

# **COUNSELING PRACTICUM I**

---



## **Lecture 1**

### **Introduction to Counseling Practicum**

**Lecturer: Susan Gitau (PhD)**

# MY PROFILE

---



- **COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGIST**
- *Lecturer, Africa Nazarene University*
- *KCPA Accredited Senior Counselor Supervisor & Chair Kiambu County*
- *Lead Consultant in Mental Health*
- *Certified Mediator (MTII), MSC Trainer (USA)*
- *Founder – Susan Gitau Counseling Foundation*
- *Volunteer Counselor/Consultant – Kenya Defense Forces & Soldiers of Peace International (SPIA)*
- *Member – East African Standby Force (EASF- AU, Kenya)*
- *Mashujaa 2018 (humanitarian service)*
- *Author, media consultant & Researcher*
- *Entrepreneur (counseling and education)*
- *Founding member, Global Africa Mental Health Network*
- *Member Association of American Christian Counselors (AACC)*

# Introduction

---



This lecture will explain the importance of practicum and internship in the journey of a counseling student from classroom to field experiences as well as guide on steps to follow when choosing a practicum and internship site.

# Expected Learning Outcomes

---

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

- (i) Explain the importance of practicum
- (ii) Identify factors to consider before choosing a practicum and/or internship site

Key Questions for Your Reflection

- a. Do you wish to be prepared before going out for your practicum? Reason?
- b. What do you think is important for you to consider before embarking on this practicum journey?



# KEY TERMS



- **Practicum**
  - A practical course designed to help students or trainees integrate theory and practice
- **Internship**
  - Internship is mostly paid up, but practicum is mainly done to gain experience and sometimes students pay for practicum in some sites
- **Self Assessment**
  - This refers to personal analysis of a student's skills competencies

# IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICUM

---

- **It is a test of what the student has been doing in class,**
- **Assessment of the ability to translate theory into practice.**
- **Skills practice in a supervised environment**
- **It is both challenging and exciting with the intern/student counselor experiencing mixed emotions about the whole experience**



# THEORY AND PRACTICE

---

- This is the core of practicum and internship experiences
- All theories are tested if a student has not specialized one theory of orientation
- A student can pick a theoretical framework that works for them or that which suits the type of clients they will work with



# SKILLS PRACTICE

---



- The student is given an opportunity to apply the skills with real clients from the intake to termination level (all stages of counseling a client are covered)
- In vivo practice with experts is a powerful experience for interns
- Video and audio recording give very good feedback to the intern and the school supervisor
- Preparing and keeping case notes and client records

# WHAT INFORMS PRACTICUM APPROACH?

---

- Accreditation standards for professional counseling programs,
- Counseling accreditation bodies,
- Emerging issues in mental health
- The licensing authorities in a country or state.
- Counselor education and counseling psychology training programs
- Specialization areas



# Education Program

---



- Counseling Psychology,
- Clinical Psychology,
- Forensic Psychology
- Counselor Education

# IMPORTANCE

---

- **It helps to reduce practicum related anxiety**
- **It reveals areas a student needs to work on before going for internship**
- **It enhances a student's self esteem**
- **Personal awareness and development**



# SPECIALIZATION AREAS

---



- **Addiction Counseling**
- **Trauma Counseling**
- **Marriage and family therapy**
- **Child and Adolescent Counseling**
- **Research and development**
- **Psychological assessment**

# EMERGING ISSUES IN MENTAL HEALTH

---

- Gender diversity
- Dynamic chronic trauma
- Neuroplasticity
- Multicultural Diversity
- COVID – 19 impact on Mental Health
- Workplace wellness (WHO measures and policies)



# HOW READY ARE YOU?

---



- Honest self-assessment
- Keeping track of skills set inventory and relevant competencies
- Willingness TO LEARN new knowledge, skills and values
- Ask if your school/department is ready to release you for practicum or internship
- Get a letter of request for internship

# HOW READY ARE YOU?

---

- Embrace constructive feedback from the program supervisor and the peers during the micro practice sessions.
- Affiliation with a professional body
- Seeking relevant licensure and accreditation
- Write a practicum proposal/prospectus to guide



# GETTING STARTED

---



- Clear with school with an approval letter and signed practicum proposal
- Choose a site that suits your expectations
- Sign a memorandum of understanding with the internship /practicum site

# GETTING STARTED

---

- Choose a site clinical supervisor (qualifications, relevant skills and expertise)
- Carry your professional documents in a folder if
- Familiarize yourself with the site (core values, culture, organogram)
- Develop an evaluation plan to track progress



# GETTING STARTED

---



- Complete personal therapy sessions and keep that letter
- Do a personal self assessment (SCOT)
- Keep a diary/journal
- Choose an accountability partner
- Have a self care plan
- Have a workplan

# SELF ASSESSMENT

---

- **Strengths** (units, skills, expertise, theory, assessment)
- **Challenges** (areas that need improvement, personal weaknesses)
- **Opportunities** (future prospects)
- **Threats** (health, security , burnout)



# CHOOSING A PRACTICUM SITE

---



- Approved sites
- Availability of opportunities/slots
- Cost effectiveness
- Matches expectations and specialization areas
- Personal needs (motivation, interests)
- Availability of supervisor

# BEFORE GOING TO THE SITE

---



- Prepare your resume
- Visit the site
- Contact the HR or careers department officer at the site
- Prepare your academic papers
- Have your accreditation /license with you
- Prepare your practicum portfolio guide

# CLIENT POPULATION

---

- **What kind of people/ population do I enjoy working with?**
- **Will I get this population?**
- **What type of problems might I want to deal with?**
- **Will I encounter these types of problems here?**



# COST IMPLICATIONS

---



- **Is the experience paid or unpaid?**
- **Does the placement allow for credit toward state licensure or certification requirements?**
- **Proximity**  
/accommodation/transport/meals
- **Is supervision paid for?**

# SUPERVISION

---

Will I receive adequate individual supervision?

- Is the supervisor credentialed at the independent practice level of licensure or certification?
- What supervision needs do I have?
- **How much will I be working with clients, rather than observing or running errands?**



# PERSONAL COMFORT

---



Will I be comfortable working here?

- Working space
- Culture
- Diversity and inclusivity
- Values
- Other professionals

# TEAMWORK

**Will you directly be involved with other professionals and experts?**

- **psychiatrists, psychologists,**
- **social workers, counselors,**
- **nurses, teachers, or childcare workers**



## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

---

WILL THE SITE OFFER AN  
OPPORTUNITY FOR ME TO BE  
ABSORBED AFTER THE INTERNSHIP  
OR HELP ME SECURE A JOB  
PLACEMENT LATER?



# A STEP AT A TIME

---



- Excitement Phase
- Struggling Phase
- Acceptance Phase & Thriving

# REMEMBER

---

Know and accept yourself

Plan well

Be focused

Don't walk this journey alone

Be flexible

One step at a time leads you to your destination



# References

---



- Corey, G. (2016). *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy*. California: Routledge.
- 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.



**Thank You!**

---