Youth and Family Internship Manual

AHSC 436

Applied Human Sciences

Concordia University

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Introduction to the Specialization in Human Relations BA Program

Program Overview

The Human Relations program is housed in the Department of Applied Human Sciences at Concordia University. Students who study human relations are provided with an opportunity to develop their leadership, teamwork, intervention, and community organization skills through applied experiential learning approaches. Graduates hold positions in helping professions, human resources, organization or community development, and public or business administration. Skills in empowering others, self-management, organizational change, and group or teamwork are developed over 3 or 4 full-time years of study.

The Specialization in human relations provides students with an opportunity to enhance their human relations and small group leadership skills.

Students' Preparation for the Internship Experience

Students complete a total of 60 university credits prior to beginning their internship experience in the fall term. Courses are primarily designed to engage students in experiential learning opportunities including observational exercises in the community, role-plays to enhance practical skills, and group work to develop facilitation and intervention expertise. Knowledgeable faculty teaching in the program draw on their practical experience and research endeavors to inform the design of the curriculum and provide an innovative learning experience for students.

Perspectives on Youth and Family Work

The undergraduate internship in youth and family work draws on various themes from youth work and child and youth care literature to support the professional development of students as entry-level youth workers in a variety of settings with young people and families. Students are introduced to several guiding principles during prerequisite course work (i.e., AHSC 322) and throughout the internship seminars and discussions. The orientation of the Departmental to youth and family work includes the following: a developmental perspective, an eco-systemic approach, a focus on collaborative and relational strategies, rights-based understandings, and a focus on ethics and reflexivity.

The Internship

Students complete a total of 360-hours between September and April at their respective internship setting.

Internship Course Description

AHSC 436 Internship in Youth Work (6 credits)
This course is one of two internship options for students enrolled in the Specialization in Human Relations. This 360-hour internship provides students with a supervised opportunity to apply learning from the BA Specialization in Human Relations to work with youth and families in a range of settings such as child welfare, schools, non-profit organizations, residential care, or outreach. The specific objectives are to teach about planning, education, and intervention in human service work, to promote self-reflection as a critical component of ethical practice, and to provide a basis for further career planning and/or graduate work in youth and family practice.

Internship Learning Objectives

The course learning objectives for AHSC 436 are to develop the ability of the student to:

- Effectively apply interpersonal communication skills in all professional settings in which they interact with children, youth, families, and community partners, professional colleagues, mentors and supervisors.
- Demonstrate knowledge, skills and attitudes that reflect effective and collaborative relational practice with children, youth, and families.
- Engage in ongoing critical self-reflection and identify how personal awareness, insights and development connect to, and influence professional practice.
- Demonstrate youth work principles, including collaborative relational approach, developmental perspective, ecosystemic approach, rights-based practice, and ethics and reflexivity.
- Articulate a plan for future career development in youth work.

Site Selection Process

Students must attend an information session during the winter term preceding their internship year. Students will be required submit the Youth and Family Internship Application Form following that meeting, as well as an up-to-date CV identifying an area of practice they are interested in (e.g., residential care, school-based, family support work). **Please note that the professor for the following year matches students to internship sites and manages the application process.**

The internship professor will identify and establish a collaborative working relationship with appropriate youth work sites that would provide the requisite learning opportunities for students for the following year. After the application deadline, the professor will forward each student's CV to a site that is aligned with the student's interest and experience level. The site will arrange an interview with the student directly. It is the site's responsibility to

will determine if the student is suitable for the internship placement and notify the student and internship professor accordingly. **Students are encouraged to give careful consideration to the site selection process as it is an 8-month commitment.**

The internship start-date is during the first week of the fall term. ***It is the student's responsibility to ensure all documentation and pre-internship requirements are completed prior to the internship start date.***

Seminar Participation

As part of the internship course, students enrolled in AHSC 436 will meet throughout the semester on a monthly basis for a 2.75-hour seminar. Students will be informed of the seminar dates at the beginning of the course. The purpose of the seminar is to support the integration and application of the curriculum provided in the Human Relations Specialization to the real world experience. Readings may be assigned if relevant to the issues discussed and students are expected to demonstrate reflexivity in seminar discussions. ***Participation in the scheduled seminars is mandatory.***

The Role of the Internship Professor

The internship professor facilitates the monthly seminar, designs learning activities to meet the course objectives, evaluates students' learning, collaborates with the student and site supervisors in identifying and confirming potential internship sites, facilitates meetings with the student and site supervisor, and responds to any disciplinary or professionalism concerns with the student and site supervisor.

