

# Welcome to Stockton University

Online Seminar in Field Instruction  
(SIFI)

UNIT 8: Transitions and Endings

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# Agency-Specific Termination

- It is the role of the field instructor to educate the student as to how termination is handled in the specific work that the agency performs, including the agency's policies concerning termination.
- Endings and transitions are discussed in the classroom, but each field placement and field supervisor will vary in how they handle this important topic.

# Ethical Considerations

## Established principles of termination

- Services are discontinued when clients no longer need or benefit from them.
- Clients are not “abandoned” (i.e., their cases prematurely terminated without transition or follow up).
- Transitions to new worker or agency are handled in a way that is sensitive to clients’ needs.

# Student Understanding Termination

- It is essential for interns to understand the clinical issues that are associated with termination and/or transfer and to make sure that this vital aspect of treatment is handled in a way that is beneficial to the population they are serving (Baird, 2014).

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# Termination with Clients in Context of the Agency

Depending on the structure and function of your agency, termination will be very different. In an outpatient service, where individual counseling takes place, termination will likely be anticipated, planned for, and discussed with the client.

Discussing termination can empower clients in utilizing their own resources. In an acute care hospital setting, the initial meeting and termination may occur in the same session. Discussions of discharge and referral with the patient and their family are typically part of the first meeting.

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# Termination in Case Management

Some clients receive case management services for extended periods of time or even for life, depending on the situation and agency function. When a student assumes a case management role, the termination will be due to the student's completion of field hours. The student will need direction on dealing with their own feelings as well as the client's feelings when preparing for termination. Students often share cases with case managers, which can ease the transition when transferring cases.

(Summers, 2012)

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## Reason for Termination

- End of a planned time-limited service, such as number of allotted sessions given by an insurance company.
- Anticipated ending – end of the semester.
- Goals have been achieved.
- Unanticipated reasons - emergency (personal or agency related)
- Client “drops out”
- Client dies or moves to another setting
- Client is dismissed from program/agency

(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 1999)

# Response to Termination

Questions and feelings that some students experience regarding termination.

- Did I do a good job? Will the changes that were achieved be sustained?
- Did I do all I could have done?
- Feelings of disappointment
- Feelings of loss
- Feelings of guilt
- Feelings of relief
- Feelings of sadness

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# Response to Termination

- The student's response to termination will, of course, vary based on the nature and length of the involvement.
- A critical piece of supervision is to assist the student with processing termination. This is another area where process recordings and journal writing can be a very valuable tool for the supervisor and the student to gain insight into the situation.
- Recognize frustrations that exist concerning the reality that no treatment can "solve" all of a person's problems and that no relationship is without its difficulties.

(Baird, 2014)

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# Client Reactions to Termination

- Clients report positive feelings when therapy has been successful and the case is closed with the achievement of goals.
- If ending is due to events such as the therapist leaving the agency or the student's internship has ended, clients experience a variety of reactions. Some feel abandoned or experience anxiety. This can be avoided if the client is aware very early on of the end date so that they can prepare for it.
- Periodic reminders of the termination date are helpful.
- Focus on clients strengths and achievements.

(Baird, 2014)

## The Field Instructor's Perspective

Baum (2007), set out to explore this virtually unstudied area – how do field instructors feel at the end of the placement, what are their overriding concerns, and what are their enduring experiences. Baum did her study in Israel, but her findings seem quite universal.

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## Baum's Findings

- At the end of the placement the feelings of the supervisors were studied. Some were positive, some negative, and others were mixed.
- Many supervisors questioned themselves, “Was I a good enough supervisor?”
- The main source of satisfaction was having the opportunity to help students grow and develop professional competence (Baum, 2007).

# Words the supervisors used to describe the supervisory experience

- Satisfaction
- Pride
- Fulfillment
- Gratification
- Joy
- Sadness (over too soon)
- Frustration over not accomplishing all they believe they could have
- Drained/tired
- Relieved that it is over and no longer responsible



# Ending the supervisory relationship

- Discussing termination issues with clients, ensuring that case notes are in order, and even evaluating the intern's performance are all easier than dealing with how the intern and the supervisor feel about each other and about the conclusion of their relationship (Baird, 2014).

## Ending the supervisory relationship

- Set aside some time to speak with the student and complete the evaluation. Go over strengths as well as areas that need improvement. Make sure cases have been appropriately transferred and that all documentation is in order.
- You may contact the field coordinator should you have any questions or if you are interested in having a student the following year.

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## References

- Baird, B., (2014). *The internship practicum and field placement handbook: A guide for the helping professions, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.* New York, NY: Pearson.
- Baum, N., (2007). The field supervisor's feeling and concerns of the supervision relationship. *The British Journal of Social Work, 37*(6), 1095-1102.
- Kirst-Ashman, K. K. & Hull, G. H. (2012). *Understanding generalist practice, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.* Independence, KY: Brooks/Cole.
- Summers, N., (2012) *Fundamentals of case management practice, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.* Independence, KY: Brooks/Cole.