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Seminar Paper 1: Competency 1

Reflective Assessment

In what ways have I accomplished this competency/practice behaviors?

As a social worker, I have learned to apply the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics to my professional practice in order to display ethical and professional behavior. I have accomplished these behaviors by learning about the agency's confidentiality policies; discussing boundary issues that are specific to clients; reflecting on my own behavior and thoughts after interacting with clients; examining staff doing their work to understand how they demonstrate professionalism; maintaining accurate, respectful, and professional written client records; and participating in supervision to discuss successes, challenges, and questions.

How has my thinking changed over time?

Before knowing about the NASW Code of Ethics and the importance of professional behavior, I used to believe that personal values and biases would not interfere with or impact professional practice, and that I would not need to use self-regulation to preserve professionalism in practice situations. However, the theoretical and empirical information I have learned as a social work student since day one has changed my thinking on the significance of regulating personal values and biases in order to maintain proper, ethical, and professional behavior.

What are the practice behaviors that indicate my competency in this area?

Making ethical decisions by applying the NASW Code of Ethics; using reflection and self-regulation to avoid allowing personal values to interfere with professional practice; demonstrating professionalism through appropriate demeanor, appearance, and communication; using technology ethically; and seeking feedback on successes, challenges, and questions or concerns are the practice behaviors that demonstrate my competency in this area.

What curriculum content areas relate to successfully completing this competency?

Curriculum content areas that relate to successfully completing this competency include social policy, ethics and values, and professional social work practice.

What learning experiences helped me to accomplish this competency?

I was able to acquire and accomplish this competency throughout my internship because the experience of meeting and learning from agency personnel, engaging with clients, and continually talking with my supervisor assisted me in the process of displaying ethical and professional behavior. Furthermore, sharing and debating my experiences with my peers and field instructor has broadened my understanding of professional behavior in the field and ethical decision-making.

What "gaps" can I identify in my learning experience? What will I do about these "gaps"?

A significant gap in my learning experience was my lack of understanding of what the NASW Code of Ethics states about ethical and professional behavior. In other words, I have not been able to "memorize" or "apprehend" its standards, therefore I have to go back and examine the document frequently if I can't remember what it mentions about a certain topic or situation. Therefore, I will study the NASW Code of Ethics at least once a week during the semester until I

have properly acquired and understood how to implement it in my social work practice to encourage ethical and professional behavior.

Integrative Questions

What value and ethical dilemmas have challenged you in your fieldwork?

During my fieldwork, I have been confronted with a major value and ethical dilemma related to adhering to the agency's policies. Clothing distribution is one of the services provided by the agency since we work with the elderly homeless population. There are a few customers who want clothes numerous times per week, but the Peer Specialist refuses to provide them with these since she believes they do not need them and may be selling them. These clients, on the other hand, frequently report that they have been robbed or do not have enough clothing, therefore they want a clean set of clothes. I believe that there are plenty of clothes in the closets that should be given to clients whenever they ask for them because there are no policies limiting the number of clothing items that a client may receive in a week, but I am only an intern who cannot ignore the role and rules established by the person in charge of clothing distribution. Furthermore, this situation creates an ethical dilemma since I have to determine whether to follow the Peer Specialist's instructions or seek to satisfy the clients' needs when they ask for clothing.

How did you (or might you) resolve them?

I believe it would be critical to bring up and discuss the situation during the staff meeting in order to determine whether there is a clothing distribution policy that protects the Peer Specialist's decision to limit the number of clothes distributed to a client or if the policy protects the clients' right to receive clothing whenever they claim to need it. I would attempt to solve the

dilemma by reminding the social workers that our priority should be to enhance the well-being of the most vulnerable individuals, who in this case are the elderly homeless, by providing them with any services or resources they require to satisfy their needs.

How did you use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values?

I used reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values by keeping a reflective record of any feelings, behaviors, and thoughts I had during and after meeting with a client. This enabled me to identify if my personal values were interfering with my practice. I discussed any concerns and areas for improvement with my supervisor in order to learn and work on growth plans.

Provide examples of how you demonstrated professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication.

Examples of how I demonstrated professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication include being polite and respectful to everyone; projecting a positive attitude toward learning and working; dressing appropriately; being punctual and not missing any meetings without prior notification; aiming to be grammatically correct in verbal and written communication; not using work time to do personal things such as texting or checking my social media; and providing feedback as well as adequate nonverbal responses (i.e. active listening) to clients, staff, and supervisors.

Reflect on the use of technology in your field agency. How is it used?

My field agency communicates with other departments, agencies, and clients' case workers and shelters by using technology. Intakes, housing applications and surveys, finding resources and services, making referrals, and setting up appointments and follow-ups with clients are the key

activities for which technology is employed. However, some tasks that need in-person contact, such as outreach, may not require the use of technology.

Provide examples of how you used supervision to guide your professional behavior and judgment.

Examples of how I used supervision to guide my professional behavior include sharing client interactions with my supervisor, as well as my reactions, feelings, and thoughts, in order to receive feedback and advice on how to respond to them while being professional. One of the instances was when I interviewed a client that, owing to his mental health condition, did not have the best attitude and would make offensive statements to me. During supervision, I expressed my feelings and views to my supervisor in order to receive feedback and direction on how I should have handled this client. To come up with suggestions on how to respond to the client's attitude in an ethical and professional manner, we would utilize the solution-focused approach and the strengths perspective.