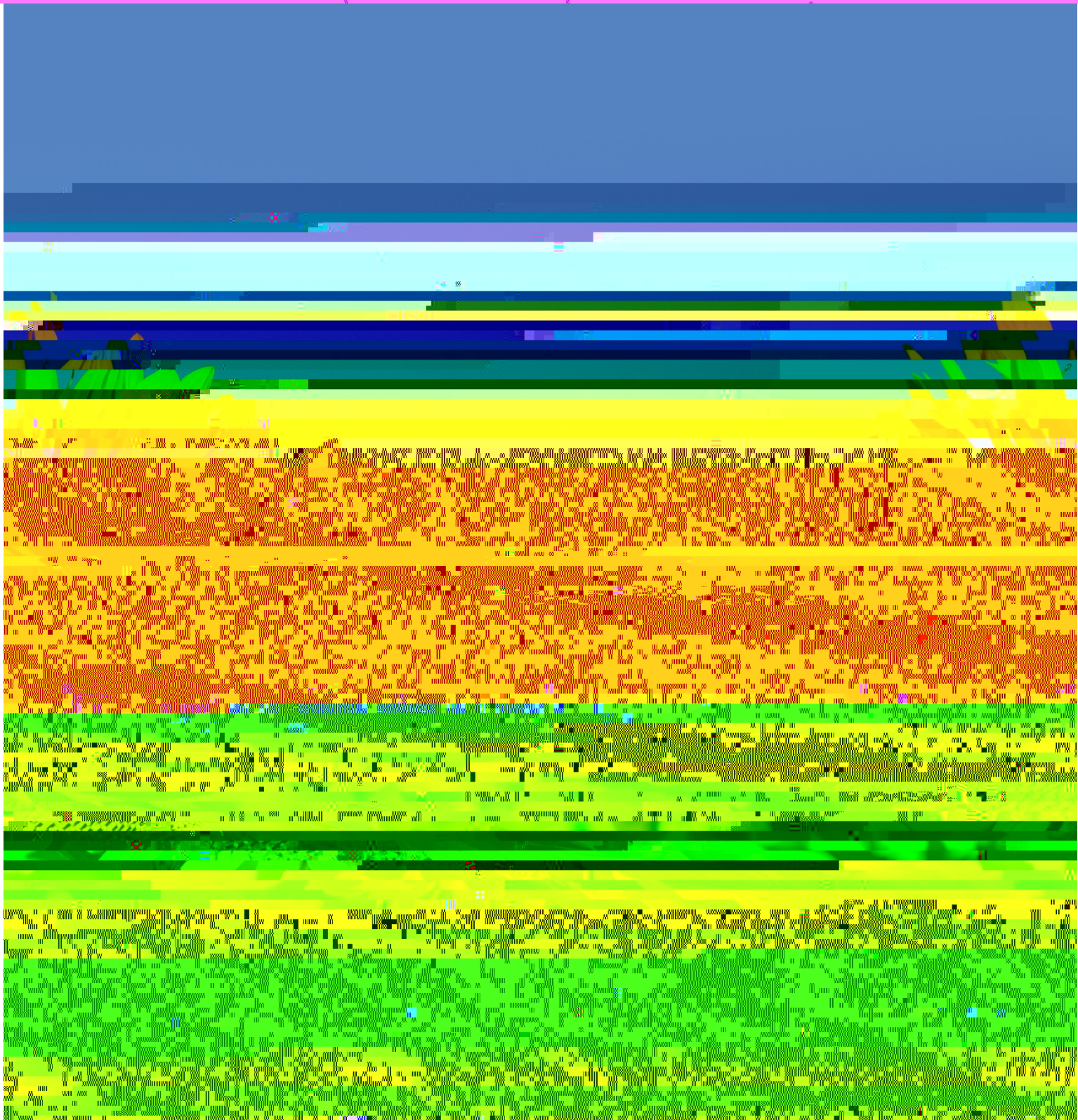


How to grow a social worker: a comprehensive guide to student supervision

Louise Studdy, Mim Fox, Maree Higgins & Charlotte Smedley



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Welcome to 'How to grow a social worker: a comprehensive guide to student supervision', a booklet designed to support professional social workers when supervising social work students on field placements, as a component of their qualifying social work degree. This booklet has been written by experienced field education staff that work regularly with social work students whilst they

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Introduction

Supervising a social work student can be an enjoyable and rewarding addition to an already busy career. It requires specific skills, can be challenging at times, and is great preparation for future supervision of staff. The benefits of students are varied. They can bring energy, enthusiasm, curiosity and excitement about learning, while at the same time contributing to the workload of the agency. They often have more time than you to engage with clients and projects, can be a source of motivation to try new things in your work, and can remind us to reflect daily on our own practice. This reflection often leads to a more creative approach and a higher level of insight into our own work. Students can be enthusiastic, questioning, appreciative, and motivated to learn, and the energy from these students can positively influence the staff in your agency. Alternatively they could be shy or underconfident and take time to adjust to the professional setting, and the rewards may be seeing them grow as a professional.

It is understandable that you may wonder how you will juggle an already busy work schedule with a student. Some common concerns that new supervisors may have are:

How will I fit a student into my schedule?

It is important to review how you might accommodate the needs of a student into your schedule. If you are comfortable with a student observing your practice then you can be orientating them to your work and your agency from very early on in the placement. Students need time and attention but can assist with your workload if they are part of a well-planned orientation and placement plan. A long-term plan for the placement, coupled with ongoing assessment of the student's progress by the supervisor can assist in maximising both the student's capacity to learn and your capacity to teach. In addition, strategies such as co-supervision with a colleague can offer the student the benefits of two supervising personalities, making it easier to balance the workload.

already have in your toolkit are the perfect foundation for an ongoing commitment to student supervision.

The social work program at UNSW Australia thanks you for your commitment to social work field education and we wish you luck in your supervision journey.

Glossary

AASW: Australian Association of Social Workers (professional association)

ASWEAS: Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (most recently published by the AASW in 2013)

End-placement report : university assessment task jointly written by the field educator and student and submitted on completion of placement. Contained within this report is the field educator's recommended grade.

External supervisor : where a qualified social worker external to the agency provides supervision to the student. This usually occurs when the on-site supervisor's training is not recognised as social work training by the AASW (e.g. a non-social work degree or an overseas social work degree).

Field educator : student supervisor based in the placement agency.

Learning contract : written assessment that outlines the student's learning goals, student tasks on the placement, and the meeting of the AASW Practice Standards.

Liaison tutor : employed by the university to assess the student's learning throughout the placement and to provide support and additional resources as needed.

Mid-placement report : assessment jointly written by the student and the field educator at mid-point and submitted to the university.

Placement : the field education component of a qualifying social work degree, conducted in an agency (also referred to as practicum, prac or internship).

Practice Standards : AASW guidelines for standards of professional practice for all social workers

is normally another field educator from a social work background who provides clinical supervision to the student (e.g. external supervision).

: This symbol is used throughout to identify interactive worksheets for use with students in supervision.



