**PROCESS RECORD ASSIGNMENT**

Process recordings are an educational tool that makes use of a time-honored social work method for improving one’s work with clients and/or client systems. It enhances one’s use of self and capacities to explore one’s work, as well as the ability to identify obstacles or areas for growth in that work. Process records are designed to allow students the explicit opportunity to explore their social work practice, apply material learned in the classroom to specific interactions within their field experience, and engage in a dynamic thinking, writing and feedback (written and verbal) process with their Field Instructor. Although sometimes Field Instructors request that students complete more, in our programs, students are required to complete this assignment four (4) times over the course of the academic year.

These assignments are explicit in their focus on helping students develop a solid self-reflective practice. They enable students to look deeply and specifically at a single practice interaction by writing a verbatim recording of what was said and observational recording that coincides with that. Students provide their own comments about their work using the structured outline below.

Equally as important to the student writing and reflecting is the written feedback offered by the student’s Field Instructor and Faculty Field Liaison. This assignment is a process that values the generative and collaborative thinking that often (if not always) results in an increase in the quality of student work.

Please keep in mind that process records are not a part of a client’s record, but rather, are a distinct part the student’s educational experience. Thus, preserving the confidentiality of the client(s) and other individuals referenced in this work must be forefront in the student’s mind when completing this assignment. **Information that reveals someone’s identity (i.e., actual names or other identifying information) must either be omitted or disguised consistently throughout.**

**Guidance for How to Complete the Assignment**

1. Field Instructors and students think together in their supervision meetings about a specific interaction to be “recorded” and why. By recorded, we mean a verbatim transcription of the exchange as remembered by the student—***this interaction should not to be video- or audio-recorded.***
   * Because we believe that all student interactions have “significance” to the student’s development, ***many kinds of engagement are appropriate for process records***—a client meeting that lasts a full hour, a 20-minute phone conversation, a complex family meeting, a community treatment team, a group session, even supervision with a Field Instructor (if the student feels comfortable with this).
   * The important thing to remember is that each interaction is, if at all possible, to be ***chosen ahead of time*** because of its anticipated significance to the learning of the particular student completing the assignment.
   * The chosen interaction should feature ***student participation, not observation***, as the intent of this assignment is for the student to be able to think more deeply about their practice, which is not possible if the student is simply shadowing others’ engagement.
2. The student engages in the agreed-upon interaction.
3. The student then completes the verbatim recollection section of this assignment ***immediately following the interaction***.

* **The single most important aspect of a process record is the *immediacy* with which the student actually records the interaction.** It is for this reason that Field Instructors and students should make a plan for private space and enough time immediately following the exchange so that the student may complete a thorough and “fresh” record. Without this preparation ahead of time, it is quite possible that the richness of the experience will be compromised or lost entirely.
* Before writing a process record, the student should **think about which segment of the interaction will be the most interesting and instructive to look at more deeply**. This is the section that should be transcribed verbatim. As it is the section that will considered with the most depth, there should be rich enough fodder for students to have opportunities to engage in reflective and reflexive thinking.
* That said, the beauty of self-reflection is that even the most mundane of exchanges may also provide students with opportunities to generate insight and deeper learning.

1. The student uses the verbatim recollection to complete the more detailed process record ***using the outlined structure below***.
2. The student gives the completed assignment to their Field Instructor for the purpose of ***receiving written feedback from the Field Instructor*** about their work. This feedback should include their Field Instructor’s questions, comments, observations, curiosities, noticings, etc. in response to the interaction and the student’s practice.

* The intent of the Field Instructor’s providing this feedback is not solely to offer positive or critical responses or writing/editing suggestions, but rather, should be useful for helping students deepen their self-reflective and reflexivity skills.
* The Field Instructor should provide the student with ***written feedback to the student within a week*** of receiving the student’s completed work, ideally before the next scheduled supervisory meeting. This is so that students and Field Instructors have an opportunity to discuss this feedback together in more detail.
* If students have an On-Site Supervisor in addition to their Field Instructor, students have the choice to share this assignment with that person to receive additional written feedback from an alternate perspective. Having the benefit of an On-Site Supervisor’s wisdom and expertise in this way can significantly enhance a student’s learning, however, it is the Field Instructor of record who is expected to provide the student with written feedback on the process record assignment.

1. The student gives a copy of the completed process record WITH Field Instructor comments to their Faculty Field Liaison ***on or before the date due***; this is so that the Faculty Field Liaison may also provide the student with some additional written feedback on their work.

