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Professional Mental Health Counseling and Professional
Mental Health Counseling—Specialization in Addictions
Program
Practicum Manual

**Professional Mental Health Counseling and Professional Mental Health
Counseling—Specialization in Addiction Program
Practicum Manual**

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The practicum program is designed to provide a beginning clinical counseling experience for Lewis & Clark graduate students. Practicum students have been trained in basic counseling skills, including the consistent use of micro-skills as well as a basic understanding of client issues. Students have also taken classes in: Introduction to Professional Counseling, Law and Ethics, Counseling Theories, Family Theories, Diagnosis, Group Counseling, Diverse Populations, and two required Treatment Planning courses. The practicum provides for the development of counseling skills under supervision. Successful completion of the practicum requires adequate demonstration of the basic counseling competencies and skills, and completion of required hours. Students must complete a one semester supervised practicum experience that totals a minimum of 100 clock hours. The student's practicum includes all of the following:

1. Students complete supervised counseling practicum experiences that total a minimum of 100 clock hours over two full academic terms of 15 weeks each;
2. Practicum students complete at least 40 clock hours of direct service with actual clients that contributes to the development of counseling skills;
3. Practicum students receive one hour per week of live, individual and/or triadic supervision throughout the practicum by a site supervisor. Weekly supervision is documented using the CARE practicum supervision note, signed by the practicum supervisor, scanned and uploaded to the Moodle page of the practicum instruction/group supervision section (the Monday class) to which the student is enrolled.
4. Practicum students attend their practicum instruction/group supervision class (the Monday class) for 3 hours every other week. Instructors for this course are core faculty members.
5. The practicum is the initial clinical experiential component of the degree program. It provides the opportunity to develop the therapeutic relationship and basic counseling competencies under intensive live and triadic supervision from site supervisors and instruction/group supervision by core counseling faculty. Placement at the Lewis and Clark Community Counseling Center allows students to participate in live supervision in real time for the best possible supervision experience. Students also may choose to do a secondary practicum at a community site for extra hours and/or experience.

During the two semesters of practicum, students spend at least 100 hours performing activities associated with the practicum, with 40 hours consisting of direct service with clients. The amount of required paperwork, training and supervision, and the cancellation or no-show rate of clients are characteristics that impact the number of hours available. Student characteristics influencing the number of hours include: ability to work independently, engage clients in a collaborative working alliance, time needed to complete case notes and other paperwork, and the amount of time spent in consultation with supervisors.

PRACTICUM REQUIREMENTS

DIRECT SERVICE HOURS

The following requirements were established by PMHC and PMHC-A faculty in accordance with standards set forth by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. A total time commitment of at least 100 hours is needed to complete the practicum. These hours are divided into the following activities, direct service, supervision, and “other” activities:

Direct Service: Face-to-face interaction with clients either individually, in groups (including psycho-educational groups or human development skills training), in consultation, or in other activities involving working with clients. **Students must lead or co-lead a counseling or psychoeducational group during practicum or internship.**

Clinic Supervision: Practicum students receive at least one hour per week of live, individual and/or triadic supervision with clinic supervisors.

Instruction/Group Supervision: Practicum students attend their practicum instruction/group supervision class (the Monday class) for 3 hours every other week. Instructors for this course are core faculty members.

Other Hours: Activities such as observation, training, completing paperwork, assigned homework, case conceptualization, outside reading, and other counseling or psychology related education.

Students may begin their practicum after a faculty advisor has signed off on their completion of all prerequisite courses, the Professional Development Portfolio, and a criminal background check. The practicum placement will start at the beginning of the semester designated for your cohort and will consist of two semesters of practicum at the Lewis and Clark Community Counseling Center.

Given the clinical nature of the class, students are expected to demonstrate professionalism in supporting classmates, accepting and giving constructive feedback, and showing openness to supervision. Students missing more than one class session per semester will be assigned appropriate make-up work by the campus practicum supervisor. Additionally, more than two unexcused absences may require a faculty review.

Paperwork

Practicum Agreement: Students are required to read and understand the practicum agreement between the program and the LC Community Counseling Center. This document outlines the objectives, duties, and responsibilities of the practicum placement and provides information essential for evaluation and supervision.

Students are expected to adhere to the provisions of the practicum agreement including:

- specified duties

- duration of contract
- number of practicum hours per week
- location

If significant changes to the provisions of the agreement occur, an amended agreement must be completed and filed with the department.

Proof of Insurance: Students are required to provide proof that they personally have professional liability insurance by providing the department a photocopy of the certificate page of the policy.

