

FIELD PRACTICUM

Activity List

National Council for Mental Wellbeing

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The development of this guide was created to support the Social Workers on the Front Line of the Opioid Epidemic Learning Collaborative and supported by funding from New York Community Trust.

This resource was created as a part of Social Workers on the Frontline of the Opioid Epidemic, a two-year initiative focused on preparing social work students across the country in addressing and treating substance use and opioid use disorders in practice. This initiative was made possible by funding from the New York Community Trust Community Trust. For questions, please contact Maura Gaswirth at MauraG@TheNationalCouncil.org.

This Field Practicum Activity list was created as part of the Social Workers on the Front Line of the Opioid Epidemic Learning Collaborative through funding from New York Community Trust to support student’s growth and create opportunities for students to enhance their knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processing and behaviors around addressing substance use challenges in the populations they serve.

The Field Practicum Activity List consists of ways students can enhance their ability to address substance use challenges in individuals, families and communities. The list is categorized by Council on Social Work Education’s (CSWE) social work competencies and includes activities that apply to differing levels of education, experience and a range of field placement settings, including child welfare agencies, shelters, schools, hospitals, treatment providers, policy and advocacy programs, etc. Students and field supervisors/instructors can select and add activities from the Field Practicum Activity List to their learning contract. This list is a place to start conversations around activities to enhance the student’s understanding and experience working with clients, groups, communities and organizations around substance use challenges.

A Suggested Guide to Creating a Learning Contract

Step 1: Student and field instructor/supervisor review the Field Practicum Activity List:

- a. Select one activity for each social work competency.
- b. Identify activities that apply to the field placement setting and student’s role.
- c. Discuss a plan for completing the activities during the field practicum and how progress will be evaluated.

This document does not replace any requirements for students from schools or field placement sites. Rather, it serves as a supplement for students who want to include focused activities as they relate to substance use prevention, treatment and recovery.

Field Practicum Activity List

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Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Activity	Competency Dimension: <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge (K) <input type="checkbox"/> Values (V) <input type="checkbox"/> Skills (S) <input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive and Affective Processes (CAP)	List additional relevant competencies, if any
During supervision, discuss ethical dilemmas as they relate to OUD/SUD treatment and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics.	K, V, S, CAP	
Review the NASW Standards for Social Work Practice with Clients with Substance Use Disorders. Discuss with a colleague at the field agency how these standards apply to their work.	K, V, S, CAP	
Review the NASW Code of Ethics Standards for the Digital Age and identify how the standards may apply, similarly or differently, to individuals with substance use disorders (SUDs).	K, V, S, CAP	
With a supervisor, discuss the field agency's policies around substance use and the culture toward behavior, appearance, communication and the use of supervision.	K	
In supervision, discuss professional boundaries and how to navigate them when coming into this work with one's own lived experience with alcohol and/or other drugs and about the strategic and appropriate use of disclosure.	K, V, S, CAP	Competency 2
Complete daily logs/process recordings for field placement activities that include self-reflections on personal values and biases and how one can maintain professionalism in practice situations related to opioid use disorder/substance use disorder (OUD/SUD).	V, S, CAP	Competency 2
Review Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) No. 52 Clinical Supervision and Professional Development of the Substance Abuse Counselor.	K, V, S, CAP	
Interview staff across disciplines (MD, CASAC, CMHC) at assigned agency or another agency within the community to gain direct practice insight in working with difficult OUD/SUD cases.	K, V, S, CAP	
View a webinar on OUD/SUD practice, such as those available from National Council for Mental Wellbeing, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Association (SAMHSA), state agency, university or NASW and discuss in supervision how different practices and policies are influencing the work.	K, V, S, CAP	Competency 5, 6, 8
Read case literature from available journals, books and websites and analyze approaches to ethical problem-solving as it relates to working with individuals and communities with substance use needs and discuss in supervision.	K, V, S, CAP	
Discuss with a supervisor how alcohol and other drugs have affected your life or those close to you by reflecting on how it affected your belief system and your values or personal ethics and how you addressed these personal feelings/experiences in your professional responsibilities and experiences.	K, V	