Chapter 1: Taking your first student

It is normal to be a bit anxious about taking on your first student and you will have many questions such as:

1. How will you get them started?
2. How will you select appropriate work for them?
3. Will they learn quickly?
4. What is the best way to teach them?
5. Will you know the social work theories that they have learnt?
6. How will you juggle your normal workload while having to supervise a student?
7. Will the two of you get on?
8. How will you deal with any difficulties that may arise?
9. Will the staff environment be accepting of new students in the agency?

Field educator experience

First and foremost, in keeping with the Australian Association of Social Workers guidelines (AASW, 2013), you must have been in the field for two years before you can take a student. This is important, as it gives you a chance to settle into your professional role and find your feet as a social worker. It also ensures that those with the benefit of experience supervise the students.

Taking on the field educator role

Firstly you will need to prepare yourself for a change in your role. Moving from a practitioner to an educator involves a personal and professional shift in how you see yourself in the workplace, your skill set, and your areas of expertise. You need to consider how you will be a student supervisor, who will be a support person for you, and how you might need to adjust your current work load. Think about field educators you know or value who may give you some resources and ideas.

A great way to start as a first-time field educator is to have an experienced agency colleague act as a mentor or share the supervisory role as a co-supervisor. Prior to offering to be a supervisor, some social workers start by taking on a small role with a colleague's student e.g. supervising the student for 2 weeks whilst the main field educator is on leave or having the student involved in one activity or intervention with you. This way the progression is gentler and you can also see if you like the experience and feel you have something to offer.

Negotiation or advocacy on behalf of student involvement may be needed with your team or manager. If possible, students need to enter an environment that is welcoming and recognises their value, energy, ideas, and a willingness to give tasks a go. At times these tasks may be ones that staff are not as enthusiastic about doing, or just do not have the time to complete, the students therefore appearing incredibly useful! If your agency is not terribly positive about having a student, try to do some solid groundwork before the student arrives. Staff may have strong memories of a past 'difficult' student or may have had negative experiences themselves as students. Explain the reasons behind supervising a student, outlining the benefits to you as a professional as well as to the work of the agency.

Once your agency has agreed, the next step is to approach the university, if they haven't approached you first! Universities are always looking for new student placement offers, so your

Preparing for your new role as a field educator

1. Enrol in any seminars that the university runs for student supervisors. These seminars are designed to support you in your new role and will orientate you to the expectations of the university.
2. Talk with fellow social workers in your agency who have previously had students. Hear their practice wisdom so you can start to prepare yourself for what to expect.
3. Give some thought to your style as a supervisor and teacher, perhaps by reading some articles on student supervision.
4. Read the university guidelines for field placement so you understand their expectations of you.
5. Reflect on the theories you use in your everyday work and prepare appropriate reading material for the student.
6. Plan what the student will be doing on placement such as casework, projects, or community development. Draw up a list of tasks and learning opportunities.
7. Reflect on your own learning style, this will help you prepare to better support your student in the way they learn.

Chapter 2: Student orientation

Student orientation can take up to six weeks at the beginning of placement, with a steep learning curve happening in the first three weeks. The pace at which students absorb new information, begin to take on the role of learner and acclimatise to the agency will differ. Some basic principles of student orientation will assist this process.

The first few days

Plan the first few days before the student arrives. Think about what the student needs to know and how best to achieve this. Call on colleagues to assist so that the orientation is varied and interesting and the orientation load is shared amongst your team.

Allocate time on the first morning to welcome the student, introduce them to key people and set them up with a desk or work area. In case of a crisis where you could be called away, organise a backup colleague whom you know will be friendly and helpful.

Sit together with the student and clarify the required university documentation. Provide them with a

- 9 Make sure the student has a diary and provide some events or meeting details for them to insert. If your agency is large you may need to provide the student with a map or

Supervision in the orientation stage

It is important to set up the supervisory relationship and expectations right from the beginning of placement. There is a great deal for students to absorb in the early part of placement as they are often engaged in activities, which mean they may face issues that they have never encountered before. This can be achieved through a supervision contract where expectations for both student and supervisor are discussed and outlined. Discuss how you will record or take notes of supervision sessions, and how these records will be kept.

Activities such as reading client files or observing interviews can be challenging for students, so it is important to check out their level of understanding, become aware of any gaps in their knowledge or lack of understanding about issues so you can determine how comfortable they are feeling in these situations. Emphasise to the student the need for debriefing and offer to be available for informal supervision if and when it's required.

Try to keep the planned formal supervision times and if they need to change, make sure they are rescheduled so the student has the guidance they need. By checking in regularly with the student you are likely to pick up on any issues or problems as they arise. If you have any concerns about the progress of the student, make sure you ring the university as soon as you realise there may be an issue. Problems that are ignored don't usually disappear, instead they require early intervention.

Developing student resources

A student folder or file in the agency is a great idea to assist with your student orientation. If you have had previous students then ask them to photocopy relevant materials to leave behind for the next student. This way you always have a copy of useful material and they can even add to the file by writing their own 'helpful hints' for the next student. For your first student, find a few relevant articles or pamphlets and place them in a folder, which can be used as part of their orientation. You can add to this as the placement progresses and it will become a useful resource for you as the supervisor, as well as for current and future students.

Ideas for your orientation folder:

- 9 An example of a typical client assessment, report templates or community events
- 9 Information for new staff or students to the agency or the local area
- 9 Articles on specific issues, for example dementia if working with older people
- 9 Articles on social work methods or practice that are dominant in your field. Some examples could be community development or counselling methods

Orientation worksheet: bringing your agency policy to life

Courtesy of Louise Studdy

This exercise is an easy and helpful one to get your student to engage more with agency policy. It can be done when the student has been on placement 15-20 days and has some understanding of one particular policy that impacts their practice. One advantage of it is that the student has a chance to share their view of the current policy and how they think it could be improved or changed. Use the questions below to guide a discussion in supervision.

1. Name a policy or part of a policy that impacts your practice.
2. In your own words explain what this policy or part of the policy states.
3. Who wrote the policy? Government? Agency? Board?
4. How does this policy affect your role/practice in the agency?
5. How does this policy impact any clients/groups/community served by the agency?
6. Can you link this policy to the AASW Code of Ethics? How?
7. Do you have any difficulties with this policy? Is it unfair to some clients or potential clients? Does it favour some client groups over others?
8. How would you rewrite this policy if you had the chance? Why? Be specific. What might you add to the policy?

Chapter 3: Allocating work to the student

A common question often asked by new supervisors is how to decide on work allocation in order to maximise learning and to make the placement interesting. If you are a first-time field educator aim to establish a plan of relevant tasks for the first 3-4 weeks, on the understanding that this can be amended as you go. If you have had previous students in this agency then review plans that have worked before. It's important to be critical by adding the wisdom of afterthought ("I should have done that earlier") and amend the plan according to the individual student coming and the nature of work for this placement.

An important question to ask yourself is what do you hope the student will achieve by the end of orientation, by the mid-placement point and by the end of placement?

Developing learning goals

1. Consult with the student at the pre-placement interview then again in the first week. Do they have any passions or interests they want to follow throughout the placement? Do they bring any special skills with them to the placement, such as computer or web skills, music or art? Do they have client experience, such as volunteering with young people, or do they speak a second language?
2. Consult with your colleagues. How would they like to be involved in the placement? How

3. Consult with other field educators you know, either internal or external to your agency. If you're in doubt regarding the appropriateness of what you plan to offer speak to the university and find out if your plan is feasible. Does it fit with what a first or second placement student needs to learn?

