## PROCESS RECORDINGS

A good process recording captures the essence and some important details of the contact between student and client. It is possible for a supervisor to see some of this from a verbal recounting of the contact; however, this approach misses some of the process that led to the success or failure of the contact. A verbal exchange fails to reveal the point at which the student gets stuck or where evidence of developing skill needs to be noted and affirmed. The act of writing a process recording enables the student to identify issues, problem themes and the flow of the process and facilitates the important process of self-evaluation. In recording the process, students begin to see learning issues for themselves, i.e. changing the subject either by client or student to avoid painful exploration or the failure to reach a mutual understanding of the issues to be addressed.

There is no more effective way to develop skill than through the use of process recordings. Tapes and videotapes, though more accurate and detailed do not challenge the student to recall, rethink, evaluate and summarize the content to the extent that is demanded by writing a process recording. It is a task, which requires absolute honesty and the courage to risk one's professional self to open scrutiny. The process is often stressful, but always a learning experience.

**Organization of Process Recordings**

Please note: Names and other identifying information have been changed to assure confidentiality.

* + - 1. **Administrative Data**
         1. **Worker**
         2. **Agency**
         3. **Services Provided**
         4. **Field Instructor**
      2. **Client Data**
         1. **Client name**(s): (fictitious)
         2. **Date** (of interview/session)
         3. **Phase of Work** (Beginning, middle, end)
      3. **Background Information**

The following information should be included, in paragraph form.

* Client demographic information/description.
* Current circumstances/presenting problem.
* History of problem and previous interventions/services.
* Purpose of interview/meeting, meeting place
  + - 1. **Dialog**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Narrative** | **Skills** | **Gut feelings** |
|  |  |  |

* + - 1. **Addendum**

Include, in paragraph form:

□ Summary/impressions. This is where you should reflect on the process, on your use of skills, and on both your strengths and challenges. Focus is on your practice with the client and/or client system.

□ Identify next steps in terms of (1) how you might approach the situation now that you have reflected on it and (2) what your next steps are in working with the client and/or client system.

* + - 1. **Questions**

Identify at least two (2) questions for class discussion. Focus on your work primarily (not on client).

* + - 1. **References and Summaries**

Identify three (3) literature sources that informed your interaction or will inform

your next interaction. When you cite the literature, be sure to *apply* it to your work with your client(s).

(Example)

**Moving from general to specific**

Shulman (2009) states that clients often begin talking about issues in universal or general terms. The worker needs to assist the client in being more specific. This helps in identifying a more manageable piece of work, as well as reducing anxiety about global concerns that are overwhelming. In my work with client X, I noticed that I was more comfortable sticking with the general, and had a hard time moving to the specific. This skill helps me to recognize the value of helping to move the client forward, and what may have made it difficult for me to do so (e.g. becoming overwhelmed with my client’s story).

Shulman, L (2009). *The skills of helping individuals, families, groups, and communities*

(6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

**Suggestions on What to Look for in Process Recordings**

1. What was the purpose of the contact with client? Was it achieved?
2. Did the student tune in to the emotional dynamics inherent in the clients' need to seek help?
3. Were life transitions or crisis situations explored as part of a holistic assessment?
4. Was the behavior of other systems considered as possible targets for intervention?
5. Did the student pick up on indirect communication and respond to it?
6. Was the interaction characterized by client initiation and student response?
7. Does the student recognize information relevant to the problem situation?
8. Does the student avoid specific content?
9. Are any personal needs of the student interfering in the student’s interaction with the client?
10. What issues are present or evolve during the contact? How does the student respond?

**Obstacles to Use of Process Recording**

Some supervisors, who are not accustomed to using process recordings as a tool, may resist using them because of fear of making a mistake or mislabeling a skill. Such fears are groundless. It is more important to identify where a skill or different perception is needed. Labeling skills is a collaborative task with the field instructor, the faculty field liaison, and the seminar professor, all sharing this responsibility.

Field Instructors should insist on receiving recordings at least one day in advance of the supervisory conference. Often several readings of the process recording and some reflection or discussion with a peer will reveal issues not seen at first. Students truly appreciate feedback from field instructors on these recordings. Field Instructors will find that attention to recording is amply rewarded by spurts in the student's growth and appreciation of honest feedback.