- Becoming a student member of the American Counseling Association enables one to obtain malpractice insurance at no cost.
- Students failing to provide proof of insurance will not be allowed to see clients at their practicum site.

Criminal Background Checks: All students will have completed a national criminal background check during their first year of graduate study. Also, many sites require an additional background check prior to the start of the practicum placement.

Documentation of Practicum Hours: Students are required to document the time spent in activities related to the practicum. Both Daily/Weekly Record Forms and the Semester Summary Report of Practicum Hours must be turned in by the end of the semester.

Evaluation of the Practicum Experience: Practicum counselor performance is continuously monitored and evaluated by both the site supervisor and faculty practicum supervisor. Formal written evaluation of each student's performance is required at the mid-way point and at the end of the placement.

Students are evaluated according to competency guidelines and outcome assessments for the development of clinical skills and professional counselor qualities. These competencies reflect the mission and training philosophy of the Lewis & Clark Community Counseling Program and are aligned with competencies established by the Council for Accreditation in Counseling and Related Educational Programs for Community Counseling Programs.

In this evaluation process, it is important to keep in mind that the Lewis & Clark Professional Mental Health Counseling Program and the Professional Mental Health Counseling—Specialization in Addictions Program frame all therapeutic work as connected to the broader project of recognizing and addressing issues of social justice. This means that factors such as the following are acknowledged as essential in considering how the forces of power and oppression impact the well-being of each individual and the relationships in their lives: physical ability, culture, race/ethnicity, social and political forces, socioeconomic status, exile/migration, religious and spiritual beliefs, language, education, gender, sexual orientation and age.

This evaluation form can be found with the other clinical forms on the PMHC and PMHC-A website under “Handbooks and Forms.” Students are advised to consider the guidelines throughout their practicum and to generate an independently scored evaluation for the mid-way and final meeting with their site supervisor. The evaluations are used to generate a dialogue between student and supervisor about the student’s training and professional growth. If students are not making adequate progress in their practicum work, the site supervisor will first discuss this with the student and if needed, notify the campus supervisor to devise a plan for student support.

All hours reports and evaluations should be turned in to the practicum counselor's campus supervisor or, if not available, to the CPSY office.

Videotapes and Live Supervision

Students will be provided the opportunity for both videotaping and live supervision. It is required that at least one taped recording and transcript of the student working with a client be made during the practicum.

PRACTICUM AGREEMENT

A practicum placement and its fulfillment involves not only the interests of the practicum counselor, but also the interests of the host agency/school, the site supervisor, clients of the agency/school, and the relationship of mutual support and accountability between the program and the LC Community Counseling Center. Important aspects of these relationships are outlined below.

Secondary Practicum Site Settings

Approved secondary sites accept graduate student counselors from Lewis & Clark and offer sufficient structure and stability to allow practicum counselors to complete their practicum requirements at the site. This includes providing appropriate training and supervision to ensure client welfare and enhance student learning.

Sites will provide:

- Access to a client caseload appropriate for a beginning level student counselor, and be able to provide up to 40 direct client contact hours.
- A qualified supervisor on site during all times when a practicum counselor is meeting with clients. If the primary supervisor is not available, a qualified back-up supervisor must be available at the location where the practicum counselor is meeting with the client.

- Orientation to the site with written documentation and pre-service training to ensure student understanding of agency policies and procedures including:
 - Agency administrative and supervisory organization
 - Client assignment and scheduling
 - Clerical support available
 - Paperwork and documentation expectations
 - Protocols for reporting abuse
 - Crisis response process for client(s) considered to be a danger to self or others (including suicide assessment supervisory support)
 - Confidentiality procedures/release of information/consent for treatment
 - Acquainting practicum counselors with culture and norms of setting.

- Support from the site administration to foster a learning environment. This includes support for site supervisors to provide adequate time for appropriate supervision as outlined in the section on supervision expectations. Although this requires a minimum of one hour per week of individual supervision, it is expected that supervisors may need additional time to track client caseload and welfare.

- Opportunities for the practicum counselor to develop professional relationships with peers, experienced counselors, supervisors, and related agency personnel through training, case staffings, and other agency activities.

- Ability to videotape client sessions for review or live observation.

- An adequate workspace in which practicum counselors can schedule time to see clients.

- In cases where changes to the agreement need to be made, a request to the Lewis & Clark faculty supervisor to make any changes in the agreement including work location, supervisor, practicum counselor hours or expectations. Any changes must be approved by Lewis & Clark prior to the change and will be appropriately documented.

