

Getting the most out of a placement¹

When students (Trainees) are on placement with a service, it is not always possible to be mentored or supervised by a worker all the time. Sometimes the student (Trainee) will spend time alone and it may be difficult to know what to do. Here is a list of suggested activities to work through so the student (Trainee) can make the most of the time at the placement service:

Service or program

- ✓ Get to know about the service or program by reading the available pamphlets, reports, website and any other available material. Do a profile on the service, noting items such as philosophy, aim and objectives, type of services offered, number of staff, and so forth.
- ✓ Find out what links the service has with other organisations.
- ✓ Get to know the roles of the people who work in the organisation and the discipline they come from.
- ✓ Learn about each of the services and programs offered. Write a brief description.

Documentation used

- ✓ Get to know what documentation and reference materials are used in the service or program. Set up a lever arch folder. Make a copy of key documents and place a copy in the folder. Use dividers to make up a section for each document.
- ✓ Read each document and write in your own words what each document is about.
- ✓ For a clinical placement, get to know what forms are used in the assessment and case management of consumers, such as the MH-OAT forms.
- ✓ Ask permission to read a file, taking note of the forms utilised in the consumers file.
- ✓ Complete a set of mock forms. Take the completed set of forms to a worker and go through the forms and ask for feedback about how well they were completed.
- ✓ Write an interpretation of what each form is about, for example, what an A1 of the MH-OAT forms is for. Check the interpretation with a worker to make sure that it is correct.
- ✓ For a health promotion placement, get to know how activities and programs are documented and evaluated. Request a copy of past health promotion reports or other available documentation (eg attendance records for events, program plans).

Learning objectives

- ✓ Review the learning objectives for the placement. Be proactive about meeting them. Take the placement objectives to the senior worker and/or supervisor and ask the person to review how work is progressing and to suggest ways of meeting the objectives if progress is not being made.
- ✓ Use the time wisely as placements should be rewarding and are only for a limited period of time. Do not spend precious placement time doing assignments. If there is a quiet period, use the time to complete one of the activities from this list.

¹ Based on a checklist developed by Kate Gooden, Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation, 2006.