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**Swk499: Integrative Seminar**

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**Reflective Assessment on Competency #6**

**Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

- **In what ways have I accomplished this competency/practice behaviors?** I have accomplished this competency while participating in my field practicum. One of the ways that I was able to perform this competency was by having discussions with participants and their guardians to better assist their needs. My field practicum is an alternative to detention programs, where participants are all adolescents that are mandated by the court system to attend the program to avoid being detained. I always make sure to start my engagement to make sure the participants are aware of why they are being mandated by the judge to attend our program. We must build our relationship with a clear understanding of what's at stake. Therefore, I continue my engagement by hearing them express their concerns and what they think about the charges filed against them. This helps me understand and better engage with each client. I also use this competency during my *SWK 416 Generalist Practice I: Individuals & Families*. During this course, I had to document an interview and complete 2 case recordings. I complete a *Narrative & SOAP* style with a participant in my field practicum.
- **How has my thinking changed over time?** After engaging with participants from my field practicum, I was able to engage and understand the implication of my clients' needs.

I have also become more empathetic toward my clients' situations. After learning about competency 6, I learned the importance of listening and paying close attention to my participants. Throughout my practicum, I have learned to have a clearer understanding of what verbal or non-verbal communication triggers my participants and how to make them feel comfortable during our sessions.

- **What are the practice behaviors that indicate my competency in this area?** The practice behaviors that indicate the competency in this area is when I apply the knowledge of human behavior and social environment and use it to understand my clients and provide them with better service. Another example is, when I or another colleague lead a discussion on a key topic among staff or participants.
- **What curriculum content areas (social policy, practice, etc.) relate to successfully completing this competency?** The curriculum that relates to completing this competency for me would have to be, *SWK416/SWK516: Generalist Social Work Practice I With Individuals And Families*, especially when completing the Case Note Recording. *Swk417 Field Instruction & Seminar 1* helped me implement competency 6 throughout my field practicum. I had to complete 8 process recordings, all of which had one on one interactions with the participants.
- **What learning experiences helped me to accomplish this competency?** The learning experience that helped me accomplish this competency was when I first started my field practicum I was reading the participants' criminal charges and their court reports before meeting them, which led me to have a preconceived idea of who they were. Shortly after, I learned that the only way to have a clear understanding of how my client would be to meet them for myself. Engaging with my client allowed me to not just go by what I read on paper, but actually, effectively engage with them and be able to value them as an individual and build a relationship with them through our engagement.
- **What “gaps” can I identify in my learning experience? What will I do about these “gaps”?** The gaps that I can identify in my learning experience would have to be, learning to engage with my participants and constituencies professionally at all times. For me to make sure I am maintaining a professional relationship with my participants and

constituencies, I would have to continually analyze my interpersonal skills around them and change whatever behavior that I believe is not right. For example, throughout my field practicum I have observed clients and case managers playfully joking, taking pictures, and even fighting with each other. I understand this type of engagement with your client is not ethical and I would have to make sure I do not fall into the habit of engaging with my clients in that manner.

## **Integration**

- **Identify a case situation you have worked with and describe how you facilitated engagement with that client system. How did you prepare for engagement?** Recently, I helped complete an assessment on a 17-year kid that is convicted of murder. At first, I was very intimidated about engaging with this participant. I read the police report and saw how severe the charges were and automatically felt like I was out of my league to be working in a case of this magnitude. However, once I started to engage with the participant and develop a relationship with him, I started to get to know him as an individual and not as a criminal. The way I prepared for the engagement was by allowing my client to speak and share whatever information he felt he wanted to give us, while just paying close attention to what he was saying. I noticed that after our conversation I started having more empathy toward him and our relationship became much more productive. I was able to motivate him to sign up for school and to become physically active with sports. I also learned that it is not good to make an absorption about a client we have not met in person.

- **In what ways did you apply your knowledge of human behavior in the social environment and person-in-environment to assist in the engagement process.** The way I apply my knowledge of human behavior and social environment was to use different types of tools that allow me to understand my client better and develop a closer relationship with him. I had my client do a genogram, where I was able to know the dynamic of his family tree and who are the most influential people around him.

- **In what ways did you use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills?** I used empathy by placing myself in his shoes and trying to understand what my client is actually feeling. I used reflection by critically thinking about what my client was saying and learning to identify what bothered him and what interest he had. I also picked up on his body language and made sure I demonstrated the correct message whether verbal or nonverbal communications.