Site Supervision

An important aspect of the practicum experience is supervision by clinic supervisors and instruction/group supervision by Lewis & Clark core faculty. Ethical principles mandate that the primary responsibility of all supervisors is to ensure the welfare of clients. This means that client welfare takes precedence over the needs of student counselors.

Consistent with supervision expectations outlined by licensing agencies, site supervisors are responsible for direct supervision to ensure client care. Faculty supervisors will typically not have the access to client data needed to manage client care directly. Along with the primary responsibility of ensuring the welfare of clients, the expectations of site supervisors are outlined below.

Site Supervisor Qualifications for Supervisors at the LC Community Counseling Center and at secondary practicum sites:

- A master's degree in counseling, social work, or a related field
- Licensure in chosen discipline
- A minimum of two years of post-degree counseling experience
- Training and experience in supervising students is strongly preferred. However, in lieu of previous training and experience, consideration will be given for the following:
 - Enrolling in the Lewis & Clark continuing education course in supervision during the first semester the student is on site
 - Supervision of supervision: the site supervisor will receive regular supervision of their supervision of the practicum counselor
- A familiarity with, and adherence to, the ethical code of the American Counseling Association
- Familiarity and compliance with the Lewis & Clark Community Counseling Practicum policies as outlined in this Agreement
- Familiarity and compliance with the practicum practices and policies as outlined in the Lewis & Clark Practicum Manual

Site Supervisors will provide:

- Individual supervision for a minimum of one hour per week for site-based (secondary) practicum students and an average of one hour a week of live/individual/triadic supervision at the LC Community Counseling Center. Group supervision time at community-based sites cannot replace individual supervision but may be used for additional supervisory time.
- Supervision appropriate for the developmental level of the practicum counselor including:
 - Consultation with the faculty supervisor to develop individual learning goals
 - Client screening and assignment according to student competency level and individual learning goals
 - Monitoring client caseload for risk and reassigning clients if necessary
 - Helping the student learn to manage caseloads
 - Supervision and training in ethics and law as issues arise with clients
 - Regular review of work samples (video and/or audio tape), case notes, and treatment plans

- Supervisory experiences to assist the student in applying basic counseling skills and developing new skills
 - Assistance in developing ability to apply theory to practice including case conceptualization and treatment planning
 - Ongoing evaluation and feedback to practicum counselors to facilitate professional growth of the practicum counselor
 - Communication with faculty supervisor as needed
- Formal written evaluation of the development of basic counseling competencies. This includes:
 - Completing the evaluation forms at the mid-way point and the end of the term
 - Reviewing evaluations with the practicum counselor
 - Reviewing and signing off on the student’s documentation of practicum hours

PMHC and PMHC-A Responsibilities

The program’s primary responsibility is to ensure appropriate training of students through monitoring quality of training experiences.

The PMHC and PMHC-A Program will provide:

- Evaluation and approval of practicum supervisors
- Approval of appropriate placements of students practicum sections
- Appropriate academic supervision
- Tracking of paperwork for the practicum placement
- Cooperation and consultation with supervisors, students, and the LC clinic director regarding student progress, possible conflicts, or impairment (including decisions regarding modification of duties or the termination of the practicum)
- Intervention consistent with ethical guidelines of the profession in cases where the practicum supervisor believes that there is an ethical dilemma around client care or agency/student relationships, and the matter has not been successfully resolved in a less formal manner.

Practicum Student Responsibilities

The primary purpose of the practicum is for students to gain supervised practice and clinical experience to help develop and integrate the skills necessary to become professional counselors. Important aspects of the student’s role and responsibilities are highlighted below:

Welfare of Clients: The basic assumption underlying all agreements between students and host agencies/schools is that the primary responsibility of all involved is to ensure the welfare of clients. Client welfare always comes before practicum counselor needs.

Counselors in Training: The student's primary role as a practicum counselor intern is as a "counselor in training" and therefore as a member of the staff at the agency. However, it is important to remember that student counselors are temporary and often novice members of that staff.

Being a Supervisee: Another important aspect of being a practicum counselor is the role of supervisee – a person who is open and receptive to the comments and critiques of his/her work by the on-site supervisor and the faculty practicum supervisor.