Try not to feel that you have to do it all on your own and allow yourself to be part of a community of field educators.

Brainstorm potential learning goals

Either by yourself or in your professional team, brainstorm possible learning goals that you could see being relevant to the placement. Some examples of learning goals that field educators have stated include:

- 9 By mid-placement the student can conduct an assessment of a client or a family, with field educator support or on their own
- 9 In a group that runs for six sessions, by session four the student can take responsibility for a specific task
- 9 Our student will have completed the draft research question by the 1st June
- 9 By April 10th the student will have drafted the poster for a Seniors Day event at the agency
- 9 The literature search is due to be completed by March 20th, or Week 5 of placement
- 9 By mid-placement the student should be participating in meetings with residents and the local community

Developing a draft work plan for the student

By developing a draft work plan for the student you are being proactive about planning for their arrival. You might discuss the draft work plan with your own supervisor or a colleague who may also be taking a student. Remember it is only a draft and should be evaluated with the student's input.

1. Include learning goals in the draft work plan. For example, understanding how the agency works or understanding how our agency works within the principles of community development.
2. Strategies to achieve this learning goal may be to include attending planning meetings, discussing agency policy in supervision, making links to community development theory, or spending time with each team member.
3. Where you can, try to include a timeline or dates in the draft work plan. These can be subject to change but it helps to have an initial timeframe in mind.
4. Remember that this is only a draft and is subject to change over time!

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Chapter 4: Assessment

Making assessment easier for you and the student

Placement assessment has two components: the formative component (ongoing assessment which mainly occurs in the supervisory and task-based relationship) and summative (through formal university assessment pieces and processes). Even though the placement is punctuated by key assessment documents, assessment needs to take place from as soon as you meet the student, and then throughout the placement. Placement assessment therefore must be viewed as an ongoing process.

Ongoing field educator assessment of student

Stages of placement	Assessment of the student
Pre-placement interview	Upon meeting the student for the first time the field educator is already assessing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Professional manner and presentation of the student b) Commitment to the placement experience c) Student’s ability to articulate relevant learning goals d) Quality of the match between the student’s learning needs and the placement’s teaching capacity and environment
Placement commences	The first few weeks of the placement is orientation and in this time the field educator is assessing how the student learns and behaves in a professional setting. Supervision in this stage is primarily about the integration of this orientation and the developing of

	student with a final assessment of their progress on their learning goals since the mid-placement visit and the content of the end-placement report is thoroughly reviewed.
Placement concludes	The student's capacity to end an engagement with their placement and their student tasks is assessed by the field educator and reflected in the end-placement report. The field educator completes the end-placement report for the university with a recommendation for the final academic grade.

In order to support this ongoing assessment process, field educators should create for themselves an assessment kit. Your assessment kit needs:

- x A copy of all the key placement dates including start date, finish date, and dates when university assessments are due.
- x A supervision notebook or folder for you to make progress notes regarding your student. Notes can include student qualities, existing skills, areas needing particular focus, and student interests, plus ideas about the learning you envisage them undertaking. You will appreciate having made notes as you approach mid-placement assessment.
- x Print-outs of key university documents including the assessment templates (learning contract, mid and end-placement reports and mid-placement visit guidelines).
- x Key contacts including the university representatives, placement coordinators and relevant field educators.
- x Include in your folder a print out of key student input and communication. Also a summary of each supervision session can be helpful, so both the field educator and the student have a quick guide for tasks set and topics discussed.

Remember when assessing your student:

- 9 Liaise regularly with any agency staff involved with your student for feedback on their progress.
- 9 Familiarise yourself with the AASW Practice Standards (2013), as they inform the university assessment pieces. These can be used in supervision sessions as a benchmark document.
- 9 See how your assessment of your student's skills, knowledge and values compares with how they see themselves. This should be done well before the visit as it is not uncommon for students to rate themselves higher than their field educator, and this can then be a source of concern for the student.
- 9 Stress that learning to be an effective social worker is ongoing after graduation, and that effective practice is constantly evaluating the way we engage with our work.

- 9 Try to be tactful but clear when giving negative feedback. Always identify the steps the student can take to improve their practice.
- 9 Tackle any issues early. Early intervention is a sound principle, even in student supervision!
- 9 Remember to tell your student what they are doing well and why. Don't assume they know this about themselves.

Ways to maximise the outcome of the mid-placement assessment visit

1. Review the learning contract with your student and make succinct notes on areas achieved and areas that need change or deletion. If a project is not going ahead, a different type of group will be running, or the nature of the research has altered (as often happens!) you need to clarify this for the liaison tutor as they will be using the learning contract as their guide for the mid-placement visit.
2. List particular tasks that need focus before the end of placement . Students often focus

receive from either the liaison tutor or the student and be mindful of areas where you can improve in your student supervision. Remember that the liaison tutor is an educational resource for you so strategising about how to maximise the learning for your student can be an added bonus to the process.

6. Highlight the student's strengths and skills . Even if issues have arisen with your student remember to use a strength-based approach in highlighting any gains they have made in their learning. Every student has areas in which they can improve, but also every student has had some success that should be acknowledged. The mid-placement visit is the perfect time to celebrate these successes so that the student is inspired for the second half of their placement.

Difficulties that can impact on the mid-placement visit

1. A lack of time: Typically mid-placement visits take at least 1-1.5 hours to thoroughly assess the student's progress. Field educators, students and liaison tutors need to ensure they have put enough time aside to not feel rushed with the process. Despite being in a busy work place, try to arrange that you are not interrupted during this time.
2. The student, the field educator or the liaison tutor is unprepared. All parties need to have read the guidelines and prepared their input prior to the mid-placement visit.
3. The mid-placement visit is too early or too late in the placement. At times liaison tutors are visiting multiple students and so not all students can be assessed at exactly mid-point. The important thing to remember is that the student should be assessed at the right time for them when enough work has been undertaken so that a proper assessment can be made.
4. The field educator and / or student are aware that there are issues with how the placement is progressing but are hesitant to discuss them in this forum. An open three-way discussion can sometimes be confronting for either the field educator or the student so both parties need to work separately with the liaison tutor to make sure the issues are being resolved.
5. It is not uncommon for one party to feel isolated in the discussion. This could be because:
 - a. Discussion primarily occurs between two of the parties.
 - b. One party is not recognising the value of the discussion.
 - c. The student or field educator feels "on show" with the focus on what they can verbally contribute to the discussion, especially if they do not feel confident with their verbal skills.
 - d. The student or field educator experiences a fear of failure, so plays it safe by limiting how much they tell the liaison tutor.

The aim of the mid-placement visit is for all parties to feel heard and supported in the learning experience. At times giving students feedback on their progress can be difficult and the field educator needs to prepare for this experience.

