

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Memorandum

TO: Prospective MHC practicum students

**FROM: William I. Dorfman, Ph.D., ABPP
Associate Director of Clinical Training**

RE: ADVANCE PLANNING: Master's Practicum Placements

DATE: May 2008

I look forward to working with you when you get closer to practicum preparation. This is an essential and invaluable part of your training experience. It is a critical stage in the transition from theory to practice, as well as an introduction to future career possibilities.

Agencies generously provide placement opportunities as a support of training programs. As such, students are guests of the agency and must comply with all of their requirements. Placements will vary considerably in location, population served, and hours of service. The most important agenda for both NSU and the agency will be the provision of competent care for clients.

To help you better prepare in advance, I want to bring several issues to your attention well in advance of preparing for practicum.

1. Many placements can lead to job possibilities. Agencies report that they pay very close attention to students' work ethic, responsibility, flexibility, maturity and interpersonal skills. You will set yourself apart by bringing great energy and enthusiasm to your placement! Flexibility is a sought after quality according to practicum supervisors.
2. Agencies are at liberty to set their own service hours, and parameters for supervising students. The vast majority require students tend to work a substantial portion of their commitment during normal business hours (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm). Requirements of independent practicum sites could make it difficult for students to complete their practicum experience exclusively during the evening and weekend hours.
3. You should expect that agencies will require screening (background checks and drug screening). You should plan to complete testing right away so as not to delay your ability to start seeing clients.

4. Many placements lead to job possibilities. Agencies report that they pay very close attention to students' work ethic, responsibility, maturity, and interpersonal skills. You can set yourself apart by bringing great energy and enthusiasm to your placement.
5. By this time you should have arranged for a student membership to the American Counseling Association so that you can begin to enhance your identity as a professional counselor. Benefits of APA membership include access to resources on the web site the national newsletter and the *Journal of Counseling and Development*. Visit the web site at www.counseling.org.
6. Also plan to determine if you will be seeking licensure in Florida. You can extend the number of hours during practicum

While my office will continue to make efforts to recruit sites with flexible hours, we cannot tailor placements to your individual circumstances. There is competition for placements from NSU students, as well as other universities. To that end I am alerting all future practicum students that they must begin now to arrange work and personal schedules to accommodate practicum site expectations. ***“Some students may need to take a leave of absence from their employment or reduce their workload during this portion of the program”*** as we pointed out in the students handbook and at orientation.

If you need further advisement, please contact the program office. Dr. Shannon Ray, fulltime faculty in counselor education is available to talk with students about the field. She has an open door on Tuesday or Thursday afternoons (2:00- 4:30) in room 2032 or you can email her (shanray@nova.edu) or call her for an appointment at ext. 5725.

