

Counseling Practicum

Lecture 4

Writing a Practicum Proposal

Lecturer: Susan Gitau (PhD)

Introduction to Lecture One

This lecture will explain the importance of writing a practicum proposal before doing internship or practicum. It will give a step-to-step guide to writing a working practicum proposal or prospectus that a intern can follow during practicum or internship.

Expected Learning Outcomes

At the end of this lecture, you will be able to:

- (i) Explain the importance of practicum
- (ii) Describe the process of developing a practicum proposal

Importance of Practicum Proposal

A practicum proposal can help an intern in the following ways:

- Focusing on the practicum objectives
- Choice of practicum site
- Self-assessment of competencies
- Enhanced self-awareness
- Having an inventory of skills and competencies
- Less anxiety related to practicum

- Enhanced self-esteem and confidence
- Easy to change track progress
- Easy to focus on practicum site services
- It is easy to calculate the number of hours to cover and how to cover them

Guidelines to developing a good practicum proposal

Self – introduction

Kindly take a moment to introduce yourself (focusing on what relates to the counseling course is more helpful, your experience in the course, plans for future career as well as your readiness for practicum). Sometimes it is ok to share what motivates you most in counseling and what scares you as well. Outline your expectations too and try to be as realistic as possible. Some institutions will ask for your place of residence, postal address, email address, school information, department, and program coordinator contacts. This is a good opportunity for the intern to ask about the values they hold so dear and how these values can limit or encourage them to practice counseling as a profession. The new wave of compassionate counselor client engagement is vital to consider because it enhances self-compassion during therapy work ((Germer, 2009)

Practicum Requirements

This may include the number of hours required in each clinical experience. For example, the number of individual counseling contact hours, couple therapy, group therapy,

psychoeducation, seminars, community service and workshop sessions. The time of working (morning, evening, afternoon) and days to work from Monday to Monday are well indicated. The overall time allocated to the practicum or internship is crucial so the practicum site can plan with and for the intern with the given time frame (Jungers & Scott, Securing a Practicum and Internship Site, 2019).

Practicum Site Information

This includes sharing on the name of the site, exact location, branches if any and special features surrounding the site. Give a brief history of the site showing how it has come to be what it is today. The staff population, designation, departments, and organogram. Include information that touches on the culture, values, core objectives, mission and vision shared by the site. Key to note is the core business of this site to see if it matches what you want for practicum experience. Check if the site will match your values and culture expectations and if not, get a plan to cope with what you find there. Do not forget to put the site's contact and physical address, street location, google map and physical location that suits the type of clients that you will be seeing. The person of the counselor is very crucial and there is need for the intern to ensure that the internship site serves that purpose of giving them the very best of clinical experience to become that desired future professional practitioner ((Mc Leod, 2013).

Justification

The following questions can help you to justify the choice for the site.

- i. Is the site easily accessible to you?
- ii. Is it suitable for the client work experience you are seeking?
- iii. Is practicum paid up or not?
- iv. Will there be a site supervisor
- v. Will the clients suit my practicum objectives?
- vi. Will I need to visit another site to fill up my hours?
- vii. How flexible is the site in relation to your personal needs?

Practicum Objectives

The objectives can be divided into:

- Clinical practice
- Administrative duties
- Consultation
- Self-care

Clinical practice objectives will cover goals related to one's clinical area of expertise, clinical supervision, and research. Administrative objectives will investigate the other engagements an intern will do outside their clinical practice. That would be helping in the office, record keeping and filing, Consultation objectives will investigate the areas the

counselor intern wishes to get more help and information to help better. The self-care goals will help the intern to plan on their psychological and physical wellness during practicum period. All the objectives should be directed to taking the intern to their desired professional goals and career development (Jungers & Scott, Practicum and Internship : Textbook and Resource Guide for Counseling and Psychotherapy, 2019).

The objectives can include a research-based objective that the intern can use to guide the clinical evidence-based investigation. For example, if an intern who is working in a drug rehabilitation centre may wish to find out, if family related issues lead to high rate of relapse among clients leaving rehab facilities. The findings are shared in the final practicum report.

Practicum Challenges

These challenges include common one faced by almost all interns and some that could be very personal. Some of these challenges include access to the site, transport costs, payment for the internship/practicum experience, lack of supervisors (site and expert supervisors), provision of stress-free amenities, lack of /or inadequate client, poor working facilities, contact client hours, self-care challenges personal ill health among others.

Evaluation

An intern needs to know how to evaluate the internship goals and objectives. A good work plan should be drawn to guide the achievement of these objectives. The intern needs to have all practicum documents kept and filled in with a daily report done. On a weekly basis, the intern ought to pick areas of achievement, challenge and undefined. The issues that are very crucial and need instant guidance and supervision are quickly addressed. The intern needs to know all that is expected of them before, during and after the practicum (Corey, 2009).

Personal Reflections

Counseling is a very personalized practice, and each student has own challenges that are only unique to themselves. The following questions guide an intern in writing this very crucial part of the practicum:

- As you prepared for the practicum, were you ready?
(Had you covered all prerequisite units, therapy sessions and approval form the university?)
- What proof did you have to show that you are ready for practicum?
(Approval letter, introduction letter, signed prospectus by the site supervisor and the student)
- During the proposal writing, did you notice areas of concern?
- How do you plan to solve issues of concern during practicum?
- Do you have an accountability partner to walk with you during the practicum?

Conclusion

We have covered the importance of writing a practicum proposal and discussed the steps to follow when writing a good practicum proposal. Remember your practicum proposal is your best guide and a powerful tool to help you track your progress and see areas of improvement.

References

- Corey, G. (2009). *Theory and practice of counseling and counseling psychotherapy* (8 ed.). London: Thomson Brooks/Cole.
- Germer, C. K. (2009). *The mindful path to self-compassion: Freeing yourself from destructive thoughts and emotions*. London: The Guildford Press.
- Jungers, C. M., & Scott, J. (2019). *Practicum and Internship : Textbook and Resource Guide for Counseling and Psychotherapy* (6 ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Jungers, C. M., & Scott, J. (2019). Securing a Practicum and Internship Site. In C. M. Junger, & J. Scott, *Practicum and Internship* (p. 8). New York: Routledge.
- McLeod, J. (2013). *An introduction to counseling*. New York: Open University Press.