Supervision

Identifying who will supervise the student will be primarily the responsibility of the site. To ensure the student has the support required, it is expected that the site supervisor will be an experienced, qualified mentor with a youth work orientation to practice and have availability in his/her schedule to **meet regularly in a one on one face to face supervision session** with the student. In some cases, supervisors may hold teaching or leadership roles within the setting. The role of the site supervisor is to provide regular supervision and mentorship to the student, and provide on-the-job training. While observation or shadowing the supervisor in his/her role may occur in the initial 1-2 months of the internship, it is expected that students step into the role with appropriate support and mentorship provided. **By the second semester, it is assumed that all students will have taken on the responsibilities that are comparable to those of an entry level youth worker at their site.** Experience is essential for the students' learning and growth as a youth work professional.

"Youth work supervisors play a critical role in supporting staff, enhancing their ownership and loyalty, and ensuring that their work has an impact"[1] *(p. 35).*

[1] Herman, M. (2012). Empowering youth work supervisors with action research strategies. *Afterschool Matters,* 32-37

Lewis, Packard and Lewis[1] suggest, "the nature of the supervisory relationship depends on the supervisor's leadership style, the supervisee's motivation, and the organization's needs" (p. 11). As such, there are many contextualized elements incorporated into the supervisee-supervisor relationship that need to be considered and discussed as the student embarks on their internship journey. It is important to discuss how the supervisor and youth work intern are conceptualizing the role of the supervisor. For example, youth work supervisors in Herman's[3] study identified as coaches and mentors with the goal of developing youth work practitioner's strengths through a collaborative supervisory process. Practitioner reflexivity supports the youth worker's development.

Human Relations incorporates the principle of reflexivity in curriculum, and as such, site supervision should involve supporting students to reflect and explore the challenges of practice in order to develop a deeper understanding and expand their repertoire of options.[2] Reflexivity in youth work practice has been defined as "an intentional act where a supervisor actively listens and provides thoughtful questions that allow staff to analyze and evaluate their own work as well as identify areas or ideas for improved practice"[3] (p. 110). Further, Herman[1] suggests tools of action research may be applied in youth work supervision. Questions such as "What am I doing? What do I need to improve? How do I improve it?"[4] (p. 7) in supervision sessions support a context of reflective inquiry and develop informed youth work practitioners[5]. Several strategies for supervisors encouraging reflexivity for youth workers include the following:

1. Create and dedicate time to the process.
2. Be reliable, trustworthy and genuine.
3. Listen and don't focus on creating or providing the answers.
4. Focus on coaching for staff to create their own solutions and provide support accordingly.
5. Don't judge ideas, encourage staff to be critical thinkers in their own right.
6. Avoid one right answer, encourage many possibilities of action.[5] [6]

The student-site supervisory relationship is central to the internship experience and it is expected that students establish with the supervisor a regular and frequent time for supervision. For example, one-hour bi-weekly should be set aside as a meeting time with the student for supervision. Team supervision – where there are more than one student at a particular placement – may be an excellent opportunity to enhance students' learning.

[1] Lewis, J. A., Packard, T. R., & Lewis, M. D. (2012). *Management of human service programs.* Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.
[2] Herman, M. (2012). Reflective practice meets youth work supervision. *Youth & Policy, 109*, 118-128.
[3] Wiedow, J. (2014). Redefining supervision in the field of youth work. In NorthStar Youth Work Fellowship, *Moving youth work practice forward: Reflections on autonomy and authority* (pp. 107-119). Retrieved from http://web.augsburg.edu/sabo/NorthStarWorkingpapers2013-2014.pdf
[4] McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2006). *All you need to know about action research.* Thousand Oaks: CA, Sage.
[5] Knowles, M. S., Holton, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (2005). *The adult learner: The definitive*

classic in adult education and human resource development. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
[6] National Helpers Network, Inc. (Ed.) (1998). Reflection: The key to service learning (2nd ed.). New York: National Helpers Network.

