Social Services / Mental Health Program at Pierce College

Well-trained, compassionate mental health professionals are critical in helping people overcome challenges and hardships to live better, happier lives. Pierce College's Social Services Mental Health program trains such professionals to interview, provide counseling and crisis intervention, conduct assessments, and coordinate treatment programs in a variety of settings. Program graduates are ready to work in entry-level positions in group homes, community mental health centers, work release and correctional programs, family and youth service agencies, psychiatric care facilities, and many others.

Pierce's Social Service Mental Health (SSMH) program incorporates strong academic and classroom training with specialized coursework designed to give students the practical knowledge, values, and skills they'll need in the workforce.

The students enrolled in SSMH are taught the following:

• Examine self and field to identify and match appropriate strengths and weaknesses for successful/meaningful education and/or career.
• Integrate self-awareness to cope and manage with stress in the field for self and others.
• Incorporate an ethic of care in all aspects of practice to insure humane treatment for clients/consumers/patients, regardless of race, creed, diagnosis, wealth, age (develop appreciation social justice).
• Maintain the integrity of the client/consumer/patient in order to establish trust.
• Access community resources to provide for life and home maintenance stability.
• Develop basic interpersonal skills as a foundation to counseling
• Know applicable laws and codes as they relate to counseling and client care.
• Integrate an understanding of the broad spectrum of human services.

Work-based Learning Requirement for SSMH Students

Students enrolled in Social Services/Mental Health are required to complete 120 hours of a work-based learning experience to earn their certificate or associates degree. This on-site learning experience allows the student to apply what they’ve learned in the classroom to real-life situations working in the helping professions. It involves a field site supervisor to monitor and oversee the student’s progress, which includes the student working to complete learning objectives that were agreed on at the beginning of the quarter between the supervisor and the student. Fall, winter, and spring quarters are ten weeks in duration, and summer quarter is eight weeks. Students who are enrolled in a field experience course are covered by two types of insurance: professional liability and general liability.

Field Site Supervisor’s Role

There are contract forms that a student will present to the field site supervisor at the beginning of the quarter to review and sign. These include a Responsibility Agreement and Learning Plan Agreement.

The Responsibility Agreement includes the following on the part of the field site:
Work-Based Learning Site Responsibilities:

- Comply with Federal and State Labor and Industry regulations.
- Provide orientation (i.e. safety policies and procedures) and job-specific training.
- Conform to federal laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability.
- Provide a safe working environment and report any student accidents and/or injuries.
- Consult with the program instructor concerning the student’s learning plan and progress.
- Verify attendance and/or time records and provide feedback to student and college instructor regarding performance and skill attainment.
- Evaluate student at end of quarter using the evaluation form provided.

At the end of the quarter, the student will present an Evaluation form for the field site supervisor to fill out and sign, as well as a Time Log to verify a minimum of 120 hours completed. The student is evaluated by the field site supervisor on their performance at the site.

Student will be evaluated on the following workplace skills:

- Quality of Work
- Quantity of Work
- Attendance
- Job Knowledge
- Versatility
- Initiative/ Self Confidence
- Working Relationships
- Observance of Agency Guidelines and Code of Conduct
- Appearance
- Achieved Learning Objectives

Pierce College
Social Services/Mental Health Program

Field Experience Course
for SSMH Students

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