two with no explanation (days when there was no scheduled client work anyway), and engages on non-placement activities such as surfing the 'net when at the agency

- At what point do you begin addressing this, and how?
- What would you require of a student in this situation?
- At what point would you alert the liaison social worker and/or placement co-ordinator of difficulties? Who would you choose to alert? Why?
- How long should you tolerate this behaviour until you begin to feel the placement is unworkable?

Scenario

A student on placement begins well, and engages strongly with agency clients. You develop a strong relationship with the student in supervision. The student invites you to be a “friend” on Facebook, and you decide to accept their friend request. The student then announces they have “friended” one or more of their client contacts on Facebook, and you notice them interacting with them on that forum.

- *What dilemmas do this raise for you?*
- *Who should you alert and consult with about this situation and why?*
- *What steps, if any, should you take to remedy things?*

Questions?

Comments?

Thank you

