Learning Contract
Practicum in Community Social Psychology
University of Massachusetts Lowell

Student's Name: Samantha Jacobs

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Supervisor: Linda Sou

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Address: 17 Warren St. 1st Floor
Lowell, MA 01852

Name of Program/Organization/Group: Lowell Community Health Center, Teen Coalition

Address (if different): The Youth Space is located at 144 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA

Website: www.lchealth.org

Supervisory Meeting (to be held at least one hour per week):

Day: Tuesday

Time: 9AM-10AM

At (location): The Youth Space at 144 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA

Additional Arrangements:

This agreement is accepted by:

Student _____ Date _____

Supervisor _____ Date _____

Practicum Instructor _____ Date _____

I. PLAN FOR LEARNING

A. Provide an overview Statement of Student's Learning GOAL for Practicum (general learning expectations and competencies student expects to master):

Over the course of the year I plan to utilize my practicum experience at Lowell Community Health Center (LCHC) to build upon the skills I have acquired through courses I have taken in the Community Social Psychology program, as well as, develop new skills in areas such as mentoring, fundraising, and grant writing. I hope that through my practicum experience I am able to create and maintain positive relationships with the youth, be more confident in my leadership skills, and become more comfortable working in a fast-paced, diverse setting.

In order to reach my goals there are many competencies that need to be acquired through hands-on learning and supervision. To acquire the competency of community assessment and program evaluation I plan to work with the program director and staff to evaluate current case management and evaluation instruments to identify if they are measuring the Teen Coalition's programs desired outcomes. There are several programs within the Coalition (including Youth Reaching Out (YRO) and Health Teens, Healthy Bodies) I will be looking at these programs to see if they measure what the staff believe they are. This will involve determining what the key outcomes are, conducting research on best practices of similar youth serving agencies, and evaluating the current program. The second competency I would like to acquire is resource development. This competency will be developed through grant writing and learning about the organization as a separate entity and as one within the community. I will be responsible for working alongside the program director in collecting information on the grant and helping to write it. Third I would like to expand on my interpersonal and group process skills. I will do this by attending weekly meetings, setting agendas, and facilitating meetings. The mission of LCHC's Teen Coalition is to "reduce risky behaviors that lead to teen pregnancy, HIV/STDs, substance abuse and violence in Lowell."

B. Using two columns that "match" each other, identify learning objectives in the left hand column and specific tasks and work that will enable you to meet-those objectives in the right hand column.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES **Specific skills student wants to develop**	**TASKS** **Work assignments that will help in the development of the desired skills**
Community Assessment and Program Evaluation	
1. Document ongoing practices, strengths, and resources of the community.	a) Use UML's online library to conduct research on best practices of other youth-serving agencies. b) Conduct research on what outcomes similar youth serving agencies are evaluating and what tools they use. c) Create a file of the above mentioned research. d) Coordinate with staff from the Teen Coalition in identifying key outcomes researched above (i.e., Are youths graduating high school? Are youths gaining more school attachment? Do youths feel like they have a trusted adult? And are youths delaying risky behavior?).
2. Develop evaluation and assessment designs.	a) Once again coordinate with staff from the Teen Coalition in identifying key outcomes mentioned and researched above (i.e., Are youths graduating high school? etc). b) Evaluate current case management and evaluation instruments and identify if they are measuring the desired outcomes. c) Survey staff to determine what they believe is the desired outcomes as mentioned above. (The Lowell Youth Violence Prevention Coalition led by the LCHC Teen Coalition works to reduce violence and risky behaviors in the

	community through encouraging youth to take the lead in educating peers. Therefore, a key outcome is delaying risky behaviors in their youth.) d) Identify some of the most pressing needs in these youth's lives. e) Conduct a pre and post-survey with the youth to determine if the program is having an impact on the targeted outcomes.
3. Develop and conduct surveys	a) Research survey questions already used by Lowell Community Health Center. b) Research questions/surveys of other youth serving organizations. c) Create a survey (approx. 20 questions) to hand out to the staff at the Teen Coalition to assess what they believe are the desired outcomes of the program. d) Create a survey for the youths to assess the outcomes they have achieved by being involved in the programs offered at the Teen Coalition.
4. Develop strategies for survey distribution that insure a good response rate.	a) Conduct a pre-test of all youths in the programs at the youth space. b) Develop a plan for reminding youth who do not fill out the survey upon the first request perhaps through reminders (letters, posters, announcements, etc.) or incentives (if everyone fills out the survey we will have a pizza party). c) Remind staff/case managers to follow up with youth after 6 months and conduct a post-test.
5. Write Evaluation and/or needs assessment reports, with appropriately formulated action	a) Create an excel file with the results from the pre and post-tests. Using the results, give recommendation to LCHC Teen Coalition staff about evaluation/case

