

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

### **Reflective**

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

I have accomplished this competency by attending weekly supervision meetings throughout the duration of my internship. During these meetings, I have discussed personal values and how they interact with the professional values that I am expected to uphold. There have been honest conversations in which I should have said something different or kept my mouth shut in order to let the client have their own time to think. I have also learned how to react in a professional way when a client shares information at odds with my personal values as well as my personal feelings about the agency as a whole.

- How has my thinking changed over time?

Since starting my education in social work, I have become much more open-minded about all lifestyles as well as becoming more capable of leaving stereotypes at the door before meeting with clients. I have also spent time making myself more comfortable with being in the intersection between professional and personal values. I now understand that there is no way to escape this phenomenon. Even with the most ethical and hardest working social work professional this will still be a possibility. We all have specific lenses in which we see the world and these will at times be in conflict with our ability to practice.

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

Some practice behaviors that I have used in my field experience to demonstrate this competency was reading the agency's policies regarding confidentiality for clients. In addition to this, in the first few visits to this site, I observed other agency members in order to better understand how to act in an ethical way and see the expectations of adults when interacting with the students. In

addition to this, I also reviewed the agency's policy regarding technology and have received an email from the agency in order to keep my professional interactions separate from professional ones. These are all different practice areas in which I have been able to demonstrate this competency and act ethically when reviewing this information.

- What curriculum content areas (social policy, practice, etc.) relate to successfully completing this competency?

In SWK 416, I completed Case Note Recordings and drew from my field experience to document the strengths perspective and the ethical collection of information. I used the Carla Washburn case because I was not meeting with clients in my field experience in a way that I could collect this information. I completed a Narrative note as well as a SOAP note in order to collect the information needed in an ethical way with the information shared. With the skills gained from these exercises, I now have the skills to ethically source information as well as have a point of reference throughout the meetings with these clients.

- What learning experiences helped me to accomplish this competency?

One specific learning experience that I had in regards to this competency was keeping a log of any of these issues that I faced in my field experience in order to discuss them with my Field Instructor. One issue that I had was in which a student I was meeting with was sharing his negative feelings about a member of the LGBTQ+ community. As a Christian, I was ready with my rebuttal as well as what the Bible says about this, or even how I felt about this community as a person. However, I relied on my professional understanding and focused on the dignity and worth of all people. This was not only a Social Work value, but this was a value of the agency as well. That each student, regardless of race, sexual orientation or gender, is treated with respect and given the same resources.

- What “gaps” can I identify in my learning experience? What will I do about these “gaps”? (In your Professional Growth Plan, identify goals for continued personal and professional growth and discuss how you plan to reach these goals).

One of the gaps also present with this idea, is that I need to get better at incorporating my religion in an ethical way when speaking with clients. For me, it is easier to leave this part of myself at the door in order to provide the professional help that they are seeking. However, after speaking with my supervisor, I have realized that this is something I can incorporate in an ethical way in which I am able to be a Christian Individual while still being a professional social worker in the secular world. To address these gaps, I will go back through my notes in order to address instances in which I could have integrated my Christian thought process. I will then write out a possible outcome script of what could have happened if I integrated my Christian thought and discuss these possibilities with my supervisor, or a professor.

### **Integration**

- What values and ethical dilemmas have challenged you in your fieldwork?

One specific dilemma that I have faced in my field work was responding in a professional way to emotional and politically charged conversations. In my field experience, I was meeting with a student who was having trouble with their classmates and was acting out with bad behavior. When speaking with this student, he identified the fact that there was another student in the room that he was exchanging hurtful words with a student who was part of the LGBTQ+ community. The student that I was working with was calling them inappropriate names. This challenged me because I was ready with a Christian rebuttal because this is something that I have had to do

many times before. However, I was able to take a step back and realize that this was my client as well as a child who needed guidance, rather than an adult rebuttal.

- How did you (or might you) resolve them?

I resolve this conflict by reacting in a professional way in the moment as well as writing journals about this after the fact. I also dedicated a weekly meeting with my supervisor in which we discussed not only this interaction, but other interactions that could possibly come up that would bring forth similar feelings.

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

I use self-regulation in my mind to put my ways of thinking into two different boxes. When I enter into the agency, I put any personal values that may cause tension, in one box and pull out the professional values of the agency and put them in the forefront of my mind. Although there is a lot of overlap between the two, it is easier to self-regulate to see the two as different sets rather than trying to juggle the two in every situation.

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

I have demonstrated professional behavior by setting clear boundaries with the students I work with. Due to the age of the students that I work with, they want to have a personal relationship and want to be friends throughout the program. Even if I see them in the hallways, they want to tell me about their days and ask me personal questions. One way I set myself apart from the other teachers and volunteers is by the way I dress. Many of the other adults wear clothes with the school logo on it as well as the clothes that are comfortable for the task that they do in the program. I wear much more professional clothing and carry myself in a professional way even when walking through the hallways. Another way I have shown professionalism demeanor is in

the way I speak to the students. There was a day in which the program was short staffed and I needed to jump into a classroom to guide the students rather than having any one on one sessions for that day. This class had a very relaxed atmosphere and the students were asking me questions like “who do you have a crush on” or “do you have a boyfriend”. While this is very typical of girls their age, I needed to keep a professional demeanor in the case that one of these students would end up being someone I have to work with. I simply answered by letting them know that I was like any other adult here with a life outside of school, but that life is meant to be outside of school rather than in the school. I followed this up with more questions about the students in order to keep them from feeling like they were in any kind of trouble.

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

Technology is used very often in my agency. Much of the communication is done over email or via a group text with the teachers and volunteers. Although I am part of the group text, I refrain from adding anything into it that does not pertain to the agency itself or any emergency circumstances. Other teachers and volunteers use this group chat as a way of showing off their students' work as well as disseminating information that all of the teachers need. However, this is a strange group chat to be a part of as it does get personal in some cases. I try my best to avoid these conversations so as not to learn information about clients that they have not shared openly with me, as well as keep the professional demeanor both inside and outside the client meetings.

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

My supervision meetings have been an integral part of my time in Field placement. I have been able to share not only specific examples from field experience that have challenged me not only personally, but professionally as well, I have been able to have open discussions about race,

gender equality, macro practice and many other things that may be impacting my day-to-day life at the agency. One specific conversation I had with my supervisor was about the fact that these students are being done a disservice by the demographic of their neighborhood. We spoke about the fact that since these are younger students, they will not be able to travel as far alone in order to attend school. This puts them in a position to have a level of “culture shock” when they enter High School or the working environment. We were speaking about our thoughts and opinions when it came to this hypothetical issue. We also spoke about ways this could be remedied in the future.