

PRE 842: Counseling Practicum, Fall, 2009

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Text: 35 Techniques Every Counselor

Should Know

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Doctoral CT Consultants:

Sarah Brown; Victoria Frehe; Eric Lyche

Schedule: Thursdays, 9:00 - 11:45

Location: 520 JRP

The primary mission of the School of Education is to prepare leaders in education and human services fields.

Within the University, the School of Education serves Kansas, the nation, and the world by (1) preparing individuals to be leaders and practitioners in education and related human service fields, (2) expanding and deepening understanding of education as a fundamental human endeavor, and (3) helping society define and respond to its educational responsibilities and challenges.

The components that frame this mission for our initial and advanced programs are Research and Best Practice, Content Knowledge, and Professionalism. These interlocking themes build our Conceptual Framework.

Course Description from the Graduate Catalog

This course is taken as one of the last courses in the master's degree counseling program. The primary purpose of the course is for the student to develop individual counseling skills while functioning in a counseling setting. In addition to individual skills, students are also encouraged to participate in group counseling and other counseling related activities within the particular counseling setting.

Course objectives

The department has proposed certain performance expectations for practicum students:

1. To be able to develop and sustain a basic helpful relationship with clients that is characterized by respect, trust, warmth, and regard for the client as a person.
2. To be able to focus on the central concerns of the client and not get lost in peripheral issues.
3. To be able to locate and use appropriate sources of information (e.g., test information, occupational/educational information, referral sources) needed to assist the client.
4. To be able to separate your concerns and agendas from those of the client.
5. To understand and honor individual and cultural diversity issues as they present themselves in your work with clients and supervisors.
6. To be able to establish and manage with clients appropriate and manageable goals.
7. To be able to conceptualize the process and direction single counseling interviews take, as well as the overall direction of work with a client.
8. To give and receive constructive comments regarding your work as well as that of other students in practicum.
9. To learn to use a variety of strategies in appropriate and purposeful ways.
10. To develop a clear sense of professional and ethical conduct in your work.

The Joint Council on Professional Education in Psychology (JCPEP, 1990) recommended the following criteria for student readiness for internship training:

1. the ability to apply theoretical knowledge
2. empirical skills in critical thinking
3. mastery of basic assessment and intervention techniques and procedures
4. conduct in keeping with the ethical principles of psychologists
5. effective interpersonal functioning
6. the ability and willingness to utilize supervision in a constructive manner
7. sensitivity to issues of human diversity (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, SES, lifestyle)

These criteria represent the consensus position of the membership of JCPEP, who represent the major APA practitioner divisions and other organizations concerned with professional preparation for the practice of psychology--specifically, divisions 12 (clinical), 16 (school), 17 (counseling), 29 (psychotherapy), 35 (psychology of women), 39 (psychoanalysis), 42 (independent practice), 43 (family), 44 (lesbian and gay), APA of Graduate Students, APPIC, CCPTP (counseling), CUDCP (clinical), and NCSPP (professional). It is reasonable, therefore, to keep these readiness criteria in mind as you reflect on your practicum and other supervised clinical experiences.

Practicum site expectations

The clinical and professional opportunities available to students on-site will differ among the various sites. Since this is a counseling practicum, it is expected that the bulk of your time on-site will be spent counseling individuals-- in individual sessions or in groups, but with a much greater emphasis on individual. However, I also expect and hope that you will become involved in other aspects of your setting including, but not limited to: (a) attending case/staff conferences, (b) familiarizing yourself with the assessment tools and practices used in your setting, (c) involving yourself in programs the setting has in progress, (d) participating in organizational/administrative functions, (e) consulting with other personnel, and (f) familiarizing yourself with the setting's referral sources.

The actual number of clients you see, as well as any additional clinical/professional experiences in which you may be asked or required to participate, will be dictated by the setting. As a general rule for this course, however, you are expected to be on-site a minimum of one day (8 hours) per week and to carry an average on-site case load of 4 clients (one-hour sessions) per week. For doctoral students, anything less than that may jeopardize your eligibility for internship. **If at any time you have difficulty meeting this expectation, please let me know IMMEDIATELY.** Recently, the faculty approved the policy that across the two-semester sequence of 842-895 or 842-948, students must accrue at least 100 face-to-face contact hours before they will be eligible to receive a grade for the second semester.

Supervision

It is an expectation of this department that your practicum site will provide you with an on-site supervisor and at least one hour of individual supervision each week throughout the semester.

Additionally, it is an expectation that you will be permitted to tape record (audio and/or video) your sessions with your clients. Ideally, those tapes will be available for review on campus as a part of your practicum.

Your on-site supervisor and I have very clear dual obligations, and it is important for you to keep both of these obligations in mind as you receive supervision and consultation feedback:

1. We have the obligation to you to provide you (within the constraints of time and resources) with the assistance you need to prepare for eventual practice and to develop into a competent counselor or psychologist. Neither of us will expect you to become a seasoned clinician by the end of practicum; but each of us will expect you to be inquisitive and open, willing to take reasonable risks, gaining in skill, and developing a sense of professional competence. You, in turn, may expect us to provide you with assistance in developing your professional competencies and identity.
2. We also have an obligation to the clients who come to you for assistance--to assure to the best of our ability that the services that you render are appropriate and helpful. Although we are concerned about your development as a counselor or psychologist, we must also be intensely concerned about the effects you have on your clients.

