



The Field Placement Survival Guide: What You Need to Know to Get the Most From Your Social Work Practicum (Second Edition)

By Linda May Grobman

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Field placement is one of the most exciting and exhilarating parts of a formal social work education. It is also one of the most challenging. It allows you, the student, to put into practice the concepts, theories, and skills learned in the classroom. It puts you in the position of practicing with live clients. It gives you room to explore and grow as a budding professional. More than anything else, it requires you to look inside yourself to examine yourself, your abilities, your reactions, and your suitability as a social worker. It can be invigorating, and it can be extremely difficult.

Field placement regardless of the setting or time involves universal issues for all social work students. Those issues are reflected in **THE FIELD PLACEMENT SURVIVAL GUIDE**. This collection of articles from **THE NEW SOCIAL WORKER** magazine addresses the multitude of issues that social work students in field placement face, including choosing a placement, getting prepared, using supervision effectively, working with clients, coping with challenges, and moving on to a successful social work career.

This collection is a goldmine of practical information that will help social work students take advantage of all the field placement experience has to offer. Each chapter (many written by seasoned experts in field education; others by students) presents a different aspect of the practicum and offers students insight into the importance of both the challenges and the joys of this unique learning experience. This second edition includes 9 new chapters.

This book is part of the **BEST OF THE NEW SOCIAL WORKER®** book series.



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Editorial Review

About the Author

Linda May Grobman, ACSW, LSW, received her MSW from the University of Georgia School of Social Work. She is the founder, publisher, and editor of THE NEW SOCIAL WORKER magazine. She is editor of the book DAYS IN THE LIVES OF SOCIAL WORKERS and co-author with Gary B. Grant of THE SOCIAL WORKER'S INTERNET HANDBOOK. Linda has been a social worker in mental health and medical settings, and she is a former staff member of two state chapters of NASW.

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Excerpt from the Introduction to THE FIELD PLACEMENT SURVIVAL GUIDE

Field placement—as I remember it, it is one of the most exciting and exhilarating parts of a formal social work education. It is also one of the most challenging. It allows you, the student, to put into practice the concepts, theories, and skills you have learned in the classroom. It puts you in the position of “practicing” with live clients. It gives you room to explore and grow as a budding professional. More than anything else, it requires you to look inside yourself—to examine yourself, your abilities, your reactions, and your suitability as a social worker. It can be invigorating, and it can be extremely difficult.

Field placement—regardless of the setting or time—involves universal issues for all social work students. Those issues are reflected in these articles, which are presented here as part of the “Best of THE NEW SOCIAL WORKER” book series. These articles represent the “best” that educators who work day-to-day with field placement students have to offer.

The title of this book is THE FIELD PLACEMENT SURVIVAL GUIDE. Is field placement something that I must survive? you may ask. What does that mean? I conducted a survey on THE NEW SOCIAL WORKER’s Web site to help name this book. The title with the word “survival” in it won hands down. I suspect that the reason for this is that those who have already gone through the practicum experience do feel as if they have survived.

I sure felt that way. As an MSW student who wanted to enter the mental health field, I couldn’t have landed a more perfect placement. I interviewed and was accepted at a large family service agency in a major metropolitan area. I was placed at the agency’s branch office in my neighborhood. There were social work students from prestigious schools around the country, and we would meet each week for group supervision and learning. I would be working alongside and learning from some of the social work leaders in the area.

....The practicum was all I could hope for and more. It was one of the most difficult experiences of my life (and certainly of my education), and I wouldn’t have had it any other way. I learned, I grew, and I survived.

You may feel this way, too. It’s not that anyone is purposely putting you through a “survival” experience, like college fraternity “hazing” or those “reality-based” TV shows. It’s just that learning to practice social work is hard work. The intense self-examination is a necessary part of learning to work with others. Putting theory into practice may not come as easily as you thought it would. You may feel uncomfortable with “not knowing”—a concept Manfred Melcher discusses in his book BECOMING A SOCIAL WORKER (another book in this series).

You may (and probably will) bump into some challenges along the way.... You are becoming a professional

in a highly demanding field, and it takes some work to get there.

The chapters in this book can help you get through those bumpy spots, keep moving through your placement, and get to the other side—being a full-fledged, successful social work professional.

Linda May Grobman, ACSW, LSW

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gabriel Reed:

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