

Self-Evaluation Paper

Summer 2022

This past semester found me very much in the middle of my stride as an intern with my site. I had been at the same site in Practicum and now really was beginning to get a feel for the place and for my role in their internship program. My client load increased and I started to be able to follow a good many clients over both semesters, seeing their progress in therapy. That was very rewarding to me. From my fellow interns at my site, I learned that we all have insecurities, strengths, and aspirations for our future careers. It's been really fun watching each of them grow as counselors-in-training and see some move on as they graduated over the past couple of semesters to the next phase in their journeys. From my peers, I learned that no matter how different each of the places we practice as interns is or how different each of us is as students, we are all working toward this goal of helping others and it feels good to see how often the same sorts of themes and ideas play out across multiple settings with different people. We are more alike than we are different. From my supervisors, both at my site and at Wake Forest, I've learned that there's nothing greater than having supportive, caring people who have been there where I am now to learn from and grow. I appreciate you all more than you will ever know!

In reviewing the course objectives for Internship I see very little that I didn't gain exposure to over the course of this last semester. I know I have to do my group work and am already making plans with one of the interns in my program to run a group this coming semester, which I'm very much looking forward to. I'm interested in seeing how that differs from individual counseling. I'm used to working with co-therapists, so this will be like adding co-clients, I suppose. My site and the university supply me with plenty of feedback and

opportunities to record, which is wonderful at my site since all clients in the pro bono internship program are required to agree to being recorded as a condition to receiving free services from an intern. My site supervisor gives us 2 hours a week (more if we ask for it) of direct supervision and that's been so good for everyone in the SIP program at Thrive. We always know we have our regular supervisor, Kristen, and we have the owner of the practice, Chris, as well as all of the other licensed therapists there with open doors (figuratively and sometimes literally) to us as interns. They all know what it's like to be where we were and I have definitely heard horror stories of less supportive sites so I feel like I hit a real internship jackpot with mine.

My learning goals were really ambitious this semester, but I feel I made a good deal of progress, regardless. My very first learning goal for the semester was to "naturalize" my use of reflections in client sessions. During practicum, those often felt forced. During internship, I began to find my groove, as it were and they felt more like me talking naturally than saying something that didn't sound like it flowed with the conversation. I feel good about that progress and I plan to work even more on it in the coming semester. Another goal I had was to work on my case conceptualization skills. I got so many new clients this semester that this one was guaranteed to improve! I have had a complex set of clients start therapy with me and I love sitting with what I learn during intakes to form a picture of what the beginning of our therapy looks like using the case conceptualization methods I learned in my classroom instruction. I have also added to my library of resources via good books on case conceptualization, treatment planning, and implementation of therapeutic interventions, and that feels nice. I really did plan to have a better self-care routine, and I am still not where I want to be with that one, I will tell you. Between doubling my case load of clients, having supervision class, adding another class with Addiction Counseling, and having a part-time money-making job as a content management

consultant, I am most assuredly overbooked more days than not. I need to work on that more. A lot more. I have started to develop a nighttime wind-down routine that consists of a leisurely walk on our treadmill while watching comedy TikTok videos. It's not exactly transcendental meditation, but it's what I've got for now and it seems to help me sleep so I'll take it and keep working. I also slipped on my goal to attend a virtual webinar or academic training of some sort, so I signed up for a suicide prevention summit between semesters, and I think that'll be really useful to me now because I have a client who just started who I feel is absolutely high risk.

One area from our goals that I know I will be needing to work on, and that I already mentioned earlier, is group counseling skills. I am really looking forward to my first chance to co-lead a group. The plan is for me and my fellow intern here in Cary to co-lead a group that she can source from Cary PD because she's worked with the police department (formerly, she was with the highway patrol, matter of fact) for decades. This will be good for a number of reasons, one being that it will be in person if we are able to manage that. My internship has been via telehealth and while I think that it's important to be able to counsel people virtually and still provide them with excellent care, it will be nice to see where the differences lie with in person. Another area I would like to focus on from the CACREP standards is how to formalize my own personal style of documentation. We use TherapyNotes at my practice and I like the system well enough, but I want to standardize HOW I document within that framework to make it applicable across other types of systems should I need to use those in the future. Currently, my plan is to stay with my internship practice after I gain my A licensure, so I may be in TherapyNotes for a while!

My new learning goals as I move into Internship II are fairly similar to the goals I had previously. I want to work more on my "counselor presence" so that I always feel genuine and

like I'm speaking from my own head and not from a textbook or a model of what a counselor "should" sound like. I want to work on knowing when to dig deeper with a client and when to just let the client talk and watch their thoughts unfold, learning about them as they share their lives with me. I would like to become solid in at least 2 modes of therapy other than person-centered. I'm fairly good with CBT and DBT so I would like to expand on those some, but would really like to work more on motivational interviewing. I have enjoyed watching the way that it works so well with clients who have substance use disorders and I have found those to be comorbid with other types of diagnoses while I've been at my site. I think that getting more experience with it will be truly beneficial to my clients. It feels natural to me and I love that authenticity. I would also like to dig into a more obscure modality, just for the academic sense of it initially, but also to try it out with an appropriate client. Perhaps something Jungian like dream analysis and interpretation with a client who is struggling to get restful sleep or has some anxieties during the day but is still dreaming would be really fun to try out. I want to go back over those techniques soon. Another goal I have for myself is to complete my EMDR training. I was originally going to complete it between semesters, but I can use all of my continuing hours toward my licensure if I take it at the end of the semester around graduation, so I may aim for that instead. I have seen the benefits of EMDR through licensed clients at my site when I sit in with them, so I look forward to being able to add that tool to my arsenal. I have a client who is interested in EMDR and I need to find someone who can offer it to her, since I'm not that person. I may just give up and take the training sooner so I can offer it to her. She's a really sweet lady who had some trauma during her time in the military and I'd love to be able to provide it for her since she's a pro bono client and none of the other interns are trained. Ultimately, I am looking forward to putting a nice bow around my practicum and internship

experiences and moving forward to my licensure exam, my A license, and the start of my career as a counselor. Thank you for your part in my journey so far. Your warm and compassion this semester meant far more to me than you may ever know!