

Responsibilities of Student Clinicians

Know the ASHA Scope of Practice and Preferred Practice Patterns for speech-language pathologists that are pertinent to assigned clients. A student clinician is not expected to be proficient in all areas of service delivery. However, the student is expected to be able to complete basic diagnostic/therapy procedures that have been covered in the professional coursework; the primary objective is to develop and enhance one's clinical skills throughout the semester.

Know the ASHA Code of Ethics and adhere to its principles. All student clinicians must comply with the *ASHA Code of Ethics* in all clinical practice. Clients and clinical situations may present different ethical questions that require analysis or interpretation of the *Code of Ethics*; Familiarity with its intent fosters clinical confidence in all interactions in ethically challenging situations.

Know and follow any clinic policies, guidelines, or procedures in the conduct of clinical practice, particularly in regard to documentation of treatment, diagnostic reports, and recording of clinical clock hours.

Respect and maintain the confidentiality of each client through strict adherence to HIPAA guidelines. Client confidentiality is a fundamental right of all clinic patrons. Clinicians may acquire knowledge about clients, their families, their economic status, and other personal information that must be kept confidential. Client information should not be discussed, either verbally or in writing, to any individuals outside of the clinic, including hallways and classrooms. Client records may not be released to any agency or individual unless the client has signed an *Authorization to Exchange Information* form which is retained with the client's records.

Respect each client's cultural and personal beliefs. It is the clinician's responsibility to understand his/her client's cultural, ethnic, and social background as well as the client's personal beliefs. This understanding builds mutual trust and respect and is fundamental in building appropriate rapport with clients. Occasionally, a client's cultural and personal beliefs may conflict with a clinical activity or even a treatment recommendation. The clinician must recognize and respect this type of situation and react accordingly.

Demonstrate professional behavior at all times. Be prompt and organized for each clinical session. Prepare all materials and equipment in advance and make sure everything is in working order prior to a session. Clients should be met promptly at their scheduled time and therapy should end promptly at the scheduled time as well.

Maintain accurate records and documentation on a regular basis. Documentation may include diagnostic reports, treatment plans, lesson plans, as well as treatment summaries. It is imperative that every diagnostic or treatment session be documented such that it is clear as to what occurred in that session or evaluation. In treatment, it is also important that progress be

documented through tracking, re-assessment, and other progress measures. This should be documented as well.

Integrate knowledge obtained in courses into your clinical practicum assignments. The information that you incorporate into your practice is the information that you are likely to retain in the future and which will allow you to grow as a professional. The clinician should be adept at locating information, particularly as it pertains to evidence-based practice. The best way to enhance your clinical experience is to gather additional information about a client's problem independently through literature searches. This type of activity should become standard professional behavior that will last throughout your career.

Ask questions regarding clinical issues. Be comfortable to pose questions when assistance and clarification is needed prior to delivering the designated clinical services. The supervisor may not always perceive the need for assistance; therefore, it is the clinician's responsibility to ask for needed guidance. It is appropriate to ask questions regarding the rationale for procedures if it is not clear. Questions regarding professional issues are valuable for enhancing the clinical experience as well.

Learn to self-evaluate clinical performance. Although it is the supervisor's responsibility to provide critique of your performance and to suggest areas/ways to improve your clinical skills, it is through self-evaluation that a clinician truly matures into a complete professional. If you are not engaging in self-evaluation following each of your clinical sessions, it is likely that you are not reaching the level of independence necessary for clinical practice in the "real" world.

Attend all clinical sessions and meetings. A clinical assignment is a professional commitment and must receive your highest priority. It is not appropriate to cancel clinic appointments for activities such as studying for exams, taking a vacation, or meeting social or employment obligations elsewhere.

Use professional conduct in all interactions with clients and supervisors. Professional conduct encompasses all aspects of practice including punctuality, neatness and accuracy of documentation, attire, preparation, and motivation. Professional conduct is most overtly demonstrated through your verbal and nonverbal behaviors when interacting with clients, their caregivers, staff, and supervisors.

Communicate regularly with the assigned clinical supervisor, and become familiar with the supervisor's supervisory style and preferences. Some supervisors may provide regular feedback on a formal or informal basis; other supervisors may defer to the clinician to approach them with questions and comments while withholding feedback until the mid-term and final conferences. Regardless of the supervisor's style, it is imperative that the clinician develop rapport with the supervisor and feel comfortable in discussing both positive and negative aspects of the clinical experience.

Maintain appropriate clinical attire during all clinical assignments as well as when conducting other activities in the clinical area. While it is recognized that fashions vary considerably and there a variety of opinions about what constitutes acceptable attire, there are certain tenets of professional dress (i.e., the dress code) that should be followed. Occasionally, there may be an exception to this code warranted by a particular clinical setting or activity, and the clinician should consult with the supervisor in these instances.

Professional Dress Code

- Jeans or any kind and shorts are not appropriate professional wear. Denim shirts, skirts, and dresses may be acceptable if they are of a more formal style (e.g., button-down collar shirts).
- Tennis shoes are not appropriate. Sandals may be worn if they are "dressy" in nature (e.g., no "flip-flops." Open-toed shoes are strongly discouraged for safety and sanitary reasons.
- Halter tops, spaghetti straps, and low-cut blouses are not acceptable professional attire. The torso should be covered from the shoulders to approximately 6 inches above the knee. The waistline on pants/slacks should be high enough to meet the bottom of the shirt. Be aware that video cameras in the treatment rooms are located on the ceiling, so observers will have a "birds-eye" view of the chest and lower back areas - these should remain appropriately covered.
- Sweatshirts and "lettered" t-shirts are not acceptable professional attire.
- Jewelry should be modest and not excessive. If jewelry is worn, it should be monitored carefully for safety as well as unwarranted distraction. Multiple ear piercings encompassing the upper portion of the ear, nose piercings, eye-brow piercings, and tongue piercings are not considered acceptable professional attire. The clinician should remove these type of piercings during the conduct of clinical assignments.
- Small, indiscrete tattoos may be acceptable but most tattoos are not considered professional in appearance. In particular, multiple tattoos or large tattoos may be distracting or even offensive to clients and caregivers. These should be covered during the conduct of clinical assignments.
- Hair should be appropriately groomed and styled within reasonably accepted social norms. Also, remember that hair that frequently falls across the face may be distracting and impede instruction, particularly when facial cues are needed.