

## **FOUNDATION PRACTICUM LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

The Boston University School of Social Work seeks to develop a social work practitioner who identifies with and critically assesses the social work profession and who in practice is more strongly oriented to human needs and the solution of problems than to the exclusive use of one method. Through classroom and field experience, social work students will develop knowledge about social and human problems and will become familiar with a range of generalist intervention methods for resolving those problems. Whether the client is an individual, family, group, or community, social work practice focuses on the client's needs, social strengths and competencies, human problems and challenges, and the application of intervention techniques which will best serve the client. The foundation practicum incorporates a range of curriculum areas, including social work practice, human behavior and the social environment, social welfare policy, social research, ethics and values, diversity, promotion of social and economic justice, and populations at risk.

Accordingly, assignments in the foundation placement should provide opportunities to work with individuals, families, small groups, and larger systems and should focus on the following areas of learning.

By the end of the foundation practicum, students are expected to demonstrate an ability to practice a majority of the foundation learning objectives (as designated by scores of 3 and 4) on the field instructor's evaluation of the student.

### **PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND ROLE**

The student is expected to:

1. assess the agency mission, structure, policies and programs, and community.
2. establish his/her role as a social work intern within the agency.
3. accept the potentials and limits of her/his role in the practice of social work.
4. form and maintain professional relationships with colleagues and other personnel within the setting.
5. act within prescribed lines of communication and authority.
6. Within the supervisory relationship:
  - a) assess own learning style and needs and develop appropriate educational goals consistent with those set by the School;
  - b) take responsibility for setting a portion of the supervisory agenda;
  - c) use a range of learning tools, e.g., recordings, role plays, discussion, audio and video recording;
  - d) be open to feedback from field instructor to increase professional self-reflection and further knowledge and skill development;
  - e) give thoughtful feedback to field instructor about own learning

needs (including impediments to learning).

7. communicate with clients, consumers, colleagues, and field instructor:
  - a) verbally
  - b) in writing
8. transfer relevant knowledge and skills learned from each assignment to successive assignments.
9. behave in accordance with professional standards and responsibilities (e.g., appropriate dress, punctuality, attendance, and time and workload management).
10. fulfill documentation requirements of agency (e.g., client records) and school (e.g., recordings) in a timely and thorough manner.

### **VALUES AND ETHICS**

The student is expected to:

1. adhere to the following social work values:
  - a) people have the right to be treated with respect for their worth and dignity;
  - b) people have the right to make autonomous decisions and to be active participants in the problem-solving process;
  - c) client systems are entitled to resources – material, social and emotional – necessary to achieve and maintain well-being;
  - d) social institutions should be humane, inclusive, and responsive to humane needs;
  - e) diversity is accepted, respected and valued;
  - f) clients and consumers have the right to confidentiality within the limit of the law.
2. be aware of her/his own value orientation, identify its impact on professional behavior, and demonstrate behavior consistent with the values of the profession.
3. be familiar with the NASW Code of Ethics.
4. identify competing values and ethics that result in dilemmas both in her/his own practice and in the larger agency context.
5. make appropriate decisions around her/his role in resolving ethical dilemmas in consultation with field instructors, colleagues, faculty members, and other professionals whose expertise and authority are available.
6. be responsible for her/his ethical conduct and for the quality of her/his practice.

### **PRACTICE METHOD**

In general, the student is expected to:

1. value diversity of populations, perspectives and orientations.
2. identify differences and similarities in experiences and beliefs, strengths, and needs of various groups of people.
3. take into account the client system's race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, age, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, and religion in the context of professional practice.
4. assess policies, procedures, and practices of the agency as they relate to accessibility, availability, and appropriateness for the diverse populations served by the agency.
5. recognize the influences of one's own cultural identity on her/his perception and approach to working with people who are both similar to and different from her/himself.
6. assess the influence of oppression and economic injustice on:
  - a) the client-worker relationship;
  - b) agency policies and procedures;
  - c) client's level of participation in the change process;
  - d) client's strengths and problems;
  - e) client's resources and capabilities;
  - f) presence or absence of other resources.
7. develop goals and intervention strategies to lessen harmful effects of social and economic justice.
8. base his/her practice on empowerment of the client system, with attention to:
  - a) strengths and assets;
  - b) natural networks;
  - c) values;
  - d) differences (race, gender, class, culture, sexual orientation, etc.).
9. be self-reflective in practice.
10. establish differential professional relationships with client systems of all sizes:
  - a) within the context of the agency mission;
  - b) based on the expressed needs of the client system;
  - c) based on clearly defined boundaries between the worker and client.
11. develop the following skills with client systems of all sizes:
  - a) engagement (starting where the client is, demonstrating empathy, "tuning in");

- b) bio-psycho-social assessment (mutual problem identification, collection and report of relevant information, identification of client systems' strengths and resources);
  - c) contracting (clarifying roles, mutual expectations of goals, limits of work);
  - d) intervention (mutual work based on contract);
  - e) mutual evaluation of practice (effectiveness of intervention);
  - f) termination (reasons, meaning, process, implication for further work).
12. advocate and intervene on behalf of clients (particularly populations at risk) when policies and programs do not support clients' well being.

In assignments with **INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES**, the student is expected to:

1. empathize with clients.
2. explore appropriately by:
  - a) asking relevant and well-formulated questions
  - b) listening to and learning what client system is saying on more than one level
  - c) observing and making note of nonverbal behavior.
3. enable client system to recognize available choices and make decisions about alternatives.
4. facilitate client system's use of external resources, and when appropriate, intervene directly on behalf of client system.
5. use concrete services, selectively offering suggestions and advice.
6. tolerate strong emotional expression.
7. serve an educational function by giving information and sharing professional knowledge.
8. help client system identify and examine interactional responses, patterns of behavior and their effects.
9. help client system in termination phase (e.g., evaluate progress in relation to goals, understand different reasons for termination, and identify strengths as well as areas for further work).

In **GROUP WORK** assignments, the student is expected to:

1. use the appropriate group work model based on agency mission and client goals and needs.
2. attend to factors of group composition (e.g., diversity issues, common needs and interests).

3. prepare group members (e.g., discussion of fee contracts, confidentiality, protection of individual and group interests).
4. in ongoing groups, arrange for adequate space, programming supplies, and equipment to facilitate group operation and ensure professional standards of practice.
5. create an atmosphere of acceptance and trust.
6. articulate purpose of the group as perceived by the agency and worker.
7. establish goals with individual members, if appropriate, and with the group as a whole.
8. develop and implement a range of activities and techniques in relation to age, competency, type and goals of the group.
9. apply knowledge of stages of group development to interventions.
10. if co-leading a group, work collaboratively to plan and process sessions.

In **MACRO** assignments, the student is expected to:

1. define the problem, taking into account individuals or groups involved, domain, frequency, and others who should be involved.
2. collect data from multiple sources.
3. apply differential intervention techniques, including needs assessment, program planning, advocacy, legislative initiatives, program evaluation, community organization, and community education.
4. utilize an assets approach to communities with particular emphasis on undervalued groups.
5. apply the concepts of power, empowerment, and participation within a multicultural context.
6. identify and assess formal and informal mechanisms for change in human service organizations and communities.
7. foster a productive role for the agency within the community.
8. evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention in relation to the task and stated goals.