

Practicum II: Student Self-Assessment

1. For a review of the state learning objectives please see the following page.
2. Listed on the following page with the learning objectives are activities I participated in to complete them.
3. Completing and understanding my learning activities did help me to reach my learning objectives. They provided me with a reliable outline to help me to organize how I was going to learn from my practicum. They also forced me to focus on different aspects of what was going on around me and allowed me to broaden my perspectives. By completing all of the activities I feel confident I can easily demonstrate my knowledge and ability to act ethically and professionally while showing an understanding of the system social workers utilize with their clients. The completion of my learning activities is proof of my ability to demonstrate the specified skills.
4. Throughout this quarter, at child protective services, there are many things I feel I have learned. The most prominent being the assets and skills required to be a social worker. I was able to understand and witness what personal assets and professional skills were most often used and in which situations. The social workers I was shadowing all demonstrated knowledge of the legal system, critical thinking, ability to reflect on experiences, and a deep understanding of how to interact with an incredible vulnerable population (which I can only assume has been learned over time working as a social worker). From observing the social workers interactions with their client, they are very respectful, calm, and thoughtful about what they say and how they say it. However, when we come back to the office, or even begin a discussion in the car, the persona changes quite a bit. While we analyze the situation that just took place their attitude, almost instantly, changes to a negative perspective, and complaints arise. I have been able to notice that though they tend to let off a lot of tension at the office they still care about what happens to the child. They are all very dedicated to do their best for each of their children, even if this means staying late at the office from time to time. I have learned that though there are specific educational/professional skills necessary, it is equally important to have a lot of dedication, a strong heart, an open and respectful mind, and a willingness to step outside your comfort zone to help somebody else in need.

It has also become very evident to me that this is a job that I cannot and probably will never do myself. Through reflecting on past classes this year and the experiences from this internship, I am too soft for this type of work. I get too attached to the family as a whole and would be absolutely torn if I ever had to tell a parent they couldn't have their child. I have gained an understanding that I have a need to make people happy, and that is why I chose the field of human services. A social worker at Child Protective Services has too much negativity and I would be constantly trying everything I could to make somebody happy, when that's not always the answer.

5. Through successful completion of my learning objectives, dedication to my role as an intern, and full participation where-ever I was able, I am fully confident in my ability to demonstrate professional and ethical behavior. Reflecting on the experience it is evident that having learning objectives and activities for a guideline provided me with different ways of learning new aspects of social work. I was able to complete 140 hours at Child Protective Services this quarter and can relate it back to being dedicated and willing to learn every day I was there. This was a

strong factor in my successful completion of the course's learning outcomes. I believe without my willingness to learn and my learning objectives as a base guideline, I may not have been able to accomplish as much.

6. As a human service professional this experience has enhanced and broadened my perspectives dramatically, especially through social work and case management. I feel going into my internship I knew the basics of what to expect and thought it would be easy to be a social worker at Child Protective Services (CPS). Reflecting on it now, I can say that I was wrong. I feel I have especially grown an understanding and appreciation for those who have the ability to work with such a vulnerable population and still have a sweet personality about them. When I came into my internship I expected to see social workers with a positive attitude toward what they were doing, who were appreciative of what they have and thankful to be making a difference. Instead I was shown multiple social workers who almost didn't seem to appreciate what they were doing because they were blinded by the large piles of paperwork they were behind on. There was always a list of papers, reports, or visits that needed to be documented on and I could tell the workers I was shadowing didn't ever feel to be caught up. It was a stressful and hectic job they were doing and they definitely didn't often do it with a positive attitude. It was disappointing at first, I admit. However, as I got to know a few of the social workers in the family voluntary services unit I came to realize it was all circumstantial. They appeared that way most of the time but also seemed to hide their appreciation until it was brought out in discussion. After witnessing this every day at the office I have come to terms that it is okay to be frustrated with the negatives of your work and you don't need to be happy about every aspect, all the time. Instead, it's important to remember why you're there and always be thankful for what you are doing in the long run. As a professional I have taken this to heart and will continue to try to motivate peers and colleagues to think about what they can be appreciative of in their field.

Looking back on this last quarter there are also many skills I have gained. How to write case notes, document events, prepare for a court hearing, and most importantly, patience and flexibility. There were a few points where a social worker and I would document and write case notes for a visit we had gone on together. This was beneficial and showed me what was required in a case note and what wasn't needed. I am confident now in my ability to write case notes and document events, this is a skill that can be transferred to another agency and will be highly beneficial, long-term. However, I feel patience and flexibility are two skills/assets I have gained most from this internship. There were many points where I was given vague instructions with no details about my task. An example of this was watching a baby in the office. I was found by a social worker, and asked to babysit. I was never told the baby's name, the social work for the child, how long I would be needed, or who to talk to if I needed assistance with anything. This was very frustrating to me and even some of the other social workers who would ask me questions I couldn't answer. Looking back at moments like this, being a flexible and patient person would have made this event much easier on me. But, if I already had these skills, I wouldn't have been able to learn what I did from the situation. I can say I am thankful for the stressful and frustrating events that have happened over the course of this internship because it taught me to be patient with other colleagues and flexible with my role and responsibilities. I don't question the risk of my tasks anymore and feel I can trust most of the social workers to give me the necessary information to succeed.

Reflecting on this quarter, I have gained an understanding and new perspective of the population CPS primarily works with and the type of person who is best able to serve these clients. It takes heart, cultural competency, dedication to your client, and also but not limited to, a specific set of academic and professional skills (writing proficiency, knowledge of the legal system, critical thinking, and knowledge of professional protocols and procedures for multiple agencies).

7. As a practicum student I feel I did very well this quarter at my internship. I feel I asked many questions and I did everything that was asked of me to the best of my ability. When I was told to adjust my behaviors, I followed through. I showed my dedication to my responsibilities as an intern by taking on the extra work of creating a new community resources hand out for the social workers. I do know there are also other areas I could have improved on, such as filing. However, I do feel very strongly, that had I been properly prepared for the task and taught how to be successful at it in the beginning I could have become much better at it. I would like to have been able to improve my filing abilities. Within my practicum class I fully participated and was engaged in every activity.
8. I do not feel I had adequate support throughout the entirety of my internship. My supervisor seemed uninterested the majority of the quarter and rarely stopped to ask how I was doing, or what I was doing. However, I can understand why this happened, as he was often very busy working with many of the social workers and helping with multiple cases at once. During my field visit it was brought to my attention that I was to sit back and observe during all interaction with clients. I was never once informed of this before this point. A week later I was informed I had filed some papers wrong and was told the social workers would be showing me how to properly file. This was very helpful, though I was never given another chance to prove my growth. When I first began, I was told to read through a couple case files and figure out how to file on my own. I strongly feel, had my role and responsibility been told to me in the very beginning when I had asked about them, I would have been much more successful. Had they taken the time to show me and tell me what they wanted me to do, I know I could have done it. Unfortunately there is only one social worker I feel has supported me this whole time and I never worked with her. Though I gained many skills, awareness, and knowledge, I feel this was still a bit of a disappointing experience.
9. I plan to intern at the American Red Cross Mt. Baker Chapter during my next internship quarter. I have not yet decided which position I want to fill just yet but am scheduled to attend an information session in the beginning of June to get more information. I am keeping Catholic Community Services, Brigid Collins, and Big Brothers Big Sisters as options as well.