

**Internship: Mental Health Counseling
COUN 6540**



Textbook:

None. Readings are assigned on the D2L website.

Purpose of the Internship:

The purpose of internship is to provide you an opportunity to enhance your counseling skills and perform a broad range of tasks and activities characteristic of professional mental health counselors. The following information should assist you in understanding and planning your internship experience.

The internship is designed to be:

- a focused experience within a mental health setting designed to increase your professional competence. (Length: A minimum of two consecutive semesters. Credits: A minimum of 6 semester hours – 3 credits per semester. Complete at least 600 clock hours in the agency setting);
- an experience to enhance your development of technical skills, critical judgment, attitudes, responsibility, independence, communication skills, and professional relationships with others;
- a cooperative venture among the intern, site supervisor, and the university faculty supervisor; and
- a quality learning and training experience and not merely a service function to the agency. While it is inevitable and desirable that you provide services on behalf of the agency, it is imperative that the major focus of your internship be one of appropriate supervised training and educational experiences.

Course Objectives:

A. Knowledge of the agency's organization and operation:

You will need to develop a broad understanding of the organizational framework of the agency. Because it is important for a professional counselor to be well integrated into the entire agency system, you will need to increase your understanding of the agency's organizational structure. Knowledge of policies and personnel practices combined with the role and function of staff personnel must be understood. The kinds of experiences that will enable you to meet this objective include:

- attending staff meetings both formally and informally;
- studying the agency's policy and procedures manual; and

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- becoming knowledgeable of the various agency committees that operate on a formal and informal basis.

B. Familiarization with the role and function of the professional counselor:

It is important that you become aware of the diverse activities in which professional counselors are involved inside and outside of the agency to aid in the development of a counselor identity as evidenced by collegial relationships, professional affiliations, and collaborative community relationships. In a similar vein, it is important that you are committed to the scholar-practitioner role and to ongoing professional development including technological competence. The kinds of experiences that will enable you to meet this objective include:

- becoming aware of the office and clerical procedures involved with counseling services;
- discussing with professional counselors their unique roles and functions in specific agency settings;
- discussing the organization and administration of services provided by the agency with the appropriate directors or supervisors;
- observing professional counselors providing direct or non-direct services in as wide a variety of different situations as possible;
- visiting with or talking to professionals employed by other agencies to determine how they provide services/learn about what types of services they provide;
- attending agency-sponsored continuing education events and/or workshops with professional counselors and members of other mental health professions (e.g., social workers, psychologists) to develop broad-based collegial relationships; and
- attending local, state, regional and/or national professional meetings (e.g., Tennessee Licensed Professional Counselors Association) that attract large numbers of counseling professionals to keep abreast of cutting-edge information pertaining to the roles and functions of professional counselors.

C. Effective utilization of and advocacy for community resources:

While you are becoming aware of services provided by professional counselors who work at your agency, it is also important that you develop an awareness of the variety of services offered to clients by other professionals outside of the agency and advocate for mental health resources in your community. The kinds of experiences that will enable you to meet this objective include:

- working cooperatively with community agencies and facilities;
- becoming familiar with state and federal services and programs (e.g., vocational programs, employment services, regional programs for mental health, alcohol and drug programs; and
- engaging in advocacy efforts with representatives of community agencies and/or client/consumer groups or advocating on their behalf.

D. Development of communication skills and the ability to engage in teamwork efforts:

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You will be expected to communicate and participate as a member of a team of professional specialists representing a wide variety of skills, training philosophies, and modes of operation. Experiences that will enable you to meet this objective include:

- participating in formal case conferences as a member of a multi-disciplinary team, if available;
- developing skills in communicating and consulting with medical and/or other mental health professionals;
- participating in in-service training programs for staff which focus on mental health-related issues which typically occur at different stages of lifespan development;

E. The development of skills in diagnosis, case conceptualization and treatment planning:

You should have experience in the evaluation of clients presenting a wide variety of emotional, behavioral, learning and/or relationship problems. You should learn to obtain and utilize information from a wide variety of sources (e.g., interviews with clients and/or parents; report cards; psychological evaluations; agency staff members) using different methods (e.g., intake interview, behavior rating forms, case/staff conferences) in order to identify clients' areas of difficulty. Once the information has been collected, you should learn to communicate to clients and relevant others in a clear and concise manner the information that has been obtained (i.e., how would you sum up what you have learned about the client based on the information you obtained? What is your conceptualization of the case?). In addition, treatment plans should be developed using empirically-based or best practice strategies or strategies that, based on a solid rationale, are deemed appropriate by you and your supervisor. The kinds of experiences that will enable you to meet this objective include:

- meeting formally and informally with staff to discuss individual cases;
- observing and conducting intake sessions with clients and/or their parents;
- developing competence in the use of at least one standardized behavior rating form/questionnaire which provides information about the nature and severity of clients' symptoms;
- continuing to develop familiarity with the DSM-IV;
- developing competence in conceptualizing clients' problems;
- developing expertise in formulating treatment plans appropriate to the conceptualization of clients' problems.

