

GUIDELINES FOR THE PSCSW AWARDS FOR CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

These guidelines are applicable to students working in all field settings, including those offering direct services to clients and those working with organizations or communities as a whole including advocacy work on behalf of social justice causes. There are two options: Guidelines for **Option A** are applicable to the student whose agency role is primary service-provider or support team member for short or long-term case assignments or interventions with individuals, families or groups. Guidelines for **Option B** are applicable to the student whose agency role is community-based, advocacy-focused or targeted to specific populations. **Judges will consider the written quality of the paper including style, grammar, organization, focus and flow. An abstract consisting of 5 – 8 sentences is required to headline the facts of the case, central points of discussion and conclusions.**

I. Introduction to Practice Setting (Option A and B)

- A. Description of the practice setting and focus of service.
- B. Community context, socio-economic and socio-cultural description of the population served.
- C. Ease of access and/or barriers for the population served.

II. Case presentation (Option A): Case Study of Individual Client, Group Client or Family

- A. Presenting problem/precipitating event that triggered individual/couple/family contact with the practice setting.
- B. Bio-psycho-social assessment of the individual/couple/family.
 1. Biological: age, sex, physical appearance, physical health, level of intellectual functioning, cognitive deficits. If the client is a child, include developmental history. Include other disorders that may have biological effects such as eating disorders and substance abuse.
 2. Psychological: mood/affect, level of psychological functioning, evidence of psychopathology, family history of mental illness, substance abuse, history of trauma; of individual, couple or family.
 3. Social Factors: client's familial and social relationships, sexual and gender identity, ethno-cultural identity, economic situation including access to basic needs (food, clothing, shelter).
- C. Clinician's initial assessment of client and client's problems including DSM-5 if indicated. To what extent are client's problems adaptive to the environment? Clinician may choose to include a systems model for assessment of a couple or family.
- D. Level of trauma, systemic oppression or societal/environmental injustice influencing the case should be noted.
- E. Why did you choose this client?

Case presentation (Option B): Case Study of Agency, Organization or Advocacy Group

- A. Identify and explain mission statement of organization or agency. What societal and/or economic problem or conditions does the organization aim to address? What is the history and origins of the organization or agency?
- B. Assessment of the organization or agency: identify its strengths and limitations, including but not limited to:
 1. Overall health and culture of the organization, including funding sources and funding allocation;
 2. Administrative structure and hierarchy; staff policies and procedures, staff morale and dynamics;
 3. Decision-making processes and flexibility to adapt to changing social conditions;
 4. Composition and role of the board.
- C. Clinician's assessment of the organization: To what extent does the organization fulfill its mission? Is the organization responsive to larger societal issues? Are staff working to support the goals of the organization and the community it serves? To what extent does the organization have a rapport with the target population? How does the target population feel about the organization? Describe the relationship between the organization and the community in which it's embedded (for example, neighborhood, school or other facility). How does the community feel about the organization?

III. Review of the literature (Option A and B)

- A. Present and document theories relevant to case study.
- B. Explain clinical/interventional approaches and techniques implemented.
- C. Provide rationale of intervention approach chosen for the client or organization based on student's assessment and the literature review as well as the nature and parameters of the setting.

IV. Process of treatment (Option A)

- A. Treatment goals and expectations of progress (including limitations pertaining to the practice setting, the role of the clinician, the treatment time frame, client's motivation, etc.).
- B. Description of the clinical relationship, including examples of the working alliance from clinical sessions, clinician's use of self, transference and counter-transference. These concepts can be applied to clients utilizing brief interventions or ongoing social work services.
- C. Discussion of collaboration with other treatment team members or professionals, if applicable.
- D. Discussion of client's response to treatment noting intrapsychic and interpersonal growth and changes in external functioning.
- E. Discussion of how the NASW Code of Ethics, particularly standards of Sections 2 and 3, may have relevance to the intervention process.
- F. What is the most salient learning garnered from the experience?

Process of Treatment (Option B)

- A. Description of the student's role in organization and to what extent student advanced the mission of the organization.
- B. Description of collaboration with other team members or professionals, if applicable.
- C. Description of challenges or obstacles that existed for student engagement.
- D. Description of how the experience did or did not meet student expectations.
- E. Discussion of how the NASW Code of Ethics, particularly standards of Sections 2 and 3, may have relevance to the intervention process.
- F. What is the most salient learning garnered from the experience?

V. Use of Supervision (Option A and B)

- A. Description of case or organization-related questions, self-awareness, self-growth and guidance within the supervision process.
- B. Relationship with the supervisor including, if applicable, any challenges within the supervision process and how those were negotiated.

VI. Conclusion (Option A and B)

- A. Evaluation of your work. What went well? What might you have done differently? What might your goals or expectations be if you could continue to work with this client or with this agency?
- B. Self-Reflection: How did writing the paper add to your understanding of your work? How did it inform your thinking? What did you learn about the client's social, cultural and economic reality? About the organization and its mission? What did you learn about yourself?