

Guidelines for Student Peer Consultations – SCWK 4302

In addition to field instruction, students completing their second field practicum are required to participate in peer consultation with a selected group of their student colleagues.

Peer consultation provides opportunities to learn and grow through students:

- discussing their field practicum practice with individuals, families, groups, and communities, including issues and intervention approaches;
- sharing field practicum experiences, including successes, challenges, and moments of insight;
- assuming responsibility for your own and each other's professional development;
- critically discussing and maintaining expected standards of social work practice;
- sharing research, committee, policy, and project work with each other and seeking suggestions and support from other group members;
- exchanging information and practice wisdom; and
- sharing challenges and potential solutions.

Students benefit from peer consultation as:

- their learning is reinforced;
- they are exposed to a variety of social work practice areas and agencies;
- their isolation is reduced (especially for students who are not placed in settings with other students);
- their self-care practice is enhanced and their stress is reduced (especially when they are involved with intense and complex practice situations);
- they see challenges in a new light, from different perspectives; and
- they build a solid foundation for lifelong learning through personal and professional growth.

A sense of mutual trust and respect is of key importance, since the essence of the peer consultation is the exchange among group members. It provides opportunities to share field experiences and learnings through a student perspective. Therefore, it is required that students adhere to the principle of confidentiality when discussing service recipient and field setting information.

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Peer consultation information and logistics:

- students shall be assigned to peer consultation groups by the Field Education Coordinators;
- peer consultation groups are required to meet **three times throughout the semester for 1½ hours each time**;
- it is recommended that students meet early in the practicum (week 3), around the midway point (week 6), and toward the end (week 9);
- meeting time is counted toward the required 350 hours for the field practicum;
- students are expected to connect with group members and determine a time for the initial and subsequent meetings;
- students are required to set an agenda for the meetings. As noted above, discussion items can be related to any aspect of the current field practicum, including field requirements for students (recordings, projects, presentations, client work etc.);
- group members need to negotiate how they will share leadership, organizational and recording responsibilities (rotation of roles is strongly recommended);
- students are required to circulate (via email) the meeting minutes (using the template) within the group, to their respective field instructor/agency mentor, and to their field liaison;
- students who are not able to meet in person are expected to meet virtually (using available technology, such as Skype, Facetime, conference calls, etc.); and
- meetings may be scheduled outside of the regular times in field in order to accommodate all group members.

Please note:

Peer consultation is not the space to discuss concerns related to the practicum that fall outside of service recipient/community issues and intervention approaches. Students who have issues or concerns related to the field practicum are expected to follow the process outlined in the *BSW Field Education Manual* and the *Student School BSW Field Practicum Agreement*. Students also may consult with their assigned field liaison (Field Education Coordinator).