Giving students feedback

Feedback is a crucial part of the assessment process but while some students may find it hard to ask for feedback, some field educators will find it hard to give it. Students are encouraged to take initiative with all aspects of their learning, including asking for feedback at placement. While some students may find this difficult, other students may regularly ask their field educator how they are progressing. Remember that when it comes to feedback, every student is different.

General principles for giving feedback:

1. Feedback is easier when the student is used to receiving it and the field educator is used to giving it. Try to provide regular feedback to your student on:
 - a. What they are doing well
 - b. What they need to do better
 - c. How they might achieve this
2. Have clear feedback notes prepared for your supervision sessions. Try to:
 - a. Be constructive with feedback (positive with areas of learning)
 - b. Refer back to the learning contract as needed
 - c. Ask how best as the field educator you can support their learning i.e. more of X or less of Y
3. Even if your student is capable, confident and seems to be handling the work well, give them this feedback. Often the student needs to be told clearly how they are progressing.
4. Make your feedback specific by commenting on the completed tasks, such as a completed psycho-social assessment, a group session plan, a draft agenda for a residents' meeting at a housing estate, or a process recording of an interview. Provide concrete feedback and reference to the development of a specific social work skill. For example, "that was a good report showing accurate assessment and using non-judgmental language".

For students who tend not to ask for feedback, provide some suggested questions they can use and encourage them to ask both you and any co-students for input and ideas. Remind them that critical reflection is needed to practice effectively. Some examples of structured questions could be:

- 9 How could I have handled that interview or group session better?
- 9 I want my questions to elicit more client disclosure, how might I do this?
- 9 My project writing seems too simple, how do I make it sound more professional?

Obviously it is easier to give positive feedback than negative feedback but your students will need both!

Strategies to deliver constructive feedback

All students will need to receive feedback that challenges them throughout their placement. Regardless of the nature of the feedback, the aim is to maximise student growth and minimise any negativity or distress involved. Some important points to remember:

- 9 Pick a time soon after the incident in question (interview, group or presentation) and ask

Assessment at the end-placement point

Many field educators and students find that the second half of placement goes quickly. As students grow in confidence and competence they are likely to work faster, take on more complex tasks and be less dependent on their field educator. It can come as a surprise to some field educators that the placement is soon drawing to an end, so try to ensure that you have a timely and productive supervision session with your student discussing their progress. Make sure to include areas that still need focus so that there is enough time to complete tasks before the placement ends and the end-placement report is due.

When approaching the end-placement point remember:

1. In supervision review the goals for the second half of placement that you and the student included in the mid-placement report.
2. Review the notes that you made in your supervision folder since the mid-placement visit. Refresh your memory regarding the growth your student has made throughout the placement. You will be glad you took some notes over these few months!
3. Consider whether the goals set at the mid-placement visit have been achieved and if not, why not?
4. Reflect on the strengths and assets your student currently possesses and consider:
 - a. What particular areas will still need focus in the future?
 - b. Recollect examples of these areas to include in the end-placement report.
5. Try to avoid writing in the report any negative feedback that you have not already shared with your student. It is too disappointing for a student to learn something negative from you when there is little time left to discuss or clarify such feedback. Completing a placement should be about tying up loose ends and finishing off. It is also important to try to work through any unfinished business that either of you have experienced.
6. The end-placement report for the first placement should be submitted by the end of the placement period.

Mid-placement worksheet: analysing contemporary policy topics on placement

Courtesy of Maree Higgins

This worksheet is useful when the student has been on placement for at least 40 days or so, and can be used in the lead up to the mid placement assessment. This is great to do either individually or with groups of students, as the students can challenge one another to think more deeply about the issues. The aim of this worksheet is to structure your student's understanding of the policy context in which your agency sits, to encourage the student to articulate their views and identify how these are consistent or inconsistent with the knowledge and values of the agency and the wider community, and to help the student to look outside their own team or project and see the 'bigger picture'.

This worksheet is in two parts, and preferably should be completed two weeks apart. Both parts can be done in supervision, with the student taking it away in between to work on.

Part 1

1. Brainstorm with your student their ideas about the legislation, procedural and policy knowledge on which they are drawing during placement.
2. Ask your student to describe, from their working knowledge and without reference to any materials, the main parts of the legislation, procedures and policies. It is acceptable if they make mistakes and take time to put pieces of the puzzle together at this stage.
3. Ask your student to imagine a media contact rang them to discuss a hot issue in your agency.
4. Ask them to clarify what the issue might be. Then ask them to think about what pieces of information might be relevant and get them to identify what they need to find out more about.
5. Set them the task of finding informative newspaper or journal articles they can read to develop their knowledge around this topic and to collect any other pieces of information they can access (Code of ethics, agency manuals, other guidelines).
6. Also ask other colleagues what they think about the issues personally and professionally (if possible).

Part 2

In the next supervision session have your student present for 5 minutes. Ask them to:

1. Briefly describe the issue.
2. Describe what they now know about this issue. Outline their personal and professional views on this hot topic. If possible take a role, such as 'average joe' or 'media rep' and feedback to the student – are you convinced? Are there gaps? What would you like to know more about?

Chapter 5: Student supervision

Regular social work supervision is a key part of a successful student placement. As a field educator you have so much experience to offer a student but this should be shared in a way that is interesting and accessible. Additionally, many field educators agree to take students on top of their own work load. There is a real skill in juggling your own work with the supervision of students!

Supervision arrangements should be discussed and agreed upon in the first week of placement with the arrangement being met by both student and field educator. Any agreement should include the frequency of sessions, time allocated for supervision, informal and formal structure of supervision, the chosen format of supervision, what the student should prepare for supervision, the use of agendas within supervision, additional supervisors involvement, and the expectations of the student within the supervisory relationship.

Frequency

The AASW require 1.5 hours per week of supervision for every 35 hours of placement (AASW, 2013). Each university will allow for different arrangements for this requirement however, ideally this time should occur in one slot and should be seen as 'formal supervision'. Informal supervision will complement this and is likely to be an important way to develop the supervisor-student relationship. Informal supervision can involve quick questions, casual discussion in the car after a joint home visit or community meeting, or debr

The learning contract

The learning contract is the assessment piece that initially directs the specific areas of learning for the student, the nature and format of supervision, as well as outlining the task completion for the

In order to maximise the benefits of this model, ensure that before the student arrives you discuss with your colleague the delineation of roles and responsibilities for supervising the student, and how you might deal with any challenges. Occasionally students feel caught between the stresses of two colleagues or are being told different things by the two field educators, which can become very confusing. Important areas of negotiation are content and frequency of supervision, university assessment tasks and the management of issues if they arise.

Configuration 2: One student is supervised by two field educators who are located in different agencies

In this model the student is supervised by two different social workers that are doing different jobs and are not located in the same physical location. This can occur when:

- x The social workers are part of the same service but physically located in different areas.
 - x The social workers are part-time but work as inter-agency colleagues so have a synergy to their work.
-
- x There is a flow of clients between the two services and so the student will gain a richer understanding of the client experience. For example, in-patient to out-patient care.
 - x There is not enough work in one agency but combined with another agency ensures enough student tasks can be offered.

In this model the student will generally split up the placement attendance days in their week to allow them to attend both agencies. For example, Monday-Tuesday at one agency and Wednesday-Friday at the other. Another variation is where the student spends a block of time at each agency, such as six weeks at one agency and six weeks at another.