F. The development of skills in implementing treatment interventions:

You will develop specialized knowledge and skills needed to implement treatment interventions that are designed to treat psychopathology and promote optimal mental health. The kinds of experiences that will enable you to meet this objective include:

- reviewing medical/psychological/psychosocial reports in which medical/mental health professionals have made recommendations to remediate clients' problems;

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- attending case/staff conferences where specific recommendations are made, including the prescription of medication, to remediate clients' problems;
- identifying sources (e.g., books, journals) to obtain intervention strategies that can be utilized with current and future clients;
- implementing intervention techniques/approaches/programs designed to target specific mental health problems (e.g., phobias, AD/HD) using a variety of approaches including individual, family, play and/or group counseling; and
- carrying an outpatient or inpatient client load.

G. Development of an awareness of ethical, legal, and multicultural/diversity issues in counseling:

Opportunities must be taken to acquaint yourself with accepted ethical and professional practices and with legal aspects of counseling functions. In addition, you should develop an appreciation of the unique contributions and concerns of diverse populations and demonstrate the ability to work with all clients to enhance and encourage their full participation in a pluralistic society. Experiences that will enable you to meet this objective include:

- reading sections from current professional publications pertaining to ethical, legal and multicultural/diversity issues;
- discussing with staff members (informally and/or in case conferences/staffings) matters related to clients' rights to privacy, confidentiality and other ethical issues as well as issues pertaining to clients' race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and/or religious affiliation and the role these factors play in the development and maintenance of mental health problems; and
- providing individual, family, and group counseling services to members of different racial/ethnic/socioeconomic/sexual orientation/religious groups, whenever possible.

H. Developing a basic understanding of counseling supervision

Given that master's-level mental health professionals provide the bulk of counseling supervision in agency settings, it is important that you learn about the basics of supervision in the event you are offered the opportunity to serve in this capacity in the future. Experiences that will enable you to meet this objective this semester include:

- learning the differences between counseling and supervision (including counselor and supervisor identities) by reading topic-relevant articles;
- learning basic models of counseling supervision (including counselor and supervisor development) by reading topic-relevant articles and viewing videotapes of supervision sessions conducted by professionals in the field;
- reading select articles from the clinical supervision literature relating to factors which impact the supervision process

Internship Site Specifications:

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The internship site should meet the following specifications:

- A diverse population is preferable so you receive exposure to a wide variety of clients' mental health concerns;
- The internship site must provide a well-developed program;
- The internship site utilizes the services of an appropriately certified/licensed staff;
- The internship site will make it possible for the site supervisor(s) to provide direct supervision for you (a minimum of 1 hour of face-to-face individual or triadic supervision per week is required);
- Since the success of your internship is dependent on you, the agency, and the university supervisor's participation, substantial preplanning and ongoing evaluation of your experience is critical and is the responsibility of all three parties who must work cooperatively. Thus, the information that you provide on your internship application form, the agreements that you and your university supervisor make with the agency's supervisors during the time of your initial interview with them, and the guidelines set forth in this syllabus will all be used to establish your overall internship experience. The university supervisor will keep in contact with you and your supervisor(s) on a scheduled basis throughout the course of your internship.

Course Requirements:

1. Number of internship hours

You are required to complete no fewer than 600 internship contact hours (a minimum of 240 direct service hours and 360 indirect service hours) over the course of two semesters (an average of 120 direct service hours and 180 indirect service hours per semester). (See "Definition & Examples of Direct Service to Clients" on Internship D2L website.) You will be required to complete a variety of assignments this semester as follows:

a. Individual and family counseling

1. Make it a goal to have a caseload of three (3) or more individual clients and/or families to whom you provide on-going counseling services at any given point in time (the instructor will consult with the site supervisor to determine whether adjustments need to be made with regard to the caseload number). At least one (1) of your on-going clients/families should be of a different racial/ethnic/socioeconomic/sexual orientation, etc. background than yourself (if possible). You will be asked to discuss in group and individual supervision what you learned from this diversity experience.