Scheduling and Tracking of Internship Hours

Students are responsible for the scheduling and recording of their internship hours in consultation with their site-supervisor. Students enrolled in AHSC 436 attend their internship for approximately 13 hours per week for approximately 28 weeks. Travel time to attend the internship (or seminar) is ***not*** to be included in the calculation of internship hours. Travel time to-and-from client's homes or professional meetings within the scheduled internship day ***may be included*** in the calculation of internship hours. Supervision time between student and site-supervisor, and evaluation meetings with the internship professor, ***are included*** in the calculation of internship hours. Scheduling for internship hours may include days, evenings and/or weekends.

Students are **not** expected to work overtime at the internship site and students are not expected to be on-call for shifts at the site. Students are not expected to be at their internship site during university closures (e.g., Reading Break). In-service professional development training can be included in internship hours.

Absences from Internship

Students are required to make up any absences. The missed time must be made up within a timeframe agreed upon by the student, site supervisor and internship Professor. A physician's note may be requested for prolonged illnesses. Students are not required to make up days missed due to statutory holidays.

Evaluation of Students' Learning

The internship professor has the responsibility for evaluating students' learning during the internship. Central to the students' evaluation is the feedback provided by the site supervisor. There are five components of evaluation for AHSC 436:

ASSIGNMENT #1: Learning Contract

The purpose of the internship is to assist students to develop and transfer skills, knowledge, and self-awareness through direct practice with children, youth and families. Developing an individual learning contract outlines the student's intention to link specific

tasks and opportunities at the internship site to course learning outcomes and individual student learning needs. The goals students set and the specific tasks students identify to be completed in order to reach the goals should focus on laying the foundations for professional performance in the field of human service. As a result, each student will have unique goals and tasks that will take into consideration what the student currently can do and already knows (e.g., a personal baseline), and the student's abilities to stretch these skills and knowledge areas to the specific opportunities at the internship site.

The student's ability to learn new ways of thinking, behaving and being requires that you take risks to step out of their usual and familiar comfort zone. All of this requires not only a desire to risk letting go of old ways (of thinking, behaving and being), but also to be open to the discomfort of *not knowing* while students try on and look for new learning, new knowledge and new skills to emerge. This will include developing individual and group communication skills in the internship seminar class.

When students are open to placing themselves in situations where old ways of thinking, behaving and being are challenged or are no longer effective, real learning begins to take place. When the risk involves learning about your self, the new learning can be especially difficult. However, this new learning can free students from behaviours and attitudes that limit their abilities and effectiveness as a practitioner. Once embraced it can have the effect of increasing the student's confidence not only in their knowledge and skills but also in one's beliefs about their abilities to accept and seek risks in the future and to deal with future challenges encountered in practice. Risking can then become a resource for developing youth workers in the future.

Each student must complete a learning contract with their site supervisor to be submitted to the instructor in class during the month of October (see Learning Contract Form). A copy of the learning contract must also be provided to the site supervisor. The site supervisor can support students' targeted learning areas by identifying resources and opportunities within the site. The learning contract may be used as part of the final evaluation discussion and serves as a working document for students and supervisors to return to throughout the internship.

ASSIGNMENT #2: Electronic Logs OR Online Discussion Forum

An ongoing requirement of the internship class is to keep track of your weekly activities and your learnings throughout the year. This can be accomplished either through the submission of regular logs or participation in an online forum**. The format and frequency will be determined by the professor for your internship section.** The following questions will guide your discussion of your weekly activities:

- What were the skills and knowledge that you used?
- What planning, preparation or reading did you do?
- Identify any feelings that arose for you in the course of your work and how you processed them.
- What did you learn this week?

ASSIGNMENT #3 and ASSIGNMENT #4: SITE EVALUATIONS

Two evaluation meetings will be completed during the year. Students will schedule two evaluation meetings (mid-term and final) to meet with their site supervisor and discuss their progress towards meeting course outcomes and personal goals in their learning contract. The internship professor will be attendance at the first evaluation , and may participate virtually in the final evaluation.

Each site supervisor will complete a questionnaire to provide tangible feedback as to the student's progress at both evaluation meetings. It is expected that the feedback be shared with the student ahead of the scheduled meeting with the internship professor. Key to the feedback and discussion is identifying strategies to address concerns and enhance learning opportunities.

Evaluation forms will be provided each year by the professor assigned to teach your section. A percentage of your final grade will be computed on the basis of these written evaluations by your supervisor, but it is the role of the professor to assign grades based on the two evaluations. The criteria will be outlined in class.