recommendations. .	management instruments and implementation strategies. b) Write out a report detailing the results of the surveys given to both the staff, as well as, the youth.
Resource Development	
1.Assess grant writing efforts of the agency	a) Learn about what the program already does in terms of grant writing activities, such as grants previously involved in, grants awarded and not awarded, and why. b) Research past grants to gain insight on the program, the requirements of the grant, and the language used within it.
2. Identify and pursue grant opportunities.	a) Learn where grants are found (government and non-profit websites, databases, word-of-mouth). b) Support the program director in writing grants by collecting the needed information (such as deadlines, requirements, regulations) for each individual grant, as well as, helping to write the actual grant at the direction of my supervisor.
3. Strengthen connections with governmental and political entities that can support change efforts.	a) Learn about current and prior relationships of the LCHC's Teen Coalition with other youth serving agencies. Identify the strengths and challenges within it. b) Learn about the roles of the collaborating members of the Teen Coalition. c) Connect with community members and organizations to encourage referrals, knowledge of LCHC Teen Coalition programming and the Violence Prevention Coalition work.
Community Organizing & Coalition Building	

1. Develop and maintain a network of constructive work partnerships with clients, communities, organizations, and other involved professions.	a) Develop a relationship with the key members of the collaborating organizations of the Teen Coalition. b) Maintain said relationship through active communication (e-mails, meetings, etc). c) Develop a relationship with the youths at the Youth Space. Support youth as peer leaders, valuing their ideas and encouraging their active participation.
2. Create programs and events for the recruitment of new youth.	a) Learn about past programs designed by the Teen Coalition. Identify the strengths and weaknesses. b) Help supervisor currently created programs such as Youth Reaching Out (YRO). This will be done through a creation of an academic curriculum by feedback from the youth about what they would like to learn, collaboration with other organizations (such as UTEC) to utilize their resources and knowledge, and finally teaching the new curriculum to the youth. c) Help coordinate and create past events such as “Get Hooked, which are primarily events used for recruitment”. d) Work collaboratively with staff to recruit youth who are involved in different organization (such as Big Brothers Big Sisters and UTEC). e) Conduct outreach by passing out flyers to different organizations and individuals in downtown Lowell. This will mostly be done by approaching youths who are outside in the downtown area.
3. Learn approaches to icebreakers and Team Building	a) Research icebreakers and team building activities on-line. b) Learn about what activities have already been done with the youth/at meetings – what works well and what does not c) Create a packet of the final icebreakers and team building activities. These will be used

	when working with the youth, and before certain events/meetings
Participant Conceptualizing	
1. Obtain information from diverse levels of the setting, from those whom the setting is designed to serve, and from various databases or sources (both formal and informal) to understand the community and social needs that the setting is designed to address.	a) Speak actively among youth to learn about their lives and their needs. b) Learn about the organization through reading past grants, becoming familiar with the website, and asking the staff questions.
2. Describe relations and interconnections between this setting and the larger social-political-historical context in which it exists.	a) Understand and research the relationship between the police and the youth. Learn why it is the way it is. (Youths sometimes do not have a good relationship with the police. LCHC creates opportunities for positive and constructive youth/police dialogue.) b) Address the relationship by possibly providing workshops to educate the youth. For example, educating them on gang violence through my research paper. c) Do my own research through conversations with youths, community members, and other organizations LCHC works alongside. Following the research, a written report will be developed.
Interpersonal and Group Process Skills	
1. Utilize effective interpersonal communication skills such as active listening, paraphrasing, reframing, challenging, summarizing, etc.	a) Be able to determine, through feedback from my supervisor, what information is important during team meetings and be able to write concise meeting notes. b) Use the information gained off site (through meetings, workshops, class, etc) and be able to paraphrase important information and

