

## **Field Education Strategies for Remote Competency Development**

The MSW Department at CSU Stanislaus has developed a plan to address temporary disruption to students' social work field placements due to national or local events such as communicable diseases, natural disasters, and/or civil unrest.

Field Instructors and Task Supervisors can assign students off-site alternative field learning activities that the student may complete in the event of a temporary field disruption. Examples of alternative field learning activities are listed below.

\* Special thanks to University of North Carolina, Denver University, University of Michigan and St. Louis Social Work Field Education Collaborative for sharing their work.

### **ALTERNATE LEARNING ACTIVITIES BY COMPETENCY**

*\* Field Instructors and Task Supervisors may come up with other activities or trainings, in addition to the ones listed below.*

#### **Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

- Appropriate and timely use of email, virtual supervision, and communication during uncertain times
- Develop new work plan, including due dates, for written products to be submitted to field instructor while working remotely
- Select a standard in the NASW Code of Ethics. Reflect in writing on differences or points of tension between the Code and agency policy/procedure and/or services.
- Read literature on the Code of Ethics and write a summary about how it applies to social work practice
- Review ethics-related case study identified by FI/TS or field faculty, OR reflect on personal experience regarding ethical quandary in field and respond in writing to factors that must be considered
- Review history of NASW Code of Ethics. Reflect on its evolution to address gaps. Identify specific areas where gaps remain
- Review an ethical decision making model (sample: <https://www.naswma.org/page/100/Essential-Steps-for-Ethical-Problem-Solving.htm>) and use this to analyze an ethical dilemma from your agency
- Identify Ted Talks, YouTube videos and podcasts related to social work practice. Write about personal reactions and how your learning applies to agency ethical and professional practice

## **Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**

- Utilize self-reflection to think about personal identities and biases (including your own sources of privilege and power) and how this may show up in practice
- Apply a diversity and difference in practice lens through research and writing to current projects
- Read and write a reflection on current literature related to diversity and difference
- Write a reflection looking at how your own intersecting identities impact your work and relationships within the field agency and with client/community groups being served
- Review the NASW Code of Ethics standards related to oppression, discrimination and marginalization. Suggest improvements
- In writing, identify the unique cultural composition of the client population served by the agency. Identify ways in which the agency meets the needs of the client population and identify how this could be improved
- Research, identify, and complete an online training focused on a population served by the agency. Identify how this information could be used to better advocate for the needs of this population in practice
- Identify Ted Talks, YouTube videos and podcasts related to social work practice. Write about personal reactions and how your learning applies to diversity and difference in practice

## **Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

- Complete writing assignment about strategies that promote social justice and human rights considering agency mission and practice
- Create list of ways the agency could advocate for social, economic, environmental justice and human rights in the agency's work
- Review advocacy agency website that you would like to learn more about and write a summary of how their work could impact the work completed by your agency
- Research a human rights issue of interest and write a summary how human rights organizations are working to ameliorate the condition
- Identify Ted Talks, YouTube videos and podcasts related to social work practice. Write about personal reactions and how your learning applies to advancing human rights

## **Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice**

- Research and write evaluation of articles that inform agency's practice
- Continue research pertaining to current projects
- Develop focus group question or survey instruments related to a need in the agency
- Develop research questions that emerge from work with the client system and agency setting. Discuss with Field Instructor and or Field Liaison and identify resources that inform (or answer) the research question.
- Research potential grant opportunities and/or prepare aspects of the grant writing.

### **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

- Explore local, state and federal policies that impact organization and/or the affected community, write summary
- Write a policy brief
- Write a letter to the editor about a policy issue impacting your agency
- Complete an analysis of a political candidate's plans for policy change
- Read social work voting toolkit (<https://votingissocialwork.org/>) and develop a plan for implementation within the agency
- Organizational Policy Review: review agency policies with suggestions/recommendations where appropriate (ex- safety policies, diversity policies, use of social media, utilization of technology, etc.)