In order to maximise the benefits of this model the student requires a proper orientation to both agencies to then be able to engage in meaningful work. This may mean that the split between the agencies is structured from the beginning, or it may mean that blocks of time in each agency occur before a split is negotiated. Adjusting to one agency can be enough for any student, let alone trying to orient to two! This model can work if the student is adept at dealing with change and adjusting to an alternating workplace. Communication between the field educators and the student from the beginning of the placement is important.

the work was observation, due to the sensitive work of child protection. Susan was young, shy, pleasant, well prepared for the visit and passing the placement according to her supervisor. I could see no real issues other than her inability to articulate adequately to me. The co-student was extremely confident and articulate, so that when they jointly presented about the agency funding and policy, it was clear that Susan was the less confident. At the end of the visit, I set Susan a few questions to answer over the next fortnight and this she subsequently did. The supervisor confirmed that although Susan was quiet, she was able to contribute in individual supervision and perhaps just needed time to mature and gain confidence. It became clear later on that Susan felt in the shadow of her co-student.

The following year I was again Susan's liaison tutor. I had to hide my astonishment. Susan was a different young social work student, and placed on her own with an encouraging supervisor, she had blossomed and matured in the 17 months since I had seen her. No longer was she a shy student, only able to offer brief answers. Instead I found a budding young social worker keen to share her reflections. So much of what she had learnt at University and on her first placement had really been absorbed.

Courtesy of liaison tutor correspondence

Group supervision

It is exciting to see that field educators in organisations who may regularly take on social work students are using group supervision more frequently and often quite creatively. Group supervision refers to a group with three or more students meeting at regular intervals and having a skilled facilitator at the helm. The aim is that students will learn from regular presentations by staff and students, a focus on relevant topics for that particular agency and client group, and the guided peer discussion that follows.

Some agencies will use their student educator, or student coordinator, to lead group supervision. Others may have a motivated field educator, perhaps one mentoring new field educators, who decides to establish group supervision by bringing together individual or pairs of students who are linked with various field educators but under the agency umbrella. In this scenario, group supervision has the potential to be really interesting and enjoyable for all concerned.

Advantages to group supervision include:

- x The opportunity to share resources, such as new agencies or opportunities for clients
- x Broader topics can be taught to all students at once, rather than individually by each field educator
- x The opportunity for each student to participate in discussion and / or to present a relevant topic if desired
- x The presence of a field educator ensures that discussion is relevant and stays on track

Supervision worksheet: assertiveness task

Courtesy of Maree Higgins, adapted from Cleak & Wilson, 2013, and Cole, 2001

This exercise asks the student to reflect on their level of assertiveness by focusing on a particular incident. This works best when the student picks an incident that did not go as well as planned, rather than using a very successful interaction. Students often want to be more assertive but do not always know how to do this and so will benefit from not only discussion with field educator or colleague after an incident but also seeing how you handle difficult situations effectively.

Part 1

Ask the student to reflect on the questions below and write a reflective response to each one.

1. Know the facts relating to the situation and have the details to hand.
2. Be ready for or anticipate other people's behaviour and prepare your responses.
3. Express your fears, needs or concerns as 'I' statements rather than as someone else's problem.
4. Prepare and use good open questions.
5. Practice your active listening skills, summarising skills and exploration skills so that you can clarify and understand your own reactions to other's behaviour and also understand where they are coming from (posters can help you think and become how you want to be – display positive writings where you will read them often – it's a proven successful technique).
6. Support yourself – be ready with calming, positive self-talk.
7. Prepare other people to support and defend you (choose someone who is really able to help and not just get muddled in the politics – someone who will be objective and communicate positively and assertively).

Part 2

Ask the student to select an incident that needed them to be more assertive in order to be more effective. In discussion with you, ask them to address the following points. Assist the student with assertive language if they are unsure of how to phrase their responses.

1. Ask the student to describe the incident in 3 or so sentences.
2. Ask the student to describe their behaviour (action, words etc.). Were they assertive enough?
3. What would they do differently if they had their time again, anything and why?
4. What do you want them to work on with this skill of assertiveness? Discuss with the student and give concrete examples of how their phrasing or behaviour would change.



Chapter 7: Creativity in social work student supervision

Some of you will have been exposed to creative techniques in your own placements or perhaps whilst on professional training. You may even be using some creative techniques already! Many new field educators like some direction to make their supervision more dynamic or just need some inspiration. Sometimes even experienced field educators state that they need new ideas and welcome suggestions or techniques that might improve the quality of their supervision or help a particular student tackle learning challenges.

So what makes a field educator creative? A creative field educator is responsive to the individual needs of their student, uses humour to connect with their student, is flexible in their delivery, open to new ideas, a positive role model for students, and trusting of the supervision and field education process.

General principles of creative supervision

1. Work within your comfort zone. If your background involves some drama or debating then you are likely to be more comfortable with role play. If as a social worker you regularly use humour well, then this will come naturally when working with your students. If you are artistic then you will find this influences how you prepare tasks and you may find yourself encouraging them to use the camera, video or other mediums to express themselves.
2. Be individual and flexible in your style. Do not just follow the same plan as last time even if it worked well. Think of what your student or students need, respect how they learn and see what they share as important.
3. Exercises or creative tools you use can become a part of your supervision and assessment process.

4. Be clear on why you are using a creative strategy and think through the practical and emotional consequences for the student involved. Creativity sometimes involves an element of risk so expect some resistance.
5. Remember that creativity should increase a student's insight and enjoyment so adjust the task if this is not happening.

How to begin? A reflective exercise for field educators

Creativity can mean different things to different people. Try answering these questions as a beginning point to start to see yourself as a creative field educator.

1. What does the term creative mean to you?
2. What is positive about having some creative input in your supervision or teaching? What does it achieve?
3. Think of a field educator or colleague that you think is or has been creative. What makes them creative and what type of things might they have done or used?
4. Reflect on your supervision with students, staff or volunteers and identify anything you think you have done that is creative. Were there te

Using the unexpected opportunity	Using the unexpected opportunity is a creative skill that allows you to maximise learning opportunities for your students. It could be taking advantage of a guest speaker at the agency or in the community, or a chance for your student to show a visitor or new student around the agency. For this to work you need to be flexible and be able to adjust your timetable as opportunities arise.
Utilising individual student skills	Students come to placement with a range of skills and if their skills are utilised appropriately this can enhance their learning regarding community cohesion. Skills such as music, art or desktop publishing are always a joy to have a student share. Music and art can be great advantage in both face-to-face and community work placements, with students undertaking a community project such as a brochure, a poster, or even a policy document.
Flash cards	Flash cards such as photo cards, strength cards and emotion cards offer creative learning opportunities. You can use commercially available cards or make your own. Some students find choosing a card that represents how they think or feel about something can trigger further discussion. To maximise the opportunities, the set of cards needs to include pictures that depict a wide range of emotions or strength based statements. These can be used effectively if the student lacks confidence or cannot identify their skills and qualities easily.
Reflection activities 1. Dear Me... 2. Magic Wand 3. Aspiration exercise	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writing a letter to oneself (Dear Me) is an example of a reflection exercise that allows the student to visualise themselves leaving placement with their hopes achieved. In this situation the use of visualisation can be powerful, motivating and constructive. The steps are as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ask the student to write a letter early in the placement indicating what they would like to have achieved at the completion of the placement. Include skill acquisition, competency, theory, feelings and fears. b()TJ 0 -

3. The aspiration exercise asks the student firstly to describe the qualities of a great social worker, and secondly to name a quality or two that they think they demonstrate even if in a small quantity. Ask them “what are they aspiring to be longer term”? The aim is that you can both add to this list as the placement continues, and the student can begin to see themselves embody their ideal as their experience grows.



