

SWK 357 FIELD EXPERIENCE
COMPETENCY JOURNAL

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1. Review of Competencies Practiced

A specific activity from the Field Learning Agreement that was completed was engage with and interview client/families to determine strengths and challenges, develop interviewing and rapport building skills. I shadowed one of the social workers at Martine Center by going with her to do an initial assessment for a patient who had recently been admitted to the rehabilitation center. The social worker gave me a copy of the assessment sheet to keep for myself as a reference. I will soon be conducting psychosocial assessments as well as initial assessments for patients around the units. This activity represents competence #6 which is to engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. The practice behavior it represents is behavior 6.2 which is to use reflection empathy, reflection and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies. Even though I was observing, one of the female patients we saw, a lady around her early 80's, kept talking to me instead of the social worker in charge of the assessment. The social worker directed her to speak to her yet I felt welcome by the fact that one of the patients also made eye contact with me regarding her concern. Some of the questions that were asked were what brought you to Martine Center? If anything were to happen to you and you went into cardiac arrest, would you want to be resuscitated or not resuscitated? I was challenged by the fact that one patient had many complaints about Martine Center for rehabilitation and nursing so it made me think about how nursing pays very little attention to some of the psychosocial needs, emotional needs and basic needs of the patient. It also made me reflect on advocacy as well as engaging effectively with the patient. Although the patient kept speaking about her concerns, the assessment questions were addressed yet some felt as if they were not due to the patient expressing herself. The patient was upset at the fact that she did not have a cellphone with her and the social worker assured we would help her order one.

2. Reflect on Performance of Competencies

Strengths: The practice behavior was practice behavior 6.2: using reflecting empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies. I was able to demonstrate interpersonal skills by effectively developing interview and rapport building skills through observing the social worker yet also speaking to the patients myself by making comments such as “very good” or “you can always feel free to ask for a social worker if you need someone to talk to.” Both patients we saw were very concerned with their hospitalization needs such as the food menu, recreation schedule etc. One of the patients told us that they did not really like the food and they wanted to make changes. Luckily we were able to get someone to help them.

Limitations :

I feel that I definitely need to grow with the geriatric population which is the main population we are serving. I do not yet feel comfortable going to do an assessment myself but eventually I will have to. I have mostly been observing how the social workers conduct assessments throughout the units.

Describe your personal feelings related to the activity:

I feel that I am sometimes afraid of what the rest of the staff will think of me as an intern or what the patients will think of me. I am definitely looking forward to having my own caseloads, conducting interviews, assessments, discharge and intake interviews etc. I would like to shadow different social workers to know how each one conducts an assessment with different patients. Some patients like to talk more than others so I feel like they need to be given the chance to speak but also come back to the assessment questions.

3. Connecting Competencies to Knowledge, Values, and Skills

What Social Work knowledge, skills, and/or values relate to your development of this competency?

The social work values related to developing this competency is having dignity and worth of a person as well as recognizing the importance of human relationships. Developing rapport with patients is very important, especially if I will plan to become a medical social worker/ clinical social worker. Many of the patients feel very lonely in the units and sometimes do not have supportive family members. While I was observing the assessments by shadowing one of

the social workers, I was also making eye contact and nodding my head and providing a smile. I felt that I was treating each patient with respect by listening to their concerns.

4. Plan for Progress

I feel that I have definitely learned so much this week regarding building a relationship with the patients and developing listening skills. I also learned that having empathy is important when working with the elderly. Although this rehabilitation center has younger patients, most of them are in the geriatric stage of life. I also learned that many patients feel very lonely and do not have a family member they can talk to everyday. On the other hand some family members may come off as controlling everything they do in the center. Due to a COVID case in the center, visiting hours are closed and recreational activities as a group also remain close until further notice. In order to foster my personal growth and continue to develop this practice behavior, I will keep shadowing the social workers as well as my supervisor. I will discuss during supervision different topics regarding patient concerns how I can help as an intern. I usually keep a notebook with me to write down everything I do throughout the day from making phone calls, to going up to the units etc.