### **Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

- Attend virtual meetings utilizing teleconferencing applications that can be accessed via computer, tablet, and/or telephone; provided teleconferencing applications meet any agency requirements regarding HIPPA and/or confidentiality.
- Reflect in writing about how personal experiences, beliefs and identities impact your relationships in field
- Plan and participate in remote meeting, support group, or other intervention
- Review literature related to culture and cultural humility and write about how it impacts your work in the agency and how services are delivered

### **Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

- Research assessment instruments used by agencies who offer similar services
- Create an assessment instrument (survey, focus group questions, interview questions) to better understand community/client needs
- Review case study for strengths, challenges and systemic factors impacting the clients and/or client group

### **Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

- Review effectiveness of evidence-based practice models and discuss ways that model could be implemented in field placement agency
- Review case study for strengths, challenges and systemic factors impacting the intervention and or implementation of the intervention
- Develop trainings that will benefit the agency (e.g, Student intern orientation and onboarding materials, social work ethics, treatment innovation, etc.).

## **Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

- Assess agency process for seeking client feedback and make recommendations for improvement
- Review literature on termination of relationships within the workplace setting (with agency staff, community partners, clients, etc.)
- Think about and plan discussions for terminations with task groups, community members/clients, and agency staff considering current circumstances
- In writing, identify the structures in place for evaluating the agency's outcomes. Compare and contrast this evaluation mechanism with structures in place for similar agencies (in other counties, states, countries).

### **Additional Activities That May Meet Multiple Competencies**

- Trainings for Agency: develop trainings that will benefit the agency (ex- self-care, ethics, etc.)
- Groups/Workshops for Clients: develop curriculum for future implementation with clients (ex- life skills, grief, trauma, domestic violence, etc.)
- Written Materials for Clients or Community: develop handouts/flyers/brochures (ex- explain voting rights, informed consent policies, etc.)
- Community Networking/Resource Development: teleconference with various service providers, participating in resource mapping, and develop a list of resources for clients with services offered, referral process, etc.
- Complete online trainings: complete assigned trainings and provide a certification of completion and/or a short written reflection and/or prepare a presentation to disseminate knowledge gained.

### **Additional recommendations specific to COVID-19 (provided by Sevaughn Banks, Ph.D., MSW)**

- Research the likelihood of COVID-19 impacting the respective county/region:
  - a. Suggestions on which geographic regions are most susceptible and why,
  - b. Suggestions on which populations are most susceptible and why,
  - c. Recommendations to ameliorate or decrease the spread of COVID-19 in the county/region
  - d. Best medical treatment to stop the spread of the virus (medical-based placements)
- Prepare a brief presentation that can be offered to the agency/seminar/field instructor/field liaison. Depending on what the situation is like in the immediate future, student(s) can schedule an online presentation and invite patients and families to learn more about the virus and how to protect themselves.

- Research agency policies and responsibilities and create a plan based on community outbreak epidemics, such as COVID-19, or other contagious diseases concentrated in the region
- Research quarantine, history of medical quarantines in the Central Valley, challenges and successes of such quarantines; develop recommendations for (possible) future quarantines
- Participate in virtual/telecommunication platform public health meeting(s), local political forums, and/or meet with local legislators to get more information about how the region is protecting its vulnerable citizens from COVID-19 and other threatening infectious diseases.

### **Confidentiality and the Use of Technology**

All students must comply with relevant laws, regulations, ethical standards, and organizational policies to ensure the confidentiality of clients. While each agency should develop their own protocols around the use of technology and confidentiality, the following best practices should be followed by all students:

- Take reasonable steps to maintain appropriate boundaries when using personal phone numbers or other electronic communication.
- Position web cameras so that others can only see your face—all visible confidential data should be removed from camera view.
- Conduct all sensitive conversations in a private space. \*Be mindful of the potential for family members or bystanders to overhear any portion of your discussions.
- Zoom communication platform is HIPPA compliant. Department of OIT holds certification if needed.