ASSIGNMENT #5 FINAL INTERNSHIP REPORT

Description: This assignment is an academic paper (10 pages not including title page and reference page) serving as a summary of the student's experience in AHSC 436. The paper is summative and is designed to integrate ALL the student's contributions over the year, including logs, any required discussion forum on Moodle, seminar discussion, learning contract, and site evaluations.

The paper must include the following:

- Review weekly logs or discussion posts and identify 3 central themes. Articulate each theme clearly, and provide one brief practice example to illustrate each theme;
- Review your learning contract and critically assess progression towards each of the learning goals and course learning outcomes. Students may refer to weekly logs or discussion posts for examples;
- Clearly articulate a plan for future career development in youth and family work, identifying ongoing learning/growth areas, areas of practice, future graduate work, etc.;
- Use APA 6th edition format and integrate relevant readings/literature (e.g., from articles put on reserve or previous course work in Human Relations).

The paper must be typewritten and double-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point font. Evaluation of this assignment will be according to the common AHSC Grading Scheme.

Ethical and Practice Issues

Code of Ethics for Youth Work Professionals

Internship students in the Human Relations Specialization are expected to abide by codes of ethics that govern the youth work profession. The internship experience is expected to provide students with an opportunity for real world application of their learning. As such, students are required to be familiar with the code of ethics in their site, as well as following codes of ethics that impact professional youth work practice:

Ethics of Child and Youth Care Professionals
http://www.pitt.edu/~mattgly/CYCethics.html

Youth Work Code of Ethics
http://www.youthcoalition.net/documents/sector%20development/Code%20of%20Ethics/Youth%20Work%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20(ACT).pdf

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
http://www.canadiancrc.com/PDFs/UN_Convention_on_the_Rights_of_the_Child_en.pdf

Challenges Encountered in the Internship

The internship experience is designed to challenge and promote students' professional development as practitioners in the youth work field. Challenges are viewed as learning opportunities for students to stretch and grow in the context of the supervisory relationship and collegial support provided during the internship seminars. Codes of ethics may also be consulted to provide guidance in addressing challenges.

As the internship is an intense experience, there is potential for challenges that students are unable to manage in consultation with their supervisor. In such circumstances, students are strongly encouraged to engage in a self-reflexive process to identify the ways in which they have co-constructed the challenging situation. Students are invited to seek out their site supervisor, the internship professor, and use the seminar discussions to process the challenges they are struggling with. The internship professor, in consultation with the site supervisor and student, may decide to intervene in situations that go beyond the scope of what the student can manage on their own.

Professionalism and Site Expectations

Students are expected to embrace fully a professional youth work role and presentation during the internship experience. Each site will have specific expectations based on the area of practice and population they work with in regards to appearance (e.g., appropriate

attire), language, structure of work time (e.g., breaks), etc. Students should prepare to meet the site's expectations by asking questions during the initial interview about the expectations required.

Terminating the Placement

The internship experience can be very challenging. Students are viewed as youth work professionals and are expected to draw on their skills in interpersonal communication, building relationships, and managing conflict to resolve disputes in the workplace. Some students may express a desire to change placements, as the internship experience may not meet their expectations. Students will be encouraged to view challenges as learning opportunities while receiving support from the internship professor, his/her classmates, and the internship site.

When enrolling in the internship course, students are making a commitment to the site, the young people served, his/her classmates, and the professor that they will be available for the duration of the course and the hours outlined. Unforeseen circumstances such as relocation or illness that impede the ability for the student to complete the internship during the academic year will be addressed with the internship professor.

In rare circumstances, students or site supervisors may wish to end the placement due to unforeseen challenges that cannot be resolved. As this situation is deemed very serious, students and site supervisors cannot independently initiate ending the placement. A meeting with the internship professor, student and site supervisor *must* occur prior to any termination of the placement.

Should the existing placement end, securing an alternate internship site for the student will be dependent on timing of the termination, alternate site and supervisor availability, and the issues that led to the ending of the initial placement. The internship professor will determine with the student the best course of action.

Payment and Hiring of Internship Students

The youth work internship is an unpaid practicum experience that prepares students for entering professional youth work roles after completing the program. Students cannot receive payment or be hired into a position at his/her site while completing the internship course.

Students will incur the costs of transportation to and from the internship site. It is expected that students will be reimbursed for costs incurred for operational purposes (e.g., travelling to clients' homes, costs for running programs).