TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Professional Counseling Program

Department of Counseling, Leadership, Adult Education and School Psychology
CLAS

Clinical Practicum (COUN 5689) Manual

Revised 10/26

INTRODUCTION

The following pages are intended as an orientation to the Clinical Practicum within the Professional Counseling program at Texas State University. The Clinical Practicum is designed to provide a semester of highly supervised counseling experience prior to the site-based internship (COUN 5389).

Contacts:

Dr. Kevin Fall- Program Coordinator

Dr. Tracy Chiles- Practicum and Internship Coordinator/ Counseling and Wellness Center Director

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

To successfully complete the Clinical Practicum, the student must log at least 100 clock-hours of counseling and administrative experiences, with at least 40 of these hours in direct contact with clients. Activities counting toward the 100 hours may include such professional activities as counseling, consultation, clinical supervision, and attending professional conferences. In the course of completing these activities, the student will be expected to demonstrate a wide variety of counseling techniques and communication skills, including, but not limited to, group and individual counseling interventions. Each week, the student must document hours engaged in these activities, and submit a weekly log to the clinical practicum professor (see **Weekly Log of Counseling Activities** form). Of the 40 direct contact hours required, 20 must be as a co-facilitator of a counseling group in the community. A list of approved sites is located on the Clinical Experience Canvas site. The group co-leader must be licensed by the state as an LPC-Intern, LPC, LPC-S, LMFT-Associate, LMFT, LMFT-S, LCSW, LMSW or be certified as a school counselor. A **Group Co-leader Agreement Form** must be completed at the beginning of the semester and submitted to the practicum professor. At the end of the group experience, the group co-leader will complete a **Group Co-Leader Rating Form** which will be submitted to the Practicum professor.

- Direct client-contact hours: 20 hours as a group co-facilitator, 20 hours in the Counseling and Wellness Center
- Indirect hours: 60 hours (supervision, consultation, research, observation, etc.)

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- The student will demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical foundations of counseling, articulate their own professional philosophy and integrate this philosophy into practice.
- The student will demonstrate appropriate intervention strategies that integrate theory, client assessment information, and accepted professional counseling skills while providing a safe and secure therapeutic environment.
- The student will demonstrate a working knowledge of ethical standards, and an ability to exercise ethical, moral reasoning in all matters relative to professional practice.
- The student will demonstrate a commitment to becoming a responsible and contributing member of the counseling profession.
- The student will demonstrate an understanding of the ongoing relationship between personal self-care and professional effectiveness.
- The student will demonstrate knowledge of basic statistics and research methodology, and integrate this knowledge into professional practice.
- The student will demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which behavior, attitudes, and values impact professional relationships.
- The student will demonstrate and understanding of how to assimilate and accommodate individual differences.

PREPARING FOR THE CLASS

Prior to seeing clients, proof of professional liability insurance must be submitted to the Practicum professor. Showing a copy of the policy listing your name, the policy number and duration of the policy will meet this requirement. In addition, you will need to have your Group Co-Leader form filled out and signed. Lastly, you will need to come to class with your Professional Disclosure Statement (you should have at least 5 copies).

Clients seen in Clinical Practicum will be based on the Intermediate Methods course(s) that you have completed. For example, if you have taken Intermediate Methods for Adults (COU 5366), you will not be able to counsel children requiring play therapy, as you have not been trained to perform these skills.

Clinical classes can not be audited due to the confidential nature of the course.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. ***Maintain a professional image.*** As counselors, your behavior, attire, and attitude reflect upon the department, university and the counseling profession in general. Consequently, it is important to maintain a professional image for the community, clients, peers and professors. There are several things you can do to enhance the image you project, including, but not limited to:

- Dressing **appropriately** and **professionally** when seeing clients;
- ***NEVER*** discuss cases outside of class;
- Not socializing in the client waiting area(s) or outside the clinic in the walkway;
- Maintaining the professional appearance of the clinic by keeping the rooms neat and clean. This includes returning chairs to rooms immediately after sessions and emptying trash containers as needed;
- Ensuring that play therapy toys are returned to their appropriate storage places, in a clean and orderly condition. Any broken toys should be left for the clinic director to repair or replace (Remember: toys are the children's words, and as such should be treated with care);
- Ensure that sand tray miniatures and sand trays are returned to their appropriate places. Also, watch to be sure clients do not take miniatures out of the room.

