What is a Learning Contract?

- Tool for identifying activities that student will complete to demonstrate skill development
- Used for evaluation (and on-going supervision and check-ins)
- Competency based education emphasizes the measurement of skill attainment as the primary focus of training, and student readiness for practice is measured against a set of core competencies.
  - 9 CSWE competencies
  - 2 activities for each competency

What is a Learning Contract?

- The document that guides a student placement
- Gives student and agency the full picture of what the placement will look like
What is a Learning Contract?

- Identifies what the student will be doing and how they will demonstrate what they are learning
- Identifies how the student’s activities fit with the overall organization

How is the Learning Contract developed?

Agency (expectation, opportunities) + student (strengths, interests) + requirements of practicum

- Co-created during the first few weeks of placement
- Identify student interests and abilities, and areas for professional growth, and align these with agency opportunities.
- Keep agency mission, vision, areas of service provision in mind, and consider practicum requirements.

Some Helpful Questions:

As you are creating the activities for the learning contract, it may be helpful to ask the following:

- How can we individualize and tailor activities to the needs of our clients/ the community being served?
- What will I observe the student doing (behaviorally: what will you see, hear) once they are competent in an area?
- Does the student have specific interests that can be incorporated into the LC?
Where can I find the Learning Contract worksheet?
http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/field-educators-liaisons/field-educator-resources/orientation-and-
training/learning-contracts-and-performance-evaluations.html

Learning Contract - Example

9 core competencies + outcomes and component behaviors

Competency 8
Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

 Expected Outcomes / SOWC Component Behaviors
- Critically evaluate the evidence base and choose and implement interventions to achieve effective goals and enhance capacities of clients and communities.
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, taking into account the human social, cultural, and contextual aspects.
- Identify and assess the strengths and barriers to effective intervention.
- Identify the strengths of interprofessional collaboration.
- Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse client systems and communities.
- Describe normative and non-normative processes associated with endings and transitions.
- Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals, using a trauma-informed and human rights perspective.

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<tr>
<th>Competency 8</th>
<th>Activity 1 and Target Date</th>
<th>Activity 2 and Target Date</th>
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Competency 8: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

- Activity 1: Provide individual counseling, using motivational interviewing techniques, on a short-term basis (6-8 weeks) for 2 clients
  - Date: End of second semester (May 4)

- Activity 2: Cover the agency crisis line two times each month and utilize trauma-informed, solution focused interventions
  - By: Each month of second semester (ending 5/4)
Learning Contract – Key Considerations

• LC will be used to measure and evaluate the student's progress
  • How will you know when the activity/goal is met?
  • What do you see, or hear?
  • What evidence is there that lets you know the student has been successful?

Learning Contract – Key Considerations

• Activities should be behaviorally specific
  • Helpful verbs: interview, write, observe, role play, participate, accompany, attend, summarize, co-lead, develop, understand, utilize, be able, distinguish between, formulate, demonstrate, examine, take initiative

Learning Contract Development: Resources

Learning Contract: What to do once it’s complete

• Student will put into Taskstream and you will approve it
• Use throughout placement
  • Supervision can bring the contract to life
    • Continuous discussion of activities
    • Progress? Growth? Challenges?
• Explore how particular skills/practice behaviors transfer to other settings

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.”
- Benjamin Franklin