

PSYCHOLOGY 497: Psychology Practicum

Experience: Practicum

Reflection Assignments: Journal Questions/Issues & Issues to Bring to Class

As described in the syllabus, one of the important learning tools in this class is your experiential journal, which you are required to write in at least once per week. It is clear that we get more out of our experiences when we fully explore, digest, analyze and ponder them, and greater depth of digestion, analysis, etc., usually equates to a more meaningful and valuable learning and growth. Often, your experiences alone will dictate what you discuss in our journal entries, but you may also want to include some of the issues below. You aren't required to address these topics, but doing so may help enrich your experience or draw your attention to features of your site, the population or staff you are working with, or contextual issues that you might not otherwise.

In addition to writing about them in your journal, many of these issues will be good fodder for class discussion.

1. Observation of your progress; assessment of the extent of your progress; what is your role in this as well as your supervisor's role?
2. Credentials of the staff; issue of role models on site. Are they appropriate? How would you know or judge?
3. Awareness of your tasks at the site as they relate to your future goals.
4. Identify problems at the site: a) issues with supervisors or coworkers; b) issues with management or policies
5. Reflect on the situation to build a picture of what is going on at that site to understand policies and procedures.
6. Issue of how one learns through observation. You may have to start your learning in this manner before you can learn by doing.
7. Identify things that you like to do and identify how you are learning what is effective in doing these things well.
8. What are the performance and learning goals for interaction with clients? What have you learned regarding the general behavioral patterns exhibited by individuals with certain common problems?
9. Resistant clients: what do you do with them? Note: if you can discuss general principles in dealing with specific clients, these can be discussed in class.
10. Humor and its use with clients.
11. What are you learning about the lives of the clients you serve?
12. How do you handle getting connected to clients who come and go?
13. How do you talk to clients who are in a different world than you are, e.g. elderly, hard of hearing and a bit cognitively confused?
14. How do you deal with clients of differing cognitive abilities?
15. How do you defend yourself against allegations of inappropriate behavior?
16. Comment on any issues related to confidentiality.
17. Understanding the uniqueness and generalizations of what you do ... can it be used with specific groups, is it a general strategy than can be used with all groups? Rule out/or rule in populations with which you can work.

18. Are you learning about the services provided by the facility?
19. Are you learning about the services provided by other agencies in the community?
20. Sort through your feelings about the site/work in a way that allows you to gain stress relief, if necessary. If relevant, how do you deal with your own feelings (positive or negative) about your clients?
21. How do you deal with questions relating to issues of the value of short-term care vs. long-term care as well as follow-up care issues?
22. Identify interagency cooperation/issues or policy issues at the site. Use this information to understand the community service system.
23. How do you deal with interagency care?
24. Identify your biases in working with this population or site. Do you take side with clients or the agency, or are you open to all perspectives?
25. How much training did you get? Are you trained to handle what happens to you in your job? Does your training include planning for what can happen? Does your training target handling dangerous situations on the job?
26. How do you handle a situation in which you feel over your head? If this happened, what was the response?
27. With clients, what are the benefits of facilitating communication or controlling it (shutting it down, judging it, etc). This is the broad issue of education/counseling vs. therapy.
28. Do you understand the language usage at your facility (specific terms, abbreviations, etc.)?
29. What are your obligations via the legal system: duty to warn, suicidal clients, etc.?
30. How do you cope with culture differences/understanding?
31. How have your academic classes prepared you for the issues you are facing at your site, or that you see happening in the lives of your clients?
32. Reflect on any responses you get from clients, staff, supervisors, etc. because of your student/volunteer status.
33. What types of communication from clients would make you uncomfortable, and how might you handle them if they happen?

General Comments regarding your journal entries:

- Adhere to core confidentiality procedures: Don't use names or use first names only.
- Use spell check!
- Do attend to basic punctuation and use full sentences.
- Entries should be sufficient length to discuss an issue, and again, should be completed at least once a week. They can be based on a specific experience or on thoughts you have connected to readings, class discussions, general thoughts about your placement, etc.