2. You will be required to make one (1) formal oral case presentation. The presentation should encompass the following:

- a. A handout to be given to your peers in group supervision which includes your objective for that particular counseling session (i.e., What were you attempting to accomplish in

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this particular counseling session and why? How did it relate to the goals of counseling? What approach/strategy did you use in helping the client/family move in the direction of some therapeutic goal?).

- b. The handout should include a critique of your counseling session which includes a) things you thought you did well, b) things you did not do so well, and c) things you may have tried differently in this counseling session, why you tried something different, and the outcomes.
- c. The handout should also include areas in which you want feedback from your peers (e.g., questions you have about the counseling session/what you did in the counseling session, how to go about working with the client, special considerations in working with a client with his or her particular issues, etc.)
- d. Also include in the handout your conceptualization of the case (i.e., What has contributed to the establishment and/or maintenance of the problem? Perhaps the client has experienced events dating back to childhood which contribute to the problem or perhaps the problem is related to a more recent event...discuss this so as to provide a context for your classmates. What is the function of the problematic behavior?) and your theoretical orientation as it applies to your work with the client/family (i.e., What is your orientation with respect to this particular client? Why are you operating from this particular orientation/how does this relate to your conceptualization of the case?). **(15 points)**

b. Diagnosis, case conceptualization and treatment planning

(1) Complete the “Case Conceptualization in Counseling” assignment. This assignment involves reading the article entitled, “Characteristics of Optimal Clinical Case Formulations: The Linchpin Concept” and associated lecture notes and answering a series of questions contained within the lecture notes. **(5 points)**

(2) Submit one diagnostic and treatment plan report (approximately 4 – 6 pages in length) to the instructor pertaining to one (1) client using the following format:

- Identifying information (i.e., client name – use a fake name such as “Fred Flintstone” as a protection of client privacy, age, date of birth, sex, education level, date of interview)
- Reason for referral/presenting concerns (a one to two sentence statement)
- Psychosocial history (several paragraphs outlining the client’s developmental history, who resides in family, quality of client’s relationships with family members, client’s educational progress and problems/successes in school, nature and quality of friendships, history of mental health problems & treatment for these problems)
- Mental status (how the client looks, feels, and behaves when you interview them taking into consideration the following: (1) *general appearance, level of attention, and amount of activity*; (2) *mood/affect*; (3) *flow of speech*; (4) *content of thought*; (5) *cognition and*

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intellectual resources; (6) insight and judgment. (See “Module 2.Mental Status Exam” notes from Diagnosis and Treatment Planning in Counseling course for details. These notes have been placed on the Internship: Mental Health Counseling D2L website for your convenience.)

- Symptoms & associated emotional/behavioral problems (i.e., a more detailed explanation as to why the client is coming in for treatment; a description of current symptoms/problems and how these have affected client and others in his/her social environment)
- Conceptualization (i.e., Based on the information you’ve obtained in the interview, why do you think the client is experiencing his/her problems? What are the various pieces of the puzzle you have to take into consideration when you think of why the client is experiencing his/her problems? You may want to consider writing your conceptualization within the framework of a particular theory.)
- Diagnosis (all five axes)
- Treatment plan (Come up with at least two goals – short term and/or long term – as well as two treatment recommendations to help the client address his/her problems. Provide justification as to why your chosen recommendations are appropriate/would be the most effective way of helping the client his/her problem.) **(15 points)**

d. Counseling supervision

Submit a four-page paper which describes a model (or combinations of models) of counseling supervision which “fits” for you (i.e., What is your model of supervision?). Address the following: (1) the basics of the model, (2) why you think this would be a good model to use in your work with supervisees (in particular, supervisees who are taking the Practicum in Counseling course), and (3) three or four factors/variables you need to take into consideration when working with supervisees (e.g., diversity issues, transference/countertransference, differences in theoretical orientations, boundary issues/ethical considerations, the style/quality of interactions between you and the practicum student based on your respective levels of development as counselor and supervisor). In addition, what are some challenges which you anticipate occurring when supervising less experienced colleagues in the future and how will you address these challenges from the perspective of a supervisor? **(15 points)**

You will also be required to take the “Counseling Supervision Benchmark Test” at the end of the semester, although this is not graded. The test can be found on the Internship website under “Content.”

2. Liability insurance

You are required to obtain liability insurance from an organization which provides liability insurance to student counselors (names of insurance companies can be obtained from the instructor). You will be required to submit a copy of the insurance policy to the instructor and Dr. Ellen Slicker, administrative coordinator of the Professional Counseling program. This must be submitted before you begin counseling clients.

3. Internship agreement

You will be required to submit an internship agreement signed by you and the on-site supervisor to the instructor for approval prior to the beginning of the internship. The agreement includes:

- activities the internship will include and the estimated percentage of time for each;
- tasks that will be accomplished as part of the internship experience; and
- the site supervisor’s responsibilities including providing you with 1 hour of individual face-to-face supervision per week.