2. ***Know and practice within the current ACA Code of Ethics.***
This includes, but is not limited to:

• Advocating for and maintaining confidentiality. The privacy of the counseling relationship and material shared therein belong to the client. Cases should not be discussed with anyone other than the University supervisor and other practicum students. Other than the legal exceptions to confidentiality, the client is the only one who can direct you to release information. Clients may also request access to their own records. Any request by a client for access to her/his records should be discussed first with your Professor/Supervisor. A guided access, (i.e., the clinician's interpretations of the information in the records) may be planned. *Check with your supervisor*

before releasing records. Even in the case of a court order, you need consult with and get the approval of your Professor/Supervisor.

- Never reveal that your client is being seen in the counseling practicum clinic, unless you have written permission from the client. Even with written permission, you can only disclose information agreed upon by you and the client, and only to individuals listed on the consent form. If you experience pressure to reveal information from a parent, lawyer, or fellow mental health professional, immediately discuss this with your professor.
- Contact with clients is limited to the semester you are enrolled in Clinical Practicum. All contact needs to go through the clinic phone. Should a client contact you outside of the Clinical Practicum course via email, social media, or other means, contact your University professor. The professor will contact the client.

3. *Recordings*

- The clinic software (VALT) allows students to review session recordings securely off campus. If you review any sessions while off campus, you **must** be able to maintain client confidentiality and not view sessions with other people around. You should never access or review sessions in a public place.

CLINICAL SUPERVISION

You will be provided a combination of supervision experiences, including, but not limited to:
- individual/triadic supervision and group supervision with your university professor, provided in person during designated hours or as scheduled by your professor;
- written comments/feedback from professor's review of video recordings; and
- individual supervision with your site-based group co-therapist.

A minimum of 1.5 hours of group supervision and 1 hour of individual supervision will be provided each week, according to CACREP requirements.

Individual Supervision
Most sessions during your practicum experience will be observed live by your professor. Your professor may also come into your session when a "teachable moment," or a special client need occurs. Individual supervision will also occur during the course of the class, according to arrangements made between you and the professor. During supervision, if you plan to show a particular segment of a recorded session, be sure to have the recording set to the appropriate spot. Your session notes and treatment plans will also be reviewed and initialed by your supervisor.

Group Supervision
Be prepared to request assistance and help from your peers and supervisor. This allows the entire group to learn from your concerns and helps you to learn to organize and utilize the

supervision time in a productive and professional manner. You should review all of your sessions and bring prepared questions and professional concerns for individual and group supervision sessions.

OBSERVATION GUIDELINES

As part of your class requirements, you are required to observe other students working with clients during class. This not only fosters your learning, it allows all students to receive feedback from multiple sources.

When observing:

- You are not to disclose or discuss material from the sessions you observe with anyone outside of your class. At no time should you communicate directly with the clients you observe, or in any way acknowledge that you observed them. Remember that professional ethics apply to you even while observing.
- If you have any contact or relationship (current or former) with a client, you are prohibited from observing their sessions, and cannot participate in any group supervision concerning that client.
- There are designated **Peer Feedback forms (for play therapy, sandtray and general sessions)** for you to complete on the peer session you are observing. Providing your peers with feedback helps both you and the student receiving your input.

PREPARING TO SEE CLIENTS

Have your computer recorder set up and check the readiness/condition of the room before your client arrives. Make sure to have all paperwork ready for your clients as described below.

THE FIRST SESSION

- Prior to meeting the client, review the **Intake Form** completed by the person who received the referral. If there is missing information, try to collect it during the initial session. Pay particular attention to whether the client reported suicidal ideation, as this may necessitate the use of the **No Harm Contract**.
- Introduce yourself to your client(s). Give client(s) a copy of your **Professional Disclosure Statement**. Inform the client that he/she does not have to sign any form until their questions are answered and they feel comfortable doing so. DO NOT simply summarize the forms. Informed consent requires that the client be given ample opportunity, without pressure, to fully read and understand any form before signing.

Sample statement*: "Hi, my name is _____. I'm going to be your counselor. Before we can get started, I need for you to read over this information carefully and sign it. If you don't understand any of the information, or if you feel uncomfortable signing these forms for any reason, please let me know and we can discuss any questions or concerns you have once we get to the counseling room."*

- Begin each initial session by addressing confidentiality and ensure that the client(s) fully understands the purpose, limits and ramifications of confidentiality. Explain that this is a training facility and you are a student in a professional counseling program. Because of this, make it clear that you will be receiving supervision from your professor and, potentially, classmates. Explain that the sessions may be viewed by other students, as well as why and how the sessions will be recorded in broad terms. Next, obtain their signature (if not already signed) and place one copy of the form in the file and give the second copy to the client. Clients cannot be seen in the clinic without signed informed consents, both for counseling and recording.

