

Student Information

Counselling Practicum Guidelines



Contents

What is this unit all about?	3
How is this unit delivered?	3
What is expected during practicum?	3
The Practicum – How it Works	4
Confidentiality Requirements	5
Supervision	5
Record Keeping.	5
Assessments	5
Learning Outcomes.....	5
Working with Clients - Practicum Procedure	5
Attendance.....	6
Payment.....	6
Assessment Tasks	6
Counselling Session	6
Reflection Journal	6
Case Study	6
Monitoring of Counselling Skills	6
Student Support.....	7
Self Care.....	7
Completion of the Practicum	7

WHAT IS THIS UNIT ALL ABOUT?

Your practicum unit is where you have the opportunity to put your learning into practice, working with real clients, under the guidance of the Practicum Supervisor. The aim is to prepare you to work in a counselling role by enhancing your professional skills and confidence through practice, self-reflection and feedback from the Practicum Supervisor combined with clinical supervision. This is where all the various approaches and techniques can be synthesized and you can begin to develop a personal, coherent and well-integrated systematic approach to the way you provide counselling.

Membership of the Australian Counselling Association requires a student to undertake a clinical counselling placement in a work setting and participate in professional supervision.

HOW IS THIS UNIT DELIVERED?

There are 2 components involved in completing this unit,

1. Clinical placement at the Iona Trinity College's Counselling Clinic, located only at the Rhodes campus, which includes working with real clients, under supervision, to enable you to develop your practical counselling experience

- Engaging in peer counselling, under supervision. This experience also allows you to further develop and deepen your practical counselling experience
- You will document your counselling hours in a Log Book, which is to be signed off by the Practicum Supervisor
- Maintain a Reflection Journal
- Participate in a mid-point review at week 6 and final review in week 13 of your counselling skills

2. Clinical Supervision. Participating in weekly group and individual clinical supervision

This unit requires you to

1. Complete 140 hours practical placement activities on-site at the College's Counselling Clinic, located only at the Rhodes campus, with a minimum of 40 client contact hours and up to 100 hours counselling related activities, such as writing up client case notes/records, attending meetings, researching counselling related materials, administration tasks, observation and attending professional development training. To meet the 40 hours direct client contact requirement you will need to see 4 clients per week.
2. Supervision. Students are required to attend 2.5 hours per week to participate in group and individual clinical supervision and discussion. Students engage in on-going critical reflection on the issues relevant to their practicum and the focus and content of clinical supervision. You are to come to supervision prepared to discuss each client, with session recordings for feedback and exploration.

WHAT IS EXPECTED DURING PRACTICUM?

You will be expected to:

1. To always act professionally and ethically, being conscious of your duty of care
2. Practice the skills you learned in previous units, being willing to experiment
3. Discuss your experiences with others in a supportive empathetic manner
4. Understand what problems others are encountering and explore what solutions could be considered
5. Discuss techniques that are successful and identify what techniques didn't work
6. Work with a variety of clients, including participating in peer counselling
7. Observe and participate in the analysis of recorded counselling sessions
8. Relate theory to practice
9. Monitor your own professional effectiveness and growth
10. Not undertake any activity for which you are unsuited or incapable of completing because of a medical condition or disability
10. Be committed to self-care, as this is essential to sustaining your practice
11. Ensure your practice is safe without taking undue risks to yourself and seek appropriate professional support as the need arises
12. Meet attendance requirements and dress appropriately
13. Participate in mid term and final review of your counselling skills

THE PRACTICUM – HOW IT WORKS

Introduction to the Practicum. The first week of the semester students attend class which introduces the clinical counselling practicum, the clinical Practicum Supervisor and advise students they will be evaluated on their ability to apply their knowledge and skills in a professional manner.

Peer Counselling. Week two peer counselling sessions are explained and scheduled throughout the semester. This experience also allows students to further develop and deepen their practical counselling experience.

Onsite Counselling Sessions

Students attend the College's Counselling Clinic during weeks 1 to 12 and complete counselling sessions with clients, peers and participate in other counselling related activities, including observation and analysis of recorded counselling sessions.

Monitoring Progress. At weeks 6 and 13 students participate in a formal review of their progress in the development of their counselling skills. This review will be based on the results of the Skill Evaluation Form: Counselling Skills and Techniques, completed by the Practicum Supervisor. If at the mid-point review a student is identified as not making satisfactory progress the Practicum Supervisor will work with the student to identify any specific areas of weakness and develop a plan address any gaps.

