Analysis of COVID-19 Through the Lens of the 9 Social Work Competencies

The situation with COVID-19 is extremely dynamic. Many agencies/communities continue to monitor the spread of the virus in order to make proactive decisions necessary to protect community members. The purpose of this assignment is for BSW students to demonstrate integration of the 9 social work competencies to analyze the impact of COVID-19.

**Students should consult first with their Field Supervisor about using this assignment for internship hours before starting it. The Field Supervisor must give approval to the student to use this assignment as remote internship hours.**

Directions: Using your field placement setting OR your local community, discuss the following:

1. Where applicable include what you know about the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. spread, incubation, duration, fatality, etc.) and CDC guidelines for best practice during a pandemic.

2. Use the 9 social work competencies and accompanied questions as specified below to analyze the impact across systems (micro-macro).

3. In your conclusion, summarize findings and recommendations for your field placement agency or local community. Describe how this assignment impacted your understanding or beliefs about the role of the social work profession in responding to a pandemic.

Students completing this assignment will receive 45-hours towards their internship hours. This analysis paper should be 12-15 pages and adhere to APA format. Students should submit the final paper to their Field Supervisor and Faculty Field Liaison.

**Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

Examine the steps being taken to mitigate the spread of the virus at the individual, agency, community, and State levels. In addition, students should consider and reflect on the following:

   a. Relevant standards in the Code of Ethics
   b. Ethical use of technology
   c. Personal feelings – how has this pandemic affected you personally? What do you need? How are you taking care of yourself?

**Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**

Discuss how the COVID-19 pandemic has created marginalization, discrimination, oppression, alienation and/or created power and privilege. Responses should also include a thoughtful analysis of:

   a. How your field placement site has (or has not) responded in order to dismantle marginalization, discrimination, oppression, alienation and/or created power and privilege as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
b. How your local community and State has (or has not) responded in order to dismantle marginalization, discrimination, oppression, alienation and/or created power and privilege as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Building on your response from Competency 2, discuss the U.S. Federal Government’s response to COVID-19 thus far. Do you agree or disagree with what they have put in place? What strategies do you propose to eliminate structural barriers and ensure equity as it relates to testing and treatment of COVID-19?

**Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

Based on a literature review, discuss what the research says are best practices for social workers to exercise during times of national traumatic events.

**Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Using your discussion, research, and analysis written in Competencies 1-4, choose an issue stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and draft a letter to an individual or group of your choice advocating on behalf of yourself and/or clients. (examples of issues: workers who do not get sick days or health benefits; schools closing so a parent needs to stay home, the suggestion of getting meds you will need for a longer period of time; schools expecting all students to have access to internet; storing food and being able to buy enough for a couple of weeks).

**Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

The expectation is that we practice “social distancing” as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Consider the following:

a. What can engagement with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities look like in social work practice if we are “social distancing”?

b. Aside from using technology to communicate, how can social workers maintain engagement with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities?

c. Regular engagement with your peers/colleagues/clients has been abruptly halted. How are you handling relationships with others that have been meaningful and are ending abruptly?

**Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Assess your field site’s or community’s strengths and needs during the pandemic. Consider the following:

a. What are potential positive outcomes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

b. Reflecting on the needs you identified of the field site or community, are those needs getting met? If so, how? If not, why not?
Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Identify at least 3 interventions that either your field site or State or Federal government has implemented with the goal being to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

a. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of your identified interventions in Competency 8? From your perspective, have the interventions worked? Why or why not?

b. In evaluating your own social work practice as an intern, identify the competencies you feel confident in and the competencies you feel need further development.

With acknowledgements to Grand Valley State University School of Social Work