	convey it clearly to staff and other stakeholders. c) Ask for feedback from my supervisor on my writing (e-mails, meeting notes, grant proposals, etc.) d) Be more conscious of developing these skills through class and in-class writing, as well as, through my papers.
2. Facilitate meetings.	a) Gain knowledge about the appropriate ways to facilitate meetings by watching my supervisor and other staff at LCHC. Most specifically, I will utilize Jesse, who is a staff member I work closely with during programming, in learning how to facilitate youth meetings by watching him do so, asking for tips on facilitation, and asking for feedback when I facilitate meetings. b) Facilitate a meeting by presenting to the staff during team meetings, and possibly the youths during programming, the research I conducted about gang activity in Lowell. c) Take on a leadership role with the youth during our Youth Reaching Out (YRO) meeting starting off by doing the mood check and question of the day and eventually through facilitation of the meetings.
3. Work collaboratively with colleagues in goal setting, decision-making, and implementing plans.	a) Be a team player and listen to all ideas and share my knowledge and resources with others during meetings and when working with the youth. I will keep everyone informed about what I am doing. b) Share ideas and be willing to ask questions. c) Overall, ask for feedback in all areas I deem necessary (writing, facilitation, collaboration skills).
General Professional Development	
1. Learn how to write for varied audiences.	a) Learn how to write e-mails specific to different people and organizations. b) Learn which languages are primarily spoken

	at LCHC and how to appropriately address said audience in my writing. c) Learn the vernacular used in grants and how to write grants effectively. d) The staff at LCHC speaks over 25 languages. Utilize the staff's knowledge when addressing individuals from different cultures to gain a better understanding of particular cultural norms, such as personal space and eye contact. e) Learn how to write clearly and concisely when writing out the minutes to our team meetings. f) Ask my supervisor for regular feedback.
2. Express one's feelings, beliefs, and commitments clearly.	a) Speak slowly and clearly to avoid sounding unknowledgeable and decrease the likelihood of not being understood. b) Create a judge-free environment where I feel comfortable to ask questions and give suggestions. c) Learn to speak without using words such as "um" and "like."
3. Accept feedback and use it constructively.	a) Take feedback positively and realize that it is for my benefit. Do not get angry or feel victimized. Try to modify my behavior based on the feedback. b) Be willing to ask for feedback to advance my skills in a particular area.

II. SUPERVISION

Describe how you are likely to use your supervision meetings and your supervisor's expertise/skills in achieving your goals and in reflecting on your progress:

My plan is to spend the supervision meetings to gain insight on the tasks that need to be accomplished during the week and most importantly to take advantage of the time spent with my supervisor to help me reach my goals. In order to do so, I hope to continue to develop a relationship with my supervisor that allows me to ask questions freely and learn and gain knowledge from my supervisor. Also, I plan to attend team meetings, as well as, workshops, retreats, and seminars that LCHC offers. Overall, this should allow me to accomplish my goals and gain confidence in my abilities and skills.

Note: *In addition to the weekly supervision, a written mid-year evaluation and a final*

evaluation are due on the dates specified by the Practicum instructor. Guidelines for these evaluations are provided by the Graduate Program. All students will also participate in Peer Supervision within the context of the practicum course. Finally, the student, supervisor, and the Practicum instructor will meet at during the year to evaluate the overall practicum experience.

III. CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS

Beginning Date: End Date:

Weekly Schedule (some variation will be inevitable, but specify the basic plan here):

ACTIVITIES	# HOURS
Tasks	7.5+ hours
Supervision	1 hour
Staff Meetings	1 hour
Preparation	.5 hours
Other (List)	

Vacation Periods Agreed Upon:
1. From_ Dec. 21 ___ to ___Jan. 24___
Day & Date Day & Date
2 From___March 14___ to ___March 18__
Day & Date Day & Date

Early termination: *This agreement should NOT be terminated by either party without joint conference between the student, the supervisor, and the practicum instructor.*

IV. RESOURCES

List research, reading, course material, other people, experiences or Programs that you will use to assist you in achieving the objectives listed in Part Three:

- Various CSP courses, current and past professors, and textbooks (specifically on Program Evaluation and Working in Groups).
- The University of Massachusetts Lowell's online library.
- My supervisor and other staff at Lowell Community Health Center's Teen Coalition.

- The youth at LCHC.
- The community of Lowell.
- Past history/research specific to the Teen Coalition.
- The staff at the youth serving agencies that are apart of the Violence Prevention Coalition alongside LCHC's Teen Coalition (Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club, YWCA and most specifically United Teen Equality Center (UTEC)).
- My colleagues in the CSP program.
- Books and tip sheets specific to icebreaker and team building activities.
- Various Websites.

V. SUPERVISOR'S COMMENTS ON THE LEARNING PLAN

(i.e., on the student's goals and objectives, what the supervisor hopes to provide, achieve, receive, etc.):

As the Director of the LCHC Teen Coalition and direct supervisor for Samantha, I hope to provide a work environment which encourages the creative and innovative ideas of staff to be implemented. I hope to provide support and guidance to Samantha so she is able to truly be part of the LCHC Teen Coalition team.

As an agency we hope that we will be able to learn from Samantha's findings and implement recommendations which are in the best interest of the youth, staff and community.