- The role of counselor in training requires the student to demonstrate a willingness to be supervised and to receive the supervision provided by both the on-site supervisor and the faculty practicum supervisor. This includes:
 - Developing an understanding of the scope and purpose of supervision
 - Engaging in a working alliance with on-site and college supervisors
 - Attending all supervision sessions on-site and at the college
 - Accurately communicating content and scope of counseling sessions in supervision
 - Maintaining an openness to feedback in supervision, and following through on directives of supervisors
 - Willingness to videotape interactions with clients and receive feedback on taped interactions
 - Seeking supervision in a timely manner about individuals who are at risk (full disclosure to supervisors of risks to client welfare)
 - Being aware of your hours and to proactively initiate activities to gain client contact hours (i.e., a secondary site) should the clinic client census be low and/or clients assigned to you do not return regularly

Training: Practicum counselors are expected to participate in ongoing development, meetings, and administrative duties at the clinic and at the site (if they have a secondary site).

Records: Practicum counselors maintain records in accordance with clinic/agency/school norms. If the setting does not require the keeping of records, students are still obligated to do so in keeping with the codes of ethics of the American Counseling Association.

- The requirements for maintaining records are as follows:
 - At a minimum, a record of the name, date, and type of activity; a brief description of the activity; and note of any unusual occurrences must be kept. This holds true for both individual and group activities.

- Use of the forms supplied with this manual to keep track of practicum hours and activities while on site. Ultimately, copies of these records will be turned in to the department and kept on file.
- It is important to keep copies of your practicum hours and have them readily available! Accurate documentation of practicum hours may be needed when applying for licensure.

Work Samples: At least once per term, students are expected to present a case presentation of their work with a client to their faculty practicum supervisor.

- The presentation is often very stressful. Please remember that the expectation is not that practicum counselors are able to present a “perfect” counseling session. Rather, reviewing the client provides an opportunity for the faculty practicum supervisor to assess skills directly and to give specific feedback to further professional development. Additionally, students in the practicum class learn by viewing and giving constructive feedback about each other’s work samples.
- The faculty practicum supervisor may require additional videotaped sessions if more work samples are needed in order to adequately evaluate skills.

Additional Responsibilities: Expectations of student counselors also include the following:

- Adopting an attitude of attending to client welfare as a counselor’s primary responsibility
- Adhering to the ethical standards of the American Counseling Association
- Adhering to the legal mandates of the state of Oregon or Washington
- Consistent and punctual attendance at all work and training activities on site
- Following agency policies
- Appropriate client termination or transfer
- Maintaining appropriate documentation as outlined by the site and the college confidentiality guidelines
- Maintaining personal liability insurance (\$1 million per occurrence, \$3 million aggregate)
- Following detailed expectations as outlined in this manual
- Completion of ***all*** documentation at end of practicum

Problems/Conflicts

If problems arise at the practicum site, the faculty instructor and the site supervisor will work with the student to develop a strategy to solve them. In the event of a conflict between the student and the site supervisor, deference will be given to the supervisor's knowledge and experience. Final decisions concerning problem/conflict resolution are the responsibility of the faculty practicum supervisor.

Removal from a Practicum Placement: In some cases, students are asked to leave their placement early.

- Students removed from a placement will be required to take some time out from seeing clients and engage in reflective activities as determined by the faculty practicum supervisor and the Clinical Director. These activities may include:
 - Therapy
 - Medical care
 - Volunteer work
 - Other personal growth experiences

Students removed from a placement may not seek another placement until instructed to do so by the faculty practicum supervisor and the CLINICAL WORK GROUP.

LEGAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES

Students are expected to practice within the Codes of Ethics of the American Counseling Association and follow the laws affecting their practicum placement. Students must know and understand the ethical codes and be aware of the laws affecting their practice before beginning to see clients.

As counselors in training, practicum counselors must tell clients that they are students under supervision and provide the client with the contact information for the supervisor.

Relevant Issues For Practicum Counselors

Competence: The ACA guidelines for an ethical practice mandate that counselors practice within their areas of competence. Competence is demonstrated by obtaining education and supervised practice. Students must complete all of the academic prerequisites for the practicum, including all courses in diagnosis and treatment, before beginning their practicum.

Informed Consent: Informed consent must be given by clients. An informed consent form must be signed either before seeing clients or during the first session.

Limits of Confidentiality: During the first session with a client, practicum counselors must discuss limits of confidentiality. These include:

- Reporting child abuse or neglect, elder abuse, or dependent adult abuse
- Reporting clients' intent to do harm to themselves or others
- Releasing records in a legal proceeding in response to a judge's order
- Testifying in a court case where a client's mental state is a condition of the case
- Notifying parents (as soon as it is therapeutically feasible) of treatment rendered to a child over 14 years of age who has legally consented to treatment without parental consent
- Discussion of the client with the on-site supervisor and/or the faculty practicum supervisor during individual and group supervision

Dual Relationships: Dual role relationships are to be avoided as it is inappropriate to engage in relationships other than therapeutic ones with your clients. This means:

- Practicum counselors are not permitted to socialize in any manner with a client
- Practicum counselors are not permitted to use their personal vehicles to transport clients

Disclosure of HIV Status: Oregon and Washington laws prohibit disclosure of an individual's HIV status without written permission. This includes disclosing a client's status to the supervisor(s).