**Outline of Process Record Structure**

The assignment is to be divided up into the following four sections; ***please use headings*** to label each section of your process record.

1. ***Contextual Information***– Describe the setting and purpose of the interaction and your thoughts and feelings prior to it. This includes basic information your relationship to the client and the overall goal of your work together.

* Briefly orient the reader to what was talked about prior to the section you are recording here, as well as what happened afterwards.
* Give some foundational information about who the person you are sitting with is—what might be important for your reader to know about them? (e.g., age, race, gender identity, cultural heritage, etc.)
* Where are you in terms of your engagement and/or relationship with this person? Is it a first meeting? Have you been working with them for some time? In what context are you meeting?
* Include a brief description of your immediate physical environment. Is there furniture? Are there others around? If so, how are you working to ensure confidentiality? How are you positioned relative to others in the room?
* Describe any noticeable thoughts and feelings you had prior to going into the interaction.

1. ***Verbatim Recollection***– Choose one 10- to 15-minute section of the interaction and describe all verbal and non-verbal interactions that occurred between you and the other person(s), as well as your internal dialogue as it was happening during the engagement

* **It is easiest to do this by dividing the paper into columns.** The four-column process is described below, and an example of this can be found in the Appendix of this document.
  + **Four-column verbatim transcription format**
    - 1st (left-hand) column: **Verbal transcription of what was said, word for word, by whom**. Individual articulations should be noted, as if you were writing a play.
    - 2nd column: **Non-verbal observations** of the person you are sitting with as well as your own presentation. This includes visual observations of the other person’s physical state and behaviors and kinesthetic observations of your own non-verbal behaviors, affect, and physiological responses, etc.
    - 3rd column: **Internal dialogue, including observations, thoughts, feelings and skills.**
      * Observations are things that you notice, such as your own and others’ non-verbal expressions.
      * Thoughts can include those things that pull you away from being present in the moment, such as, “I’m hungry. I wish I’d eaten breakfast…” or “This paper is due next week; will I get it done?” They can also include the meaning you make of what you are observing in the interaction, “She seems scared.” You can also include notations of skills you are using, or intentions behind doing what you did, “I asked because I needed clarification” or “I was hoping to get her to talking about the emotion I can see in her eyes, but she is not expressing verbally.”
      * Feelings should include your internal emotional responses to what was being said. For example, “I feel embarrassed; I probably shouldn’t have said that” or “I feel sad hearing this.”
      * Skills might include notations of intentional (or unintentional) use of relational and/or technical social work practice skills.
        + A single notation in this column may often be a combination of some or all of the above (Observations/Thoughts/Feelings and Skills); they are often overlapping and may not easily teased apart.
    - 4th column (right-hand): **Field Instructor Comments** for the purpose of the Field Instructor providing the student with written feedbackabout the verbatim transcription. This may include questions, comments, observations, curiosities, noticings, etc. in response to the interaction and the student’s practice.
  + Please note that there is an accepted realization that students will not remember everything perfectly. This is not the goal and we do not want students to be paralyzed by trying to remember every single detail.
    - This is a good opportunity to practice the skills of mindful listening, remembering, and subsequent documentation—all of which will be instrumental to you as you practice in your placement and beyond.
    - Additionally, the things you don’t remember in hindsight may be just as interesting or important as those you do—you may even end up writing about this in the next section.

1. ***Reflection/reflexivity***– The verbatim may be the longest section of the paper, but this should be the most substantial; **this is the “heart” of the process record**. Write about your overarching account of the interaction that includes a thorough examination of your own biases, ethical issues, practice skills, etc. The kinds of things that could and should be included in this section are listed below. Students don’t have to explicitly respond to each of these bullets, but should at least intentionally give thoughtful consideration to each, recording to share what feels most relevant and impactful.

