CUNY Experiential Learning Symposium: Guttman’s Human Services Field Placement Internship

Challenges and Opportunities for Evidence Based Practice
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The Human Services Major Field Placement

- The structure- students placed in variety of agencies throughout NYC (e.g., rehabilitation, homeless services, mental health, substance use, child welfare, criminal justice, etc.)

- The partnership- agencies provide supervision, mentorship and professional development for 125 hours per semester per student, for two full semesters.

- The opportunity- student interns bring their skills, talents and enthusiasm in the hopes of developing professionally and personally.

- Integration of coursework- Integrative Field Seminar
Evidence Based Practice

- Is EBP a skill, a practice, knowledge or all of the above?
- What is the role of experiential learning in EBP?
- How do we know what works and what doesn’t?
PARTNERSHIP

- The opportunity of the field placement agency in mentoring students through the EBP process
- The opportunity for Guttman’s Human Services field of practice
- How can we create synergy?
EBP education, training, and implementation for human services providers

What do we know already from the literature on EBP training and implementation?

1. Providers who have experience with research are more willing
2. Training is ongoing
3. Exposure in educational settings improves uptake
4. Organizational buy in, support, professional development/“culture of research”
5. Champions and peer leaders
6. Practices are not drastically different, burdensome, and demonstrate outcomes fairly quickly
Human Services majors at Guttman are unique

- Little is known about associates level, Community College interns
- Guttman students ARE the future of the field
- Research questions:
  1. Identify specific tasks, responsibilities, and skills
  2. Identify methods of exposure/training in evidence based practices
  3. Explore relationship between exposure/training and knowledge, intention, and implementation of EBP
“COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES WITH AND PERSPECTIVES ON EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICES IN HUMAN SERVICES” funded by Guttman’s Innovation grant

- Study methods- mixed (qual and quant)
- Data from our students (learning contracts, EBP reflection 1 and 2)
- Data analysis (thematic content analysis and survey analysis using SPSS)
Field Placement EBP Model

- EBP Attitudes/Knowledge
- Field Placement: tasks and responsibilities
- Adoption and/or intention to adopt EBP
- Supervision/Feedback
- Skills application (practice)
- Skills training methods

Gaps
Opportunities
Recommendations
Making meaning of the data

Hypotheses

Students will not have prior knowledge of EBP and may feel ambivalent toward EBP initially.

Some students will gain exposure to EBP through training and supervision in agencies where there is an organizational culture of research, support for professional development and ample resources.

Students will improve their knowledge of EBP, yet many gaps will persist based on course content, agency setting, and supervision (capacity for supporting interns).
sustainability
Guttman Community and CUNY Community College Human Services Programs

Peer Reviewed Journal and Professional Conference (SSWR)

Pilot testing of Human Services Curriculum and Agency training

Guttman Human Services Program and Partners (field placement agencies)
Engaging our partners

- Key informant interviews
- Purpose
- Hypotheses
- Next steps: recommendations, feedback session/member check, integration with curriculum
The student experiential learning perspective

- Lack of knowledge.
- Importance of Evidence Based Practices.
- Evidence Based Practice as the best approach to provide services to our clients.
Barriers

- Difficult to follow.
  
  Example: Even though research has shown that washing our hands can reduce infections, people still have a hard time to achieve this practice.

- Can be tedious and hard to find.

- Overworked staff and supervisors.

- Agency lacks capacity to offer supervision, training, and professional development for interns.
Recommendations

- Heavy emphasis of the importance of Evidence Based Practice in class.
  - Course on Research methods.

- Introduction of Evidence Based Practice at field Placement (Trainings).

- Implementation of Evidence Based Practices.

- Evidence Based Practice as part of the human services learning outcomes.

- Required training on Evidence Based Practice to all supervisors and interns.