Consulting with Colleagues and Obtaining Supervision

Students are expected to understand and follow ethical guidelines, and to seek supervision when there is confusion or an ethical dilemma to be resolved. Ethical decision-making involves consultation and using the advice pooled from numerous sources. If an ethical concern related to the practicum arises, the student should discuss it with the site supervisor. Additional support or guidance can be gained by raising the issue in the practicum class. Remember that regardless of the setting, collaboration is an important part of the process.

The student must inform both the on-site supervisor and the faculty instructor in the event that an ethical error is made so that steps can be taken to minimize harm to clients. Failure to follow ethical guidelines, disclose ethical errors, and/or seek appropriate supervision may result in dismissal from the practicum and/or degree program.

SELF-CARE

Practicum can be a stressful time. Sometimes students find themselves in emotional turmoil resulting from listening to the concerns of so many people. It is important to **make** time and **take** time for self-care.

Concerns About Self: Practicum counselors concerned about their level of stress and/or emotional well-being should consider:

- Being more attentive to personal needs
- Addressing concerns with their site supervisor and/or the faculty practicum supervisor
- Seeking out therapy to help resolve issues brought up by practicum experiences
- Limiting or suspending the practicum if the distress continues

Concerns About Peers: Practicum counselors concerned about the level of stress and/or emotional well-being of another practicum student should:

- Approach the student directly and express their concern
- Encourage the student to follow the steps for self-care outlined above, including discussing problems with the faculty practicum supervisor
- In the case of continuing concern about a peer's welfare, if it seems that the faculty practicum supervisor is not aware of the problem, discussing your concerns with the faculty practicum supervisor

SECURING A SECONDARY PRACTICUM PLACEMENT

All students will enroll in Practicum I and Practicum II at the Lewis and Clark Community Counseling Center. However, they also have the option to secure a secondary, site-based practicum in the community. Although advisors and other faculty and staff members at Lewis & Clark can provide guidance regarding secondary practicum selection, students are ultimately responsible for contacting sites and securing practicum placements.

NECESSARY FORMS FOR PRACTICUM

Under no circumstances will anyone who does not have all of their paperwork on file be allowed to see clients or attend the practicum class; and any student who has a grade of Incomplete in a class which is a prerequisite for practicum will not be able to start the placement.

Many forms are required to be submitted as students prepare for and complete their practicum experience. These forms can be divided into three categories: forms related to the process of securing the practicum, forms related to registering for the practicum, and forms related to the documentation and evaluation of the practicum experience. These forms are described below. This list of forms can be used as an itemized checklist to ensure that all proper paperwork has been completed and submitted in a timely manner.

Forms Related to Securing the Practicum

As stated above, all of the forms and information regarding the placement at a practicum site must be submitted **prior** to beginning the practicum.

Practicum Agreement and Contract: This contract outlines the objectives, duties, and responsibilities of the placement as well as the specific dates of the practicum.

Professional Liability Insurance Confirmation: A photocopy or scan of the Professional Liability Insurance must be submitted by 30 days prior to the start of the placement.

Practicum Registration Approval

Registration for the Practicum class (and therefore practicum placement) is contingent upon successful completion of all course prerequisites, portfolio requirements, and Practical Skills for Counselors (MHC 509) and Ethical and Legal Issues in Professional Counseling (MHC 532). A copy of the Clinical Pre-Approval Form, signed by your advisor, must be on file in the CPSY office prior to registering for the practicum class.

The Internship/Practicum Administrator will initiate the process of practicum class assignment by distributing the Class Preference form to all upcoming practicum counselors. The Clinical Director, in consultation with practicum class instructors, will determine assignments of clinic section and instruction/group supervision section (Monday class).

Evaluation of the Practicum

The following forms and information are necessary to document and evaluate practicum experiences and are to be submitted at various points during and after the practicum. The use of these forms will be explained in more detail by the faculty practicum supervisor; all forms are available on the CPSY website.

Record of Hours: Direct, supervision, and other. To be completed weekly by the practicum counselor.

Evaluation Forms: For the site supervisor to complete mid-way through and at the end of each semester.

Semester Summary Report of Practicum Hours: To be completed at the end of the semester, summarizing hours for the semester.