

Clinical Concentration

Advanced Field Placement Learning Opportunities

The Advanced Clinical Concentration prepares MSW students to advance their skills and capacity to deliver therapeutic services and support. A person-in-environment approach focuses on assessment, diagnosis, treatment, evaluation and prevention of mental health symptoms with acknowledgement and integration of the systems of oppression that impact our daily walks in the world. By centering intersectional identity and liberation health, students learn theoretically-based skills to develop clinical relationships, deliver therapeutic services from various practice models to support clients, and evaluate successful clinical outcomes. Students are able to ethically assess and intervene at multiple system levels, addressing both the internal and external factors that impact functioning, and evaluate their own meaning-making processes as a foundation of their clinical practice.

The curriculum elevates practice experiences through frequent and consistent partnered role plays addressing individual, couples and family therapy. Role plays and coordinated practice groups will offer opportunities to explore student experience within clinical practice settings as well as skill development in clinical activism within supervision, organizations, and community settings.

- The Fall term focus is on clinical assessment, case formulation, and intervention skills with individuals. This includes formal assessment engaging differential diagnosis, effective use of clinical documentation and terminology, reflective integration of critical consciousness, and application of various practice models and interventions that honor the multiple intersections of client identity.
- In Winter, students engage in practice models focused on family, couples and groups interventions while exploring their own socialization processes and family of origin work.
- In Spring, the focus is on the use of self, professional preparation, and the role of clinical social workers in agency and policy practice. Students work to understand and develop their foundational *clinical framework* to carry and build upon after graduation. Each term will build confidence in case consultation/presentation, strategies for sustained self nurturance, and the deepening of clinical knowledge and practice.

Types of field placement settings:

Field placements provide MSW students with a range of learning opportunities that prepare them to practice therapeutic work with individuals, couples, families and groups. Students who select the advanced clinical concentration are likely to work in a variety of settings where clinical skills are grounded in a strengths-based perspective. These include but are not limited to:

- Outpatient community mental health programs
- Inpatient psychiatric units and hospitals
- Behavioral health settings
- Partial hospitalization programs
- Culturally-specific treatment programs
- Treatment clinics (substance abuse/SPMI)
- Intimate partner violence and sexual assault programs
- Corrections programs
- Crisis and acute stabilization programs

Examples of Possible Internship Activities that Support Student Learning:

- **Assessment:** Conduct clinical assessments at multiple system levels, addressing both the internal and external factors that impact adult functioning
- **Group work:** Assist, co-facilitate and facilitate treatment and support groups (e.g. CBT, DBT, chronic pain management, grief and loss)
- **Diagnosis:** Use a biopsychosocial assessment to inform a strengths-based case conceptualization that contextualizes the practice of differential diagnosis of adult clients
- **Documentation:** Master agency-specific documentation systems and methods (may include case notes, treatment notes, treatment summaries, court documents)
- **Treatment:** Initiate and implement theoretically informed therapeutic interventions. Treatment focus is on the adult individual but may include family systems interventions as well.
- **Termination:** Initiate and implement termination of therapeutic services with individuals (and families) using client-centered practices and including appropriate evaluation
- **Evaluation:** Evaluate client progress and clinical intervention effectiveness with attention to multiple sources such as outcome indicators, level of engagement, feedback from supervisors, colleagues, and client systems
- **Policy practice:** Engage advocacy, brokering, and organizing skills with clinical clients to support the development and maintenance of ethical and just programs and policies that meet therapeutic needs