* Give a **more detailed account** of “what was happening.” What was going on for you? What do you think was going on for the person you were sitting with? Were you attuned to this in the moment, or is this something you notice only in hindsight? What factors contributed to this?
* Explore any **assumptions** you found yourself making about the person, yourself or the situation—beforehand, throughout or afterwards. What do you think these are about?
* Similarly, examine any **biases** that came up for you. Situationally, what might have prompted them? Or on a personal level, what informed these or where do you think they stem from?
* What **power differentials** do you notice? Consider the physical environment you noted in the above section, the relationship you have with the person you are sitting with in the context of your role, as well as larger systemic issues of power, especially as they relate to identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, class, age, gender identity, ability, religion, sexual orientation, cultural or national origin, etc.). How might any or all of these be impacting how you engage?
* Discuss any relevant **ethical issues** that present themselves. What is the challenge? What professional values might this be this touching upon or creating a conflict between? What thoughts do you have about how you might work to resolve this?
* What **practice skills** were you using (these might include ones noted specifically in the verbatim, but others you didn’t identify above as well)? Was your use of these intentional? If so, why?
* In hindsight, do you **wish you had done something differently**? If so, what? Why?
* **What did you not remember** when transcribing the conversation, but had to go back in and add? What do you think impacted your ability to immediately recall this? What might not remembering be significant of?
* Expand in more detail upon the **thoughts, feelings and observations** you documented in the above verbatim transcription. What makes them notable?
* How does this exchange connect to or impact your **identity as social worker** (or its development)?
* Share any other “**noticings**” that you feel are relevant to your practice and/or the situation at hand.

1. ***Next Steps***–

* Describe the **possible goals and methods you could imagine for future work** with this person(s) (or team, group, etc.). In other words, now that you have had the experience of this conversation, what might you want to explore or suggest or do next time you meet?
* More importantly, **what do you take away from this particular experience as an area of professional growth** for you? What have you learned and/or what do you want to work on in anticipation of developing your practice skills and/or identity? Ultimately, what from this experience feels meaningful for your learning that you would like to use as a springboard for your growth?

1. ***Field Instructor Comments***– Please include this section header and leave room for your Field Instructor to comment on your practice, your reflection, and this Process Record assignment as a whole. As noted above, this feedback should include your Field Instructor’s questions, comments, observations, curiosities, noticings, etc. in response to your interaction and practice. The intent of this feedback is not solely to offer your positive or critical responses or writing/editing suggestions, but rather, to help you deepen your self-reflection and reflexivity skills.

**Appendix A**

**Verbatim in Four Columns: Explanation and Example**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Verbal Recollections*** | ***Nonverbal Observations*** | ***Internal Dialogue*** | ***FI Comments*** |
| Each box can be dedicated to each person’s contributions.  Ex: In this box you write what you said… | Make a note here about what your body language was like as you said that…  Or,  What did you observe about others’ nonverbals? | Note any internal dialogue happening for you in that moment. You may have more to say in some boxes than others. | FI add their reflections/ comments to support your learning and connection to Social Work Competencies and Ethics, adding any questions they hope to further discuss and explore with you. |
| Then this box would be the other person’s response… | Your observation of your own or their non-verbal communication… | Any internal dialogue going on for you as you listen. |  |
| You may have many rows of boxes to capture what you want in the exchange. |  |  |  |

**Example from Practice**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Verbal Recollections*** | ***Nonverbal Observations*** | ***Internal Dialogue*** | ***FI Comments*** |
| J: That sounds so interesting, but also super challenging. |  | I wanted to him to explain because I didn’t want to assume I knew what he meant. |  |
| C: I just feel like I need to push myself. |  |  |  |
| J: I hear people say “need to push myself” a lot—what do you mean when you say it?” |  |  |  |
| C: I don’t know… I guess I don’t want anyone to think I’m lazy. | He held his head low and didn’t look up. |  | What do you make of this? |
| J: Have you heard people refer to you that way in the past? |  |  |  |
| C: Ha – oh yeah! | Sarcastic laughter. |  |  |
| J: Do you mind if I ask who and why? |  | Was this too many questions? |  |
| C: My folks. Because they just think I am. |  |  |  |
| J: Do you think you are? |  | Closed ended question—how could I have made this open? | Great observation; now in hindsight, how would you answer this question for yourself? |
| C: I don’t know. |  |  |  |
| J: You don’t know? |  | I didn’t know what to say here. Part of me thought if I didn’t say anything, maybe he would keep going, but he didn’t. Silence for what seemed like forever, but was probably only like 20 seconds. So I just repeated what he said. | Silence can be such a powerful tool… We haven’t talked about this yet, but how comfortable do you feel sitting with silence? |
| C: I mean, I think I’m a loser a fair amount of the time, but I also see that I’m not. | He shrugs. |  |  |
| J: I don’t think you’re a loser. |  | I wish I hadn’t said this; how I feel about him is unrelated. He kind of looked at me funny and then changed the subject. |  |
| C: Anyhow, I think I *am* going to apply for that job doing overnights … |  |  |  |