Chapter 8: Integrating theory to practice

One of the certainties of being a student supervisor is that some students avoid discussing theory like the plague! And let's be honest, some of us social workers find the actual task of explaining how we integrate theory to our everyday practice not such an easy one. Although theory-practice integration is an essential part of student supervision, it does not need to be exhaustive. A solid grasp of the theoretical framework for your agency context is all that's required. If you read this and think, "I can link theory to practice well and see this as an integral part of the placement", you are indeed fortunate and a gem for the students you teach. For everyone else, focussing on two theories that are relevant to your agency is a good start.

The importance of integrating theory

To be an effective practitioner a social worker must be competent in identifying and evaluating relevant theory for their practice, no matter what the context is. Not only does theory guide our practice, it assists us in justifying what we do with management, colleagues and clients and is vital in the student evaluation process.

We are ethically bound to follow theory in our practice (ASSW Code of Ethics, 2010) and social workers have to be able to justify their decisions, market their services and compete for health and welfare grants. Being able to competently articulate the models they use and the rationale for their choice of intervention are central to both a professional approach to social work and the credibility of the worker.

Placement offers an opportunity to lay a strong foundation for the student and nurtures some of those seeds sown at university. It is very important for students that as supervisors and field educators we can bring theory to life, make it relevant (and perhaps exciting), and as a result lessen the distance that students often feel exists between the classroom and placement. This task

is not always easy, so the following chapter aims to encourage you to try different approaches.

Understanding where theories come from and how they relate to each other

Students often look blank when we ask if they know the roots of a particular theory. Is it from sociology, politics, economics or psychology? If they can identify the discipline they can recognise other theories from that discipline which might help to identify some common terms or concepts. An example is systems theory. Systems theory is a science based theory developed when scientists recognised the impact of subsystems on each other with changes in heat or altitude. When students are asked to guess the roots of this theory it illustrates the problem students experience identifying different theories, and highlights the contextual importance of theory application.

Sometimes a theory is definitely social work based and full of familiar jargon, as in the case of practice models for social workers. With social work students being located in a wide range of settings, the theories that will be relevant to their practice today may encompass issues and concepts that were not part of our own undergraduate training (depending on when or where you were at university). In these circumstances the learning about theory can be both for students and supervisors!

Biological theories	Existentialism	Group work theories
Psychodynamic theories	Life span theory	Feminism
Behaviourist theories	Systems theory	Postmodernism
Learning theories	Organisational theories	Family therapy principles
Cognitive theories	Structuralism	Solution focused brief therapy
Humanist theories	Interactionist theory	Critical theory and critical social work
Narrative therapy	Trauma theories	Strengths-based approaches
Assessment frameworks	Crisis intervention	Research methodologies
Adult education principles	Grief and loss frameworks	Human rights perspectives
Anti-racist and anti-oppressive theory	Community development principles	Capacity building

Doing this brainstorming activity with your student can be an empowering exercise where you both are able to bounce ideas off each other, provide positive feedback to one another and feel excited by how much you both do know!

Student reflection

My supervisor and colleagues were proactive in discussing theoretical frameworks related to projects I was involved in, as well as sharing resources as to how I might approach similar issues within a direct placement context. The support from co-workers and autonomy given for project completion offered me an inspiring glimpse into how I would perform as a fully qualified professional.

Courtesy of student correspondence



Chapter 9: The Integration Model - a model for theory to practice

The Integration Model, courtesy of Louise Studdy

As discussed in the previous chapter, some practitioners have a good theoretical basis to their work but have difficulty or lack confidence in articulating this to a student or another worker. Many workers have identified that they were never taught how to link university material to placement and so lack confidence in this area. Other social workers who were exposed as a student to a supervisor with a strong theoretical focus, found this to be a breakthrough experience for them.

The Integration Model is a tool for students, social workers and other field educators to assist them in the integration of theory to practice. This model assists students to link classroom theory to placement experience and can be used in a one-on-one supervision session, in student groups, or in a classroom setting. The model can be used individually by the student or field educator or worked through together, following the steps outlined below. Remember that learning occurs when a positive learning environment is modelled and supported.

Familiarising yourself with the theory

Ask your student to choose a theory by trying to select one that has some relevance to the context of your practice. If it appears in an article or book chapter ask them to read the synopsis or abstract first. Suggest they try to locate a summary of key points, which may appear in a table or grid in the body of the writing or in the conclusion / summary at the end of the article or chapter. Ask them to identify if they recognise any of the terms or jargon or if any are unfamiliar. They may not have the time to read an entire book so encourage them to pick key sections or scan the chapter headings.

Ask them to find familiar terms in the book or article. Students will recognise some of the terms from their classroom courses, for example, conflict theories, power and inequality. They may also recognise feminist terminology when reading critical practice theory. This allows students to understand that they bring some existing knowledge from other subjects to this new theory and so it will be less overwhelming. Recent theories may not appear very familiar to you but may be reminiscent of older theoretical understandings. For example, in the 1970s short-term casework became a popular practice model. Today solution focused brief therapy is a very popular approach with students and practitioners alike, and involves some of the tenets seen in earlier theories despite the new jargon.

Summary stage

Students should summarise the theory in 5-10 brief points. This is not easy, as it requires them to highlight the main points only. With each point they should give an example from practice to explain what they think the theory is about. If any point is unclear, they should return to the text and try to find case studies or examples provided by the author.

Some texts have case studies at the end of the book or chapters, which are easy to follow. Relating social work theories to your practice is much simpler than the challenge of relating theories from other disciplines. Practice theories tell us how to practice as a social worker whereas conceptual theories help us to understand and analyse particular situations and systems. They may be located in areas including human functioning, stages of life span development, organisational theory and the very current approaches of postmodern theory. We need both types of theories in our work.

Two examples of the Integration Model are presented below to demonstrate the application of this model.

Chosen theory

Key points

Postmodernism

1. Emphasises difference and diversity
2. Draws attention to language and discourse
3. Shows the need to totally rethink the nsw2olangu

If the theory seems to have little relevance to their selected practice example, they should not despair. It is important to acknowledge the ways in which the theory helps understanding. Also, articulating and analysing where there is little 'fit' between the two, may point the way to other theories or models or suggest new directions for a theoretical development, which draw on your practice experience.

Critical analysis of theory is expected by your social work students, so encourage this, as it is not always forthcoming. Once a student is feeling more confident about a theory it is often useful to combine the strengths of two frameworks, where one may be more conceptual and the other one more practice orientated and informing of the intervention. For example when working with a teenager who is a refugee, the student might use parts of life stage theory (what challenges might they be facing as a teenager?), or grief and loss theory to inform their understanding of their past refugee experiences and current status.