- Finally, based on the client's ability to pay, determine the fee that the client(s) will pay for services. You may say something like, *"The fee for counseling is $25. If you can't afford that fee, let me know what you can afford and we set that as your fee."* Should the client be unable to afford $25, ask, *"What can you afford to pay?"* Stress the importance of attendance and promptness as well as inform the client that sessions must be cancelled 24 hours in advance, when possible. Payment is made via the QR code that is in the CCWC.

- Depending on the student's preferences, theoretical orientation, and/or the requirements of a particular professor, the first session is also an opportunity to gain background information on the client in a structured manner while also incorporating your theoretical orientation.

TERMINATION

Termination begins 2-3 sessions before the final session. During that time, help the client determine whether further counseling is desired and/or warranted. Inform the client that another practicum class will be held during the following semester, and that they can see a counselor then if they prefer (NOTE: students can only see clients within the scope of the course).

Give your client an opportunity to complete a **Client Rating of Assessment and Counseling Clinic** form. Inform the client that they can complete the form and leave it in the counseling room or on the desk in the waiting room. Also, make sure the client understands how valuable their feedback is and how extensive the measures are to incorporate their feedback. As appropriate, provide the client with a list of **Community Referrals**, along with emergency phone numbers.

SESSION DOCUMENTATION

The session summaries serve to facilitate and document your conceptualization of the session in terms of both content and process. They also provide a documentation of the client's progress over the course of counseling. Keep in mind that these are official case notes--open to client and legal scrutiny. As such, what you document in the notes becomes part of the official record and should never be altered or deleted. (Note: There are **Session Summary forms on ClinicNote for the following: general therapy, play therapy, family therapy, sandtray therapy, art/activity therapy, and parent consult**). The session notes should be written immediately following the session, accurately reflecting what happened in the session. Depending on the student's theoretical orientation and/or the requirements of the professor, the student is required to complete a **Treatment Plan** for each client after the third session. You are also required to complete a **Client Summary Report** at the end of the semester.

You are responsible for maintaining the file on each of your clients via ClinicNote. The notes should be written by the counselor in training and not via AI (example ChatGPT).

Client File Documents Checklist

Each client file should have the following paperwork in ClinicNote:

___Background Forms
___Consent for Recording
___Informed Consent
___Telemental Health IC
___Intake (some clients may or may not have this)
___All client SOAP notes – reviewed, dated, signed
___Treatment Plans for each client seen more than 3 times
___Client Summary Reports for each client – 1pg max

CORRESPONDENCE

All official documents intended for correspondence concerning a client must be co-signed by your supervisor (for example: **Consent for the Release of Confidential Records**). This includes routine letters sent to clients. Any letter that contains clinical information, the services of the practicum clinic, or might be viewed as some form of contract or agreement must be co-signed by your professor. This procedure protects the counseling intern, the client, and the university.

REPORTING ABUSE OF CHILDREN, ELDERLY OR DISABLED PERSONS

- If, during the course of counseling, you suspect that a child, elderly or disabled person is being abused or has been abused, remind the client of your legal obligation to report.

Obtain information that would be required for report to the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. See Texas Family Code for report specifics. Inform your professor as soon as possible and document report to DPRS in the client file.

- It is preferable that you and your client report the abuse together. If, however, you are not physically present with the client, and, consequently, cannot be sure that the client has or will report the abuse, *you must report it*. You are required by law to make the report within 24 hours after learning of the possible abuse.

  Dept. of Protective & Regulatory Services 1-800-252-5400

  http://www.dfps.state.Texas.us/Contact_Us/report_abuse.asp

ASSESSING AND RESPONDING TO SUICIDE

- If, during the course of counseling, a client states or suggests suicidal ideation, a **Suicide Assessment Form** *must* be completed so that appropriate action can be taken for the safety of the client. Should the student counselor suspect that a client *may be* suicidal, the student counselor must immediately shift direction in counseling and notify the University Supervisor. This is true regardless of theory. The student counselor must be direct in order to fulfill the student counselor's ethical obligation to preserve the client's well-being (beneficence).
- Should a student counselor consider a client to be at moderate to high risk for attempting suicide, the student counselor will notify the University Supervisor and call the university police department at **512-245-2805** immediately after completing the assessment interview.

Frequently asked questions

1. **For the 20 direct-client hours that are not group co-facilitation hours, are those made up of clients who come through the Texas State University practicum clinic and are assigned to me?**

   Yes, you will earn 20 direct client contact hours through one of our counseling clinics in San Marcos or Round Rock, under the supervision of a Counseling Faculty member.

2. **How much time is spent in the classroom/week during practicum? Is it multiple days, or do you see all your clients/have class on the same day?**

   Clinical Practicum classes are structured as follows: Practicum meets from 1 to 9 pm (with the first half being a combination of individual and group supervision), time for a break, and then clients are seen in the clinic from 4pm to 8pm, supervision and paperwork from 8 to 9pm. Depending on the size of the class, supervision may be arranged at an earlier time.

3. **Am I expected to co-create a group, or can I just be a co-leader for one that already exists?**

   You are expected to co-facilitate a group that already exists, alongside a licensed mental health practitioner (cannot be another graduate intern). You will earn 20 hours co-facilitating a group outside of the University Community Counseling and Wellness Center.

4. **Can I carry over extra hours that I earn from Practicum into Internship?**

   No, hours cannot carry over from Clinical Practicum to Internship. These are two different courses.

5. **Will I need to recruit clients for the clinic?**

   You may be required to recruit clients for the clinic, though many clients continue with services from a previous semester. The Program recruits clients from the community through regular, ongoing efforts. Should caseload fall below necessary levels, student counselors may be encouraged to assist in recruitment of clients for practicum sections.

6. **When do I see my first client?**

   During the longer Fall and Spring semesters, you will begin seeing clients during the second week of class. During the shortened Summer semester, you will begin seeing clients the first week of class to ensure you have the maximum amount of time to accrue experience in the clinic.

7. **How do campus carry rules affect Clinical Practicum clinics in San Marcos and Round Rock?**

   Due to the presence of children and mental health concerns being addressed in the clinics, these settings are exempt from campus carry rules. Outside of each of the clinics, the following sign is clearly posted in English and Spanish: “Pursuant to Section 10.06 Penal Code (Trespass by license holder with a concealed handgun), a person licensed under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (Handgun Licensing Law), may not enter this property with a concealed handgun.” For more information, view the Texas State website: www.txstate.edu/campuscarry

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

TO: Supervisors of Group Counseling
FROM:

Professional Counseling Program
Counseling, Leadership, Adult Education and School Psychology
601 University Drive
San Marcos, TEXAS 78666
Office: Administrative Assistant:512- 245-2575
Email:

_____ is an advanced graduate student in our Professional Counseling Program and is currently enrolled in *COUN 5689, Clinical Practicum*. This Practicum includes counseling clients under my supervision in our *Assessment and Counseling Clinic* at the San Marcos campus and attending a supervision seminar. In addition, as part of the requirements for the course, our students are required to participate as a co-leader of a group. This student is seeking your permission to participate with you in co-leading a group.

The student's role is to support you, to participate in planning and implementing group techniques and intervention strategies, to take part in preparing progress notes, and to receive feedback from you on his/her counseling skills. Attached you will find an evaluation checklist to facilitate the evaluation process and I ask that you complete it with the student as a means of providing specific feedback. If issues arise that are of concern to you or the student, please inform me as soon as possible so that instructional, administrative, or remediation actions may be accomplished. I may be reached at the university via email or at the phone numbers listed above.

As you know, counseling skills cannot all be learned from reading, discussion, or observation. These are advanced students who have completed core course requirements, a group process course, and an intermediate methods course and are ready, under supervision, to practice their skills with clients this semester.

Please sign and return this consent to supervise, along with documentation of your professional licensure or certification and documentation of liability insurance protection. The student is required to carry liability insurance, as are the professors who are duly licensed professionals in the State of Texas.

We appreciate very much your willingness to contribute to our student's professional development. If I may be of assistance to you, please let me know.

Signature, Group Co-Leader and Supervisor_____ Date _____

Printed Name, Licensure and/or Certification Designation
_____

Licensure/Certification No. _____

Email: _____Phone: _____

Group Hours Log

Student: _____
Group Site: _____
Group Co-Facilitator: _____

Practicum students: Complete the group hours log below. Students should accrue 20 direct hours of group co-facilitation during the semester.

Week Beginning	# Direct Hours
TOTAL	

_____ _____
Student Signature Date

_____ _____
Group Co-Facilitator Signature Date

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Group Co-Facilitator Evaluation

Group Co-Facilitator: Please rate the student on the following responsibilities related to co-facilitating the group at your agency/site:

Responsibilities	Always	Most of the time	Some of the time	Rarely	Never
1. The student was prepared for group sessions and tasks.					
2. The student was prompt for both counseling sessions and supervision.					
3. The student behaved in an ethical and professional manner.					
4. The student seemed professionally trained and met the tasks of a beginning counselor.					

Comments:

_____
_____
_____
_____

_____ _____

Group Co-Facilitator Signature Date

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CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Students in the Texas State University Professional Counseling Program have access to and work with confidential records of actual clients from the Texas State Assessment and Counseling Clinic.

Two factors relative to student access of client records during the clinical education process must be stressed:

1. Legally, the information in the client's record belongs to the client. A violation of client confidential information from the client's record has serious legal and ethical consequences.
2. The Code of Ethics of the American Counseling Association and rules of the Texas State Board of Examiners for Licensed Professional Counselors stipulates that confidentiality of client information is a part of professional responsibility and integrity.

Due to these legal and ethical considerations, any student enrolled in the Professional Counseling program who reveals contents of a client's record, except as it relates to the educational process in the classroom or at a clinical site, is subject to a referral to a Program Standards Committee and a completed Professional Counseling Performance Evaluation.

I _____ , attest to the following: (1) I understand the Professional Counseling Client Confidentiality Policy and Procedure Statement; (2) I understand that the penalty for violation of a client's confidentiality will result in a referral to a Programs Standard Committee and a completed Professional Counseling Performance Evaluation ; (3) I agree to maintain the confidentiality of client information to which I am exposed as a Professional Counseling student.

Student Signature_____
Date Signed _____
Witness_____

This agreement will remain on file with the Texas State Professional Counseling Program Faculty and will be made available to all supervisors to whom students have been assigned.

Texas State University- Community Counseling and Wellness Center

Clinical Ethics Agreement

Please read and sign this form. The original is to be returned to the instructor, and the student should retain a copy.

1. I hereby attest that I have read and understood the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice this semester and will practice my counseling in accordance with those standards.

2. I understand that my responsibilities include keeping my instructor informed regarding my training experiences.

_____ _____

Student signature Month/day/year

Practicum Supervision Agreement

This document serves as an agreement between _____ (Student/ Supervisee) and _Dr. Chiles_____ (Practicum Professor/ Supervisor) for the _Summer 2025_____ academic term.

The supervisee will participate in one hour of weekly individual/ triadic supervision and engage in a minimum of 1.5 hours of group supervision per week.

1. **The purpose and goals of supervision**:
    a. Fulfill supervision requirements set forth by the Professional Counseling Program and CACREP.
    b. Promote student growth, development, competence and professional identity as a counselor in training.
2. **Content and context of supervision:**
    a. The content of clinical supervision will focus on the strengthening the students counseling skills, conceptualize client cases and treatment plans, as well as enhance their theoretical orientation.
    b. The context of clinical supervision will assist students in understanding the ACA Code of Ethics, consent, confidentiality, regulations, and other clinical guidelines including telemental health services.

Responsibilities of Student/Supervisee and Faculty/ Supervisor

1. **Student/Supervisee Responsibilities**
    a. Adhere to ACA Code of Conduct and uphold professional responsibilities and standards.
    b. Arrive for supervision prepared to discuss cases, notes, treatment plans, and recordings.
    c. Complete clinical documentation by due date given by faculty supervisor.
    d. Implement feedback provided in clinical supervision.
    e. Contact supervisor immediately in instances of crisis (suicidal ideation, homicidal ideation, ect.)

2. **Faculty/ Supervisor Responsibilities**
    a. Adhere to ACA Code of Conduct and uphold professional responsibilities and standards.
    b. Provide weekly supervision to the student/ supervisee in the Community Counseling and Wellness Center on a weekly basis at an agreed upon time.
    c. Monitor student growth and development of counseling skills and theoretical orientation.
    d. Provide student/supervisee with feedback on client sessions, recordings, and clinical documentation.
    e. Complete Professional Counseling Performance Evaluation and LPC documentation for student/supervisee upon completion of hours and course.

3. **Required Community Counseling and Wellness Center Procedures:**
    a. Student/Supervisee will complete telemental health training prior to providing counseling sessions.
    b. Student/Supervisee will record each counseling session.
    c. Student/Supervisee will complete all required clinical documentation (SOAP Notes, Treatment Plan, Client Summary Reports) by the due date set forth by the Practicum Professor/ Supervisor.

I, _____ (Student/Supervisee) and _____ (Practicum Professor/Supervisor) agree to uphold our responsibilities as outlined in this Practicum Supervision Agreement.

Date signed: _____

Notes: