



University  
OF Manitoba

## Faculty of Social Work Professional Reflective Journaling

Reflective journaling is an important tool which assists students in identifying and processing learning in the field practicum setting. Journals provide an avenue for students to document what they are learning and to become more reflexive in their practice. Recording in a journal is not simply about recording what happened or was observed in the field setting but is intended to foster and strengthen one's understanding and development of critical thinking skills.

All social work students are expected to spend time writing in their journal on a weekly basis, the method or process to be determined in discussion with their field instructor. The Field Instructor will determine the key components and areas of exploration to be addressed in a journal. An electronic, expandable version of the Reflective Journal is available to all social work students and instructors and can be found on-line at [http://umanitoba.ca/social\\_work/programs/ddfieldinfo.html](http://umanitoba.ca/social_work/programs/ddfieldinfo.html).

Instructors may modify the existing form or may create a different set of critical thinking strategies, based on the individual perspective of the instructor and/or the scope and nature of the work being undertaken in the respective field agency. Common areas of inquiry to consider in a journal include the following:

- What ethics and/or values were challenged in my practice this week? How did this affect my actions?
- In which situation did I use my practice skills most effectively this week? What skills were developed or strengthened?
- What areas do I need to improve upon? What can I do to improve upon these skills?
- What did I struggