

Evaluating Fieldwork Placements

Internship sites vary in many ways. Settings for training, structures and styles of supervision and theoretical orientations can be vastly different. The following list gives some areas to consider and suggests questions to ask when choosing a placement site.

Contract and Agreements

Length of commitment: semester, six months, nine months, a year?

Time commitment: hours per week for training, supervision, clients, staff meetings, office duties, intakes.

Schedule: are there set supervision and training times? Scheduling of rooms available to see clients?

Stipend paid or fee required?

Expenses: intern pays for travel, training, supervision?

Stability of agency: Is the agency financially and organizationally solid? Is there high staff turnover? (Get copy of corporation papers during internship.)

Application Process and Requirements: Contact name and position. Deadlines. Resume and cover letter? Other documentation? Group or individual interview? When notified? How many positions available?

Work and Environment: What will it feel like to work there?

Location: agency and work site(s), if different.

Client Population: adults, adolescents, children, families, couples, individuals, groups. What is the referral base; mandated, self-referred?

Client Issues/Diagnosis: substance use, crisis, personality disorders, psychotic disorders?

Caseload: number of clients. Intakes? Hotline shifts? Enough clients to keep interns working? Too many? How long does it take to start seeing clients?

Facilities available to audiotape or videotape client sessions for review by supervisor?

How is my work evaluated?

Intakes: Who does the intakes? How are clients assigned?

Policy on collecting fees? Is trainee responsible?

Supervision

Supervisor Who will my supervisor be? How much experience does he/she have supervising? Does supervisor have required formal training to supervise trainees? Theoretical orientation and any special training? In private practice? Are they employed by agency or volunteer? On site? (Check licensure on BBS net site or see credentials.) How available are they? Is there access to more than one supervisor? What are the procedures to resolve conflict with a supervisor?

Type of supervision: individual, group. Hours per week? Special features: video-taping, one-way mirrors? Is outside supplementary supervision necessary or required?

Theoretical orientation used at agency (Psychodynamic, family systems, client-centered, Jungian, behavioral, narrative etc.) Are there choices?

Training: How often? Topics?