Schema to help students link a theoretical model to their practice

A great way to encourage students to engage with a new theory or model is to provide some key questions for them to answer about it. This way they are not just reading the article or book from start to finish, they are reading with a purpose and seeking answers as they go. Suggest they make brief notes and highlight their findings.

Below is an example of a set of questions designed to help students gain the most from the book *Coping with Grief* (McCissock & McCissock, 2012).

1. How do the authors describe or define grief and bereavement? Include any key phrases or words.
2. How might someone experiencing significant grief react physically (bodily reaction) and emotionally? Give several examples for both.

9. Finally, take theory in small bites throughout the placement so that it can be absorbed and applied, and not lost.

Remember that a practicing social worker professional should be able to explain what they are doing and why. So get your students working and ensure that you are able to see the theoretical integration in their work!

Student reflection

While there were many good things about my experience, having the opportunity to create social change at a systemic level was most inspiring and without a doubt the thing I will remember most fondly.

Courtesy of student correspondence

Reflective learning worksheet: think sheets

Adapted from Cleak & Wilson, 2013, Making the Most out of Field Placement, Third Edition, P. 88

The think sheet is a learning tool which aids student reflection and can be applied to any placement tasks including case work or counselling sessions, community work activities and research or policy tasks. A real advantage of this reflective tool is that it helps the student to break down what has occurred into distinct items and helps them with their own learning. It provides structure to reflective writing, making it distinctive from journal writing.

As well as asking the student to comment on the emotive side of the client, themselves and others, it encourages a focus on what they learnt and how this was done. When an intervention has not gone as well as planned it is important for the student to reflect on what they have learnt, how they might do it differently (wisdom in hindsight!) but to also recognise what they did do adequately or well, as there is always something positive.

Some learning blocks may be easier for you the supervisor to tease out, for example a student uncomfortable with a client's expression of pain or grief may tend to move onto safer topics or become more action focussed. They may not realise this is happening regularly and need you, the supervisor, to point out this pattern. However students may offer plenty of ideas as to why they had difficulties and have good insight already into their own learning blocks.

When using the think sheet remember:

1. You can change 'practical assistance' to 'tasks undertaken' so this tool is relevant to community work, research tasks, social policy or student projects.
2. Remember to go through your expectations of using this tool and check that the student understands why they are doing this, clarify any terminology, spell out when it must be

Think sheet worksheet

<p>Identifying data</p>	<p>Who were you with?</p> <p>Where were you?</p> <p>What were the significant issues or events that occurred?</p>
<p>Practical assistance or tasks undertaken</p> <p>Remember to distinguish between concrete and other kinds of tasks</p>	
<p>Feeling component</p> <p>In both yourself and others involved, identify the feelings and the levels of emotion present</p>	<p><u>Student:</u></p> <p>Level of emotion:</p> <p><u>Client / service user:</u></p> <p>Level of emotion:</p>
<p>What content have I learnt?</p>	
<p>How have I learnt?</p> <p>Remember to focus on the process of learning and strengthening the learning</p>	



Chapter 10: Writing skills on placement

Students begin their first placement with variable skill levels in a number of areas, writing skills being one of these. The range of written reports and formats for professional practice is extremely varied and includes memos, emails to agency staff, assessment reports, funding submissions, research reports, group evaluation reports, community profiles, etc. The list goes on! You as the field educator are the expert with the written documentation that your agency uses every day. Universities therefore, value the written skills that you can teach our students in the field educator role. It is crucial that you teach your students how to competently utilise the written word for the benefit of your clients and agency.

In many placements there will be opportunities for students to practice and develop their written skills including undertaking psychosocial assessments, family assessments, writing up case notes or making referrals to other agencies. It is expected that initially students will be slow to complete such reports and perhaps struggle with the correct language to use. With practice and feedback from yourself (feel free to comment on anything they need to learn), students on their first placement should be improving significantly by mid-placement. The process of writing and re-writing drafts can, in itself, be a valuable learning opportunity as it is building the students writing capacity.

When working with students their writing skills remember:

- 9 If the student is concerned about producing 'perfect work' then provide them with a deadline that they must meet with their draft. Having a deadline can force editorial decisions.
- 9 With the student for whom English is not their first language, or for whom literacy is a concern, the pace may be slightly slower and you may have to correct more writing

fundamentals, such as grammar. In this case an early discussion with the university representative is appropriate to see what support the university can provide.

9

- 9 What are the sensitivities, policies or protocols regarding their work?
- 9 Under whose name does the report go out?

It is hoped that your student will develop an awareness of the importance of professional writing early on in their placement. You and your team members will be key mentors in this process so please take the time to explain what is needed in the placement and remember to check out whether the student really does understand what is required in this area.

Written skills worksheet

Courtesy of Louise Studdy

Use the following worksheet when assisting students in their learning about different types of documentation. Provide your student with an example of written material that they can use as a guide. Some examples include: actual case file reports with identifying data removed, court reports, newspaper articles, newsletters or office emails. Have the students answer the following questions then discuss their answers in supervision.

What is the purpose of this written item?	
Who is going to be the reader (both intentionally and perhaps unintentionally)? Will it be the client, NGO, colleague or community member?	
What type of language should be used to maximise the impact or outcome? Does it require the use of specialised terms; is it formal or informal in style?	
Is it written in the first person or other?	
Is a letterhead or logo included and why?	
What agency protocols are being followed in the construction of the document?	
Has a format, structure or special form been used?	
To what rules or issues of confidentiality are you required to adhere? How much information can you disclose?	
Has permission been gained from the client, family, group referred to in the document? Was it needed? How do you know this?	
Who needs to approve the draft document?	
Whose name does it go out under if it is not your own? Why?	
List the type of written documents that you have completed to date on placement. Use the correct terminology for each.	
What other points need to be considered when writing documents as a social worker?	

2. **Trauma or mental health background** : An increasing amount of students have a traumatic response to incidents they are involved with on the placement, or disclose a trauma or mental health background to their supervisor. Often students are reluctant to disclose these issues to the university, as they have a fear of stigma, not being given the placement they want, or being viewed negatively by university or agency staff. The university is always mindful not to breach the student's privacy however if there is a risk to the student's wellbeing, learning on placement or to the agency's client group then the field educator should contact the university representative as early as possible in the placement.
3. **Mobility and access issues** may be significant key factors for some students and the university works with these students to identify as closely as possible any adjustments that may need to be made in the course of their placement. Adjustments can include physical aids such as rails or adjustable chairs, but could also include computer programs, voice recognition programs, visual aids or variations to the placement attendance pattern.
4. **Literacy issues** : This includes students who present on placement with poor spelling, grammar and hand writing despite having progressed satisfactorily at a tertiary level. Often the root cause can be found in educational backgrounds and a decreasing reliance on hand writing in everyday life. This issue should be identified early in the placement as universities have learning and teaching supports available for students in this area. In addition these students may require extra time to complete drafts of written work prior to submission to their field educator.
5. **International students** have particular needs on placement including adjusting to the cultural context of the Australian workplace. Even if their spoken English is strong, do not assume that the student is comfortable with the cultural context. This is particularly true for students from countries where English is a common language, yet the welfare system is significantly different to Australia. These students require a more detailed orientation in regards to international differences and may need ongoing debriefing regarding moments of cultural clash that they may encounter.
6. **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students** potentially face heightened challenges related to balancing field placement with their family and community commitments. They may also experience racism or isolation within an organisation. Paying attention to cultural safety in the workplace, encouraging critical thinking and questioning, giving students access to cultural mentors, encouraging the development of supportive networks among students and working collaboratively with the university when issues arise is crucial to the success of the placement experience.