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Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Activity	Competency Dimension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Knowledge (K) ■ Values (V) ■ Skills (S) ■ Cognitive and Affective Processes (CAP) 	List additional relevant competencies, if any
Review NASW Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice and discuss with a colleague or supervisor the strategies the agency employs to be culturally responsive to the population(s) they serve.	K, V, S, CAP	
Research the impact of oppression, discrimination and historical trauma for Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) and how that relates to prevention, treatment and recovery of OUD/SUD in your agency/community.	K, V, S, CAP	Competency 4
Review agency data on populations served and identify cultural considerations for providing treatment/services/policy recommendations and discuss in supervision.	K, V, S, CAP	
During supervision, identify personal values and potential biases related to substance use challenges and identify ways to self-regulate to manage these biases and values while working with clients and within organizations and communities.	K, V, S, CAP	Competency 1, 6
Select a treatment program and interview a clinician about their use of culturally relevant treatments and interventions. What does that look like? How does it work? Who does it work for? Who doesn't it work for?	K, V, S, CAP	
Identify a population and a SUD and review articles/literature to understand the impact of the SUD on that population and potential evidence-based treatment options. Present the findings to a field supervisor or a colleague at the agency.	K, V, S, CAP	
Read pertinent literature and watch webinars, such as New Jim Crow, 1619, the 13th, reparations, anti-racism, etc. and in supervision discuss ways to serve individuals, families and communities in a culturally informed manner.	K, V, S, CAP	

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Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic and Environmental Justice

Activity	Competency Dimension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Knowledge (K) ■ Values (V) ■ Skills (S) ■ Cognitive and Affective Processes (CAP) 	List additional relevant competencies, if any
Read case literature from available journals, books and websites as it relates to prevention, treatment and recovery for OUD/SUD.	K, V, S, CAP	
Meet with local NASW chapter to inquire about chapter priorities and stance/ activities on social justice issues.	K, V, S, CAP	
Identify and discuss the systemic effects of discrimination, oppression and stigma on the quality and delivery of substance use services and identify and make recommendations for improvement in polices.	K, V, CAP	Competency 5
Interview local experts in the field of criminal justice to understand the systemic injustices for BIPOC who also have an OUD/SUD.	K, V, S, CAP	
Review current national, state and local laws related to OUD/SUD and highlight the differences in laws across states and populations.	K, V, S, CAP	
To identify gaps and local need, conduct a needs assessment of the local social service scene in your agencies community to gain perspective on the of extent of OUD/SUD services, funding sources and gaps.	K, V, S, CAP	Competency 5, 9
Determine the number of residential SUD treatment beds available in your community and the accepted methods of payment for treatment. With a supervisor, reflect on the findings and the impact on the community's access to care.	K, V, S, CAP	Competency 9
Research the availability, approval process and payment for medications for OUD for the population served and/or your community and discuss in supervision.	K, S, CAP	

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Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Activity	Competency Dimension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Knowledge (K) ■ Values (V) ■ Skills (S) ■ Cognitive and Affective Processes (CAP) 	List additional relevant competencies, if any
Create a mock questionnaire, survey or poll for clients/client system/ organization/ community to capture a gap in service or to identify a need as it relates to OUD/ SUD prevention, treatment and recovery. Create an informed consent form and obtain consent from participants.	K, S, CAP	
Participate in assessment and evaluation of clients' progress, satisfaction of services and familiarize self with agency evaluation protocols and standards	K, V, S, CAP	
Research the efficacy of the evidence-based practices the agency is utilizing to serve those with OUD/SUD and discuss during supervision.	K, S, CAP	
Address evidence-based practice questions and concerns during supervision.	K, S, CAP	