Small Group Consultation

In addition to your on-site supervision, I or one of the College Teaching Consultants will meet with you weekly for one hour to focus on specific skill development. While we will be discussing specifics of your sessions, we will be trying to develop or improve skills you are using in your work generally. **Responsibility for supervision of your CASES is completely in the hands of your on-site supervisor, and if anything that gets suggested in class or in our consultations should ever conflict with anything your site supervisor is telling you, it is YOUR responsibility to let me know that at once.** None of us can afford for you to be receiving mixed signals about how you are to be handling your cases. The focus in our sessions is on generic skill development, though we are using your cases as a starting point for which skills to work on.

Class Sessions: Our class sessions are intended to be both instructional and consultative in nature:

1. They will be instructional in that we will try to spend a part of each session discussing some topic central to professional practice. A part of this will include student presentations. The presentation of topics will be the shared responsibility of everyone in the class. The presentations should be applied in nature and should be of general interest to the entire class. The topic may be an issue, intervention, test, or assessment strategy, type of client, etc. You may choose to make a formal presentation, lead a discussion, or use some other presentational strategy. Regardless of your approach, however, you should be prepared to serve as the resident expert on the topic.

2. The sessions will be consultative in the sense that you will be expected to present cases for review and discussion. The consultative aspect of these sessions serves the purposes of:

- (a) sharing with others the kinds of clients with whom you are working, your style and strategies as a counselor in training, and the peculiar difficulties that you experience in your work with clients;
- (b) receiving support and assistance in developing skill areas;
- (c) receiving feedback concerning possible effects you are having on your clients;
- (d) allowing others to learn from you; and
- (e) extinguishing the anxiety each of us feels about presenting our work to others.

Each student will be required to make three 30-40 minute case presentations. These should include

- (a) a brief introduction to the case--including a description of the client and the circumstances that brought her/him into counseling.
- (b) a summary and conceptualization (theoretical integration) of the case to date--including:
 - 1. a summary of the psychological, social, medical, etc. factors relevant to the case;
 - 2. an integrative summary of any assessment information that you have acquired (share profiles/protocols with the class when possible);
 - 3. a summary of what you have done and what you are doing to assist the client with her/his concerns, and why (i.e., a case process conceptualization); and
 - 4. an analysis of the effects of your interventions.
- (c) EITHER a 15-minute segment of audio or video tape,
- OR - a typed transcript of a 15-minute segment of the session.

Although your on-site supervisor will provide your case-specific supervision, you should **come to each class session prepared to review your cases with the group**. This requires some preparation on your part. In particular, be prepared to provide (a) a summary of each of your cases to date, and (b) your conceptualization of the cases. Be prepared to discuss what you think is going on with your clients and why, what you are doing with your clients and why, and what sort of help or assistance you think you need in order to work more effectively (and efficiently) with your clients. Review your sessions and identify those areas/interactions/issues that concern you and on which you want the help of the group. Most weeks you will only get to present a minimum amount of information about a subset of the cases with which you are working.

At this stage of your professional development, each of you should be personally and professionally able to share and receive information, suggestions, and other constructive comments with your professional colleagues. It is my expectation that each of you will share in the consultation and instruction of each other throughout the semester.

Evaluation

The previously noted course objectives provide the framework for evaluative judgments concerning students' clinical performance in the course. Clearly, judgments concerning performance relative to these objectives involve an element of subjective/clinical judgment on the part of instructors--this is inherent in any clinical course. In order to try to control for possible misperceptions, early and ongoing evaluation is important; and I will do my best to provide you with this.

Although it is my intent to be supportive and encouraging, evaluative feedback may not always be positive. That is, some of the feedback that you receive will require (or at least encourage) you to accommodate and change. Although you are probably doing much that is clinically correct, my expectation is that you will develop through your experiences in this course--not that you will stay the same.

In the end, the largest part of one's final evaluation will reflect where you are in your professional development by considering the course objectives in two ways:

1. How much and what kinds of progress has the student made?
2. Where is the student at the end of the course?

In addition, however, you are expected to:

1. attend each class session--coming prepared to discuss readings, cases, etc.
2. carry an average client load of 4 clients per week
3. tape record each session with every client (if allowable at your site)
4. do research appropriate to the clients/issues with which you are dealing
5. attend weekly supervision sessions with your on-site supervisor
6. attend weekly consultation sessions with me or your doctoral student consultant
7. keep a log of all practicum-related activities
8. provide constructive feedback to peers, receive feedback from peers, supervisor, and instructor non-defensively
9. behave and dress professionally, and adhere to the practice and ethical standards of the profession at all times
10. present the cases and content presentations described earlier in the syllabus.

Course requirements will be weighted as follows:

60% Individual counseling, on-site activities, and supervision/consultation

20% Case Presentations

20% Class participation (discussions, feedback, presentations, & role plays)

You must make satisfactory effort toward all course requirements in order to pass the course.

Erford, B., Eaves, S. Bryant, E., & Young, K. (2009). Thirty-five techniques every counselor should know. Prentice Hall.