

WEEKLY JOURNAL EXAMPLE

Week 3 January 24 - January 27, 2011

Carol Bridges
Evergreen Social Services
Ada, Oklahoma

January 24, 2011

This morning I spent some time preparing for tomorrow's STEP classes. The morning seemed to be slow, so I read some Social Work journals and more in the policy manual. I talked to several of the workers to find out more about what they do. I found out that permanency planning involves a lot of different things. I met with my field instructor and we talked more about what I would be doing in my internship this week. I will be shadowing different workers this week to just get a feel for the work in this agency that serves a lot of different types of clients.

Hours: 8 hours

January 25, 2011

This morning I sat in on a parenting class. I also watched a video about working in the agency and read some clients' files. Some of the information I read really disturbed me, but I know that bad things happen to people. My field instructor talked to me about my emotions and that helped me a lot.

Hours: 8 hours

January 26, 2011

I attended the meeting of the Community Services Council as a guest of my field instructor. The Council members discussed some possible changes in the way that the Council functions, and I volunteered to be on one of the committees (I can't believe I did that!). I shadowed a worker making a home visit to follow-up on some plans that were made last week. I read the case and some agency policy before I went on the visit. I was just an observer, so I did not say anything, but the worker and I discussed the visit in the car on the way back to the office. I have learned a lot today.

I had to leave at 4:00 today because of illness - it was nothing serious.

Hours: 7 hours

January 27, 2011

I worked on reading cases for most of the day today. I found the cases interesting and I learned a lot about the forms that the agency uses for various programs and services. I also read some more of the agency policy manual – there is a lot to know!

Hours: 8 hours

Total Hours for the Week: 31 Hours

Values and Ethical Practice

This week an issue of self-determination came up when a client wanted to discontinue with the program he was involved in, while some staff, including myself, thought this was not a good decision because of his lack of progress. There was nothing to prevent the client from leaving the program, so we decided to shift our focus on keeping the door open to future services, as well as preparing him to face the challenges that were before him. Reluctantly, self-determination was what guided us, although it was difficult knowing that this client might “fail”. When I thought more about my own reluctance to apply a basic social work value to practice, I realized how hard it is to “do the right thing” as a professional.

Critical Thinking and Professional Knowledge

This week I reviewed two journal articles on homelessness because the agency serves a lot of persons who are homeless – they work closely with the homeless shelter, and I don’t really know much about homelessness. I found in my research that single persons receive low priority for housing programs, which results in increased homelessness for this group, therefore, shelters become overcrowded. The research I did helped me have a better attitude and reshaped my thinking about the homeless men that are served by the agency. Honestly, I have always thought of these men as mostly hopeless alcoholics who “choose” to live this lifestyle. I know now that the subject is much more complicated than that, and I have a much better understanding of the dynamics that produce homelessness.

Reactions to Internship Experiences and Activities

This week I spent a lot of time thinking about, discussing, and working with one or two clients. I feel like I have already learned so much, but I know I have a lot more to learn about being a professional and working with other professionals. An outstanding experience this week comes from attending the Community Services Council Meeting. I couldn’t believe how well everyone

worked together even though they are from different agencies and have different responsibilities. I thought that people would probably disagree a lot. I thought I would be bored at this meeting, but it was really interesting. It made me want to be a professional even more when I saw the way people listened to what the social worker from my agency had to say. It was good to see professional people working together. Guess maybe I saw some of what we talked about in Practice II when we studied teamwork. My decision to volunteer for a committee was outstanding in that I usually don't do things like that - I am shy! I am also learning that people have really big problems that would be hard for anyone to solve on their own. I guess I am feeling less judgmental and am seeing the importance of empathy. I felt discouraged last week because I could not do more – but I am learning the ropes around the agency and feel like I am starting to be accepted.

Responses to Faculty Field Liaison

Last week you asked me to clarify what days the agency was going to closed after I mentioned in my journal that the board recently made a change in official holidays. The change was the addition of Presidents Day. This holiday should not create any problem for me because I have already made arrangements to go to the agency on a Friday when I am not in my Integrative Seminar class. Also, I was able to talk with my field instructor about some of my feelings about not belonging—as you suggested. She mentioned also having some of the very same feelings when she was a student in her internship. We discussed some ways for me to deal with this issue, and I am feeling better about being a part of the agency as a student (I know I am not an employee, but in the agency as a learner!).

Hours to Date: 95 hours