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Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Activity	Competency Dimension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Knowledge (K) ■ Values (V) ■ Skills (S) ■ Cognitive and Affective Processes (CAP) 	List additional relevant competencies, if any
Read employee handbook/manual and understand organizational policies to administer and improve OUD/SUD services to individuals, families and groups	K, S,	Competency 2
Evaluate current policies that address substance use disorders at the agency, local, state and federal levels that address human rights and/or environmental justice and discuss in supervision.	K, V, S, CAP	
Evaluate and discuss policies or policy changes needed at the agency, local, state or federal level that would help address the OUD/SUD needs of the clients/population or community served and discuss in supervision.	K, V, S, CAP	
Create a plan for changes to social policy that could improve the service delivery for clients with OUD/SUD needs.	K, V, S, CAP	
Participate in a professional policy activity that enhances understanding of target population and community.	K, V, S, CAP	
Evaluate the process to get policy changes on the local, state and federal levels and discuss with supervisor. Take into consideration temporary policies/guidelines due to COVID-19, including multiple perspectives within the policy (if applicable).	K, S, CAP	Competency 9
Review a social justice policy and determine how it affects individuals and families impacted by OUD/SUD in the population served at the field agency. Discuss the findings and implications in supervision.	K, V, S, CAP	Competency 9
Review an economic policy and determine how it affects individuals and families impacted by OUD/SUD in the population served at the field agency. Discuss the findings and implications in supervision.	K, V, S, CAP	

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Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

Activity	Competency Dimension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Knowledge (K) ■ Values (V) ■ Skills (S) ■ Cognitive and Affective Processes (CAP) 	List additional relevant competencies, if any
Attend a training on motivational interviewing (e.g., a webinar, online training or shadow a staff member at your agency).	K, V, S, CAP	
Employ motivational interviewing techniques, including empathy, trust, authenticity and supportive listening, with at least three clients, colleagues or constituents.	K, V, S, CAP	
Employ motivational interviewing techniques in an OUD/SUD treatment group. If not available at your organization, practice motivational interviewing techniques during supervision as if you were running an OUD/SUD treatment group.	K, V, S, CAP	
Evaluate a situation of conflict within a family or OUD/SUD group and how you were able to facilitate the family/group using positive problem-solving/conflict-resolution techniques through process recordings and/or during supervision.	K, V, S, CAP	Competency 7
Evaluate uses of various human behavior theoretical frameworks to use to engage clients with OUD/SUD needs. In supervision, discuss how the framework applies to your work.	K, V, S, CAP	
Apply one of the following when engaging with individuals or families with OUD/SUD: stage of life, anti-oppressive practice, social environment or person-in-environment.	S, CAP	
Reflect on ways to utilize and improve on intrapersonal skills to assist in service delivery and engagement across diverse situations and with diverse populations and discuss in supervision.	K, S, CAP	
Evaluate interpersonal dynamics and contextual factors that both strengthen and potentially threaten working with individuals and families impacted by OUD/SUD. Reflect on learnings in supervision.	K, S, CAP	

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Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

Activity	Competency Dimension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Knowledge (K) ■ Values (V) ■ Skills (S) ■ Cognitive and Affective Processes (CAP) 	List additional relevant competencies, if any
In supervision, identify and discuss SUD assessments and screening tools used at the field agency or types of SUD assessments and screening tools available to organizations.	K, S, CAP	
Identify, understand and implement appropriate substance use screening and assessment tools in work with clients.	K, S, CAP	
Research to see if the SUD assessments/tools used by the field agency are evidence-based and what other evidence-based SUD assessments and screening tools could be used. Discuss findings in supervision.	K, CAP	
Attend an orientation/training on the SUD assessments and tools used at the field agency.	K, S, CAP	
Assess recovery supports and resources within the field agency community for those with OUD/SUD and discuss the implications on access to care in supervision.	K, S, CAP	
Review files from other clinicians to examine previously completed SUD assessments and tools.	K, S, CAP	
Shadow clinicians as they perform SUD assessments at the field agency.	K, S, CAP	Competency 6, 8
Independently perform SUD assessments with clients review and reflect on the process and results in supervision.	S, CAP	
Research the link between substance use and risk for suicide. Discuss with supervisor suicide risk assessment tools the agency uses to assess for suicide.	K, CAP	
Engage in effective and ongoing analysis of assessment data that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reflects individual, families, groups, organizations and communities' strengths and wishes. ■ Highlights interventions utilized. ■ Addresses impact of trauma, adverse health conditions and mental health challenges. ■ Incorporates principles of self-determination. Review assessments completed on at least three clients and discuss in supervision. 	K, S, CAP	Competency 1, 2, 3, 6, 8