4. Performance agreement

You are responsible for fulfilling the negotiated agreement as spelled out by the instructor during the internship experience.

5. Completion of time logs

You are required to complete daily as well as monthly time logs of your internship and supervision hours and submit them to the instructor once a month. Log forms can be found on the course website.

6. End-of-the-semester evaluation

You are required to complete an evaluation of your internship supervisor and site at the end of the semester using the “Supervisor Evaluation of Intern” form. Your site supervisor will likewise be asked to complete an evaluation form on you at the end of the semester, although the instructor will be touching base with him or her throughout the course of the semester to obtain informal feedback on your progress and to address areas of concern/deficiency. The end of the semester evaluation will account for 50% of your grade and is based on a combination of factors such as counseling skill proficiency, dependability, professionalism, and willingness to put into practice suggestions that are made by your site supervisor in supervision to improve your skills as a mental health counselor. The instructor reserves the option to make adjustments in the final site supervisor evaluation scores, if needed. **(50 points)**

The overall average rating you obtain from your supervisor at the end of the semester, taking into consideration all of the areas in which you were rated on the “Supervisor Evaluation of Intern” form, will determine the number of points you earn as follows:

Average End-of-the-Semester Rating (based on a 1 – 6 scale)	Points

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5.00 – 6.00	50
4.00 – 4.99	40
3.00 – 3.99	30
2.00 – 2.99	20
1.00 – 1.99	10

6. Attendance

You are required to attend and actively participate in group (i.e., class) supervision – including online discussion board activities. The success of this class is dependent on everyone attending and providing feedback to one another when discussing cases and other course-related issues. You are not allowed to miss more than one class per semester.

Summary of Assignments/Activities for Evaluation Purposes

1. Case conceptualization in counseling assignment (5 points)
2. Oral case presentation (15 points)
3. Diagnosis, case conceptualization and treatment plan report (15 points)
4. Counseling supervision paper (15 points)
5. End-of-the-semester evaluation by site supervisor (50 points)

Evaluation Procedures:

Your grade will be based on the number of points you earn for the aforementioned assignments and end-of-semester evaluation. However, the instructor reserves the right to lower grades based on behaviors which demonstrate a lack of professionalism, disrespect toward others, a lack of dependability, ethical concerns or anything else which he deems inappropriate for an MTSU Professional Counseling student. In this case, the Professional Counseling faculty will decide what course of action should be taken. Options may include, but are not limited to, repeating a semester of internship (at the same agency, a different agency or the MTSU Center for Counseling & Psychological Services) and/or participating in a course of personal counseling.

Grades will be based on the total number of points you earn at the end of the semester according to the following grading scale:

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Points	Grade
93 - 100	A
90 - 92	A-
87 - 89	B+
83 - 86	B
80 - 82	B-
77 - 79	C+
73 - 76	C
70 - 72	C-
67 - 69	D+
63 - 66	D
60 - 62	D-
59 and below	F

Evaluation considerations:

You must receive a minimum grade of “B-” to progress to the next semester of internship (or graduate). If you obtain anything less than a “B-” then, at the discretion of the instructor, you may be required to repeat a semester of internship or complete assignments/activities which you failed to complete (or complete satisfactorily) the first time around resulting in the low grade.

Counseling Dispositions

Students in the Professional Counseling program are required to demonstrate program Dispositions (i.e., being collaborative, ethical, professional, reflective, self-directed, and critical-thinking students) in this class and in all other academic and professional endeavors. Information regarding demonstration of these dispositions may be communicated to program faculty and used as a component of the faculty’s continuous evaluation of student progress. (See Professional Counseling Program Handbook for details.)

Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability (e.g., physical, learning) that may require assistance or accommodation, or you have questions related to any accommodations for note taking, reading, etc., you should speak to the instructor as soon as possible. You may also contact the Office of Disabled Student Services (898-2783) with questions about such services.

Safety Precautions

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Keep your site supervisor apprised of all aspects of your work. Obtain supervision from your site supervisor immediately if you become aware of any information that causes you concern for another person's safety. If the supervisor is not available, seek assistance from another counselor/mental health professional in the agency immediately. Also inform the instructor as soon as possible.

Due Dates for Assignments

Assignment	Target date for completion
Case conceptualization in counseling	Given Date
Oral case presentation (2 cases per class meeting max.)	Given Date
Diagnosis, case conceptualization & treatment plan report	Given Date
Counseling supervision paper; take supervision benchmark test	Given Date