WHY SUPERVISION?

The professional supervision process is essential in developing clinical understanding and appropriate counselling and psychotherapy interventions. Within the field of counselling and psychotherapy, supervision is a requirement for membership of professional bodies, as well as for the ongoing development of professional practice.

CONFIDENTIALITY REQUIREMENTS

Confidentiality is a crucial aspect of the professional counsellor's role and should be discussed with the client at the first session.

Supervision

In viewing or listening to recorded counselling or therapy sessions, counselling students are bound by the same legal and ethical considerations as if the client were talking directly with a counsellor.

Record Keeping.

During your practicum you will be required to keep case records of your clients which will be kept until the conclusion of the course. These records may include any of the following: intake notes, assessments, case notes, goal statements, release of information forms, video and/or audio tapes, transcriptions, evaluations and critiques, and/or all other records. On completion of the semester, all will be destroyed or erased, except for release of information forms.

Assessments

When submitting written transcripts, reports, reflections or other work, you must ensure that the "client" (this may be a fellow student or another person) has been de-identified. Initials or pseudonyms may be used instead.

Your "client" should be made aware when consenting to the recording of sessions, that the recording and/or transcripts may be viewed by academic staff and study support staff.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Demonstrate the application of appropriate evidence based counselling theories and skills during the counselling process.
2. Demonstrate self-awareness and reflective practice in counselling and identify areas for further professional development.
3. Demonstrate professional verbal and written communication skills with clients and others in the counselling environment.
4. Apply the values and ethical principles of counselling according to the ITC Student Code of Conduct and Australian Counselling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics and act in a professional manner at all times.

WORKING WITH CLIENTS - PRACTICUM PROCEDURE

1. Complete an intake interview for all new clients
2. See at least 4 clients weekly
3. Write up session notes on all client sessions. These must be done on the day.
4. Record all client sessions, with permission, either with audio or video tapes.

5. Contact the Practicum Supervisor immediately in the case of client suicidal thoughts or actions, suspicion of abuse, or suspicion of other situations of possible danger or harm.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend for all practicum hours. If more than 3 days are missed due to illness and students do not meet the required placement hours, they will be required to make up the lost time.

PAYMENT

You will receive no payment for the work undertaken as part of completing your Counselling Practicum.

ASSESSMENT TASKS

Counselling Session

Record a 30 minute counselling session, using the free zoom software, with a fellow student and provide an analysis on the effectiveness of your session.

You can use the Skill Evaluation Form: Counseling Skills and Techniques Checklist as a prompt if required.

Due week 8

Reflection Journal

Maintain a journal, writing at least four reflections of 300 words on your learning as regards

- a. how to establish and maintain therapeutic relationships with clients,
- b. how to effectively assess client issues and
- c. how to develop case formulations.

Reflect on your performance in each of these areas.

Length 1,500 words

Due week 13

Case Study

Write a report detailing 2 client sessions providing

- A brief overview of the client's issues
- The counselling approach you selected and why
- The client goals set
- Treatment plan

Length 1,200 words

Due week 14

MONITORING OF COUNSELLING SKILLS

At weeks 6 and 13 students participate in a formal review of their progress in the development

of their counselling skills. This review will be based on the results of the Skill Evaluation Form: Counselling Skills and Techniques, completed by your supervisor.

If at the mid-point review a student is identified as not making satisfactory progress the Clinical Supervisor will work with the student to identify any specific areas of weakness and develop a plan address any gaps.

STUDENT SUPPORT

If you are experiencing any difficulties during your practicum please speak to your Practicum Supervisor or the College Principal. The College can assist with learning support or provide additional assistance.

If we find at your mid-point review that you are not making satisfactory progress we will work with you to identify any specific areas of weakness and develop a plan to address any gaps.

SELF CARE

At times, the work that students experience with clients and/or during supervision or reflect upon, may be distressing or trigger existing personal issues. Usually these issues can be addressed in supervision. However, where the student finds these issues are creating any particular difficulties they may either seek counselling privately or speak to the Practicum Supervisor who can arrange for no cost or low cost counselling services.

Where the student's personal difficulties are impacting their practicum the WIL Co-ordinator will arrange for appropriate support, which may include additional supervision.

COMPLETION OF THE PRACTICUM

To finalise your Practicum after the completion of your required hours you will need to

1. Submit your Log Book that has been verified by the signature of the Practicum Supervisor
2. Complete an evaluation of your experience completing the Practicum and with any recommendations for improvement