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Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

Activity	Competency Dimension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Knowledge (K) ■ Values (V) ■ Skills (S) ■ Cognitive and Affective Processes (CAP) 	List additional relevant competencies, if any
Identify what approaches (abstinence-based, harm reduction, trauma-informed, trauma-specific, cognitive behavioral therapy, 12-step facilitation, etc.) the field placement uses to address SUD problems (prevention, assessment and/or intervention) and discuss the benefits and drawbacks of these approaches in supervision.	K, CAP, V, S	Competency 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Under supervision, independently work with a client or client group to develop a relapse prevention plan and teach them the skills necessary to prevent relapse.	K, S	
Identify interventions used at the agency to address substance use. Research if these interventions are evidence-based and if not, identify alternative evidence-based interventions and discuss in supervision.	K, CAP	
Shadow clinicians providing evidence-based SUD interventions and discuss key takeaways in supervision.	K, S, CAP	
Implement evidence-based SUD interventions with clients or client groups and discuss in supervision.	S, CAP, K	Competency 4
Review other clinicians' treatment plans related to SUD.	CAP, K, S	
<p>With a client, develop a treatment plan related to SUD and review in supervision. The treatment plan should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be individualized ■ Be strength focused ■ Highlight other supports ■ Discuss concurrent treatment planning 	S, CAP	Competency 6, 7
Use a case vignette of a client with SUD/ODD to develop a treatment plan. Review the treatment plan during supervision.	S, CAP	
Attend a Day on the Hill or legislative forum to advocate for legislation related to substance use treatment services (medication-assisted treatment (MAT), harm reduction, access to health care, etc.).	K, S, CAP	

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Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

Activity	Competency Dimension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Knowledge (K) ■ Values (V) ■ Skills (S) ■ Cognitive and Affective Processes (CAP) 	List additional relevant competencies, if any
Develop self-evaluation tool to measure progress on specific practice skills related to substance use (motivational interviewing, assessment, group facilitation, coalition building, etc.) and have supervisor use the tool to measure progress over time.	S	
Review client file(s) from other clinicians to determine progress toward agreed-upon goals. Discuss with field supervisor ways to ensure goals are measurable and to maximize clinical support and services for goal attainment.	K, CAP	Competency 7, 8
Shadow clinicians during termination activities and discuss in supervision.	K, CAP	Competency 8
Independently apply evaluating and ending phase skills during termination activities and prepare client for final sessions/meetings. Discuss during supervisory meetings.	K, S, CAP	Competency 8
Identify the approaches/methods the field placement uses to evaluate services. Discuss in supervision their benefits and drawbacks.	K	
Review agency reports and database(s) to identify the measures used for evaluation. Assess if these measures meet “Criteria for Selection of High-performing Indicators” using the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) checklist and, if not, research what other measures could be used and discuss in supervision.	K, CAP	Competency 4
Analyze agency outcome or client satisfaction data to identify gaps or trends and recommend changes to improve service delivery.	S	
Under supervision, independently develop and implement evaluation questions for a client, group, program or community assessment as it relates to OUD/SUD. Interpret data gathered during supervision.	S, CAP	Competency 4
Select a case to complete an assessment, intervention plan and evaluation plan obtaining informed consent from the client, as necessary. Develop recommendations from a micro-, mezzo- and macro-perspective and discuss during supervision.	K, S, CAP	

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