External supervisor reflection

James was late and arrived sleepy to his first external supervision session. Two weeks later he did not turn up at all, prompting me to ring him. An apology came a day later indicating that once again he had slept in. When we met, we talked about professionalism and I learnt that this overseas student worked every night of the week. How on earth was he going to stay awake at his

placement, let alone in an external supervision session? It would have been easy to give up on him but something told me to give him more time. I spelt out to him what would happen if he missed any more supervision and decided to ring his supervisor. Surprisingly James was doing quite well at his agency but quite often did present as tired. James quickly found alternative work that allowed more sleep and was appreciative of the chance to prove himself.

He passed this first placement and went onto his final placement the following year. As his English improved, his confidence grew and his belief that he had something to offer the profession was really visible. In his final placement he was recognised as having strong empathic skills, a warmth that clients appreciated and a strong ability to organise himself. It was pleasing to hear a colleague remark that he was doing well at placement and hoped to use his native language when he graduated. James needed the extra follow up in his first placement. However with some restructuring of his personal life he was able to complete both placements, graduate and find employment.

Courtesy of external supervisor correspondence

- 9 Explore with the student their personal strengths and qualities in order to balance their view of this challenging experience. Ask the student how they have dealt with this challenge in the past. You'll want to know what their strengths and strategies are and what do you need to know to assist them.
- 9 Explore whether there are university resources with which the student can be linked to facilitate a productive placement experience. Contact your university representative who has been allocated to visit this placement and share your concerns. Find out if they know

Self-care worksheet for social work students

Courtesy of Louise Studdy

Students need to be learning self-care strategies in practice as a technique to support them throughout their career as a social worker. Use this worksheet at any stage through the placement to guide a discussion with your student regarding their self-care needs. This is particularly useful for students who are having a personal response to the content of their placement tasks, or who are neglecting their own need for breaks during working hours.

Why is self-care so important for social workers and their students?

What self-care strategies have you used so far whilst on placement? Be specific.

What success have you had with these techniques?

Name other self-care strategies that you have observed or heard about from your field educator / other social workers / students?

What are some symptoms showing that a social worker or other health professional might be starting to burn out?

How do you know when you are getting run down or overwhelmed in a work situation?

What might you need to do more on this placement to maintain your enthusiasm and energy levels for the duration of the placement?



Chapter 12: The end is in sight - finishing placement

Planning well ahead for finishing placement is essential. As a field educator you need to model to your student how to finalise the tasks, end relationships and complete the placement in a professional manner. Completion is a skill that the students will take with them throughout their careers and is relevant for all areas of social work.

The completion process is informed by end stage theories, such as final stage of casework and group work, grief and loss theories. Students are often surprised by the emotions they experience as they approach the end of their placement. Students can experience a range of both gratifying and challenging feelings including:

1. A sense of achievement or fulfilment when reviewing their accomplishments.
2. Feelings of relief or surprise at the end of such a lengthy period of time.
3. Frustration and disappointment when tasks are not completed in the way they had imagined.
4. Sometimes there is real sadness to be leaving the clients or group members whom they may have come to know well.
5. At times students experience feelings of guilt at leaving their clients or colleagues.
6. Often students feel exhaustion prior to the final few days at placement. In some situations this brings about disengagement from the work earlier than needed, so the student finds it hard to keep motivated to the end.

The aim is to help your student handle completion of their placement in the same professional manner that they conducted themselves throughout the other placement stages. Some helpful strategies include:

- 9 The second half of placement often moves quickly so after the mid-placement visit, both you and the student write in your diary, 'placement finishes in a month', 'only 2 weeks to go' and 'one week to go'. This minimises disappointment, rushing and a lack of necessary reflection time at the very end.
- 9 One month before the end of placement, meet with the student and ask them to determine their priorities for learning and outstanding tasks. Specify what needs to be done before the end of placement. For example, write a final draft court report, take meeting minutes independently or undertake a solo complex assessment.
- 9 Aim for them to complete the majority of tasks one week before the last day, as finishing tasks always takes longer than expected.
- 9 Share some of your own completion stories that might encourage the student to elaborate on what they feel they have achieved. Warn them that grief and loss will impact on them in some way when ending their placement so they should not to be too surprised if they have unexpected feelings.
- 9 Let your student know that endings and grief are difficult and that this is a good time to gain some more insight and skills into how to handle professional completion.
- 9 Two weeks before their last day ask the student in supervision if they feel able to share with you an excerpt from their journal. It should be something which they are comfortable to reveal to you and engage in a discussion about. By doing this activity you are beginning their reflection on completing placement.
- 9 Encourage your student to reflect in their journal with these suggested questions:
 - a) How do I normally handle goodbyes or endings?
 - b) What do I think will be hard about leaving the placement?
 - c) What am I looking forward to after placement is finished?
 - d) How could I continue to build on my skills in this area?
- 9 Stress to the student that any unresolved issues from placement may impact them either in their next placement or in the workplace, so engaging in meaningful reflection prior to finishing placement will have a positive impact.

Concluding rituals

Concluding rituals are an important part of marking the passage of time and acknowledging the contributions of individuals in a communal environment. Students have often invested a large amount of time, energy and passion into the agency and an acknowledgement of this is well deserved. A farewell morning tea or lunch is often appreciated, with students also reciprocating in their gratitude. Such rituals really aid the completion process and can provide a light social end to the placement. Even when difficulties have been experienced during the placement, a positive end can leave both students and field educators feeling that their time and energy has been valued and they have been a part of something important.

Concluding worksheet: your journey as a social work student at placement

Courtesy of Louise Studdy

This is a reflective worksheet to use around a month before the placement ends. The aim of this worksheet is to encourage your student to focus on some key areas that need to be discussed in your concluding supervision sessions, and in the end-placement report. Students can sometimes get lost in the tasks or the detail and it's helpful for them to stand back and reflect on their progress. Particularly this worksheet aims to focus the student's reflection on their skill development, theory development, and professional confidence. Once the student has individually answered the questions, have them bring it in to supervision and use it as a discussion guide.

1. What skills need further development? Name the specific skills and indicate how you will achieve this.
2. How can you use more theory at placement? Be specific with both the names of theories and how you might achieve this.
3. Are there any areas where you feel you need to improve your professional confidence? If so how might you achieve this?
4. In terms of your progress as a student social worker where do you want to be at the end of this placement?
5. How do you see this placement fitting with the rest of your career goals?
6. What areas are still areas of development for you and how do you see these progressing from here?

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