

GUIDELINES FOR THE PSCSW AWARDS FOR CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

These guidelines are applicable to students working in all field settings. There are two options: Guidelines for Option A are applicable to the student offering direct services or interventions to clients (individuals, families or groups) on short or long-term assignments. Guidelines for Option B are applicable to the student whose agency role is community-based, advocacy-focused or targeted to specific populations and social justice. **Judges will consider the written quality of the paper including style, grammar, organization, focus and flow. All identifying client and agency information must be rendered anonymous. 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. Description of the population served, including socio-economic, community and cultural factors.
- C. Ease of access and/or barriers for the population served.

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

- A. Presenting problem or precipitating event that triggered client contact with the agency (individual, family or group).
- B. Bio-psycho-social assessment of the client (individual, family or group).
 1. Biological: age, sex, physical appearance, physical health, level of intellectual functioning, cognitive deficits. If the client is a child, include developmental history. Include behaviors 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.
 3. Social Factors: client's family 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 presenting problem including DSM-5 if indicated. To what extent are client's behaviors adaptive? Systemic oppression or societal or environmental injustice impacting the case should be noted.
- D. 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. Explain its history and origins. What societal or economic problems does the organization aim to address?
- B. Overall assessment of the organization or agency, its strengths and limitations, including but not limited to:
 1. 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. Student'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 mission? To what extent does the organization have a rapport with the target population? 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 interventions or strategies implemented.
- C. Provide rationale for chosen intervention or strategies particularly as they relate to the initial assessment, to the literature review and the nature and parameters of the setting.

IV. Process of Treatment (Option A)

- A. Treatment goals and expectations of progress (including constraints such as the practice setting, time frame, the role of the clinician, level of client engagement, etc.).
- B. Description of the clinical relationship, including examples of the working alliance from actual sessions, clinician's use of self, transference, and countertransference. These concepts pertain to clients receiving ongoing clinical services as well as clients utilizing short-term interventions.
- C. Description of student's 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 is relevant to the intervention process, particularly the six core values and standards of responsibility one through three.
- 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 the extent to which student advanced its mission.
- B. Description of the student's collaboration with other team members or professionals, if applicable.
- C. Description of challenges or obstacles that existed for student engagement.
- D. Discussion of how the experience did or did not meet student expectations.
- E. Discussion of how the NASW Code of Ethics is relevant to the intervention process, particularly the six core values and standards of responsibility one through three.
- 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 inside the supervision process.
- B. Description of student's relationship with supervisor including, if applicable, any challenges in the supervision process and how those were negotiated.

VI. Conclusion (Option A and B)

- A. Evaluation of your work. What went well? What would you do differently? What would be your goals or expectations if you continued to work with this client or with this agency?
- B. Self-Reflection: How did writing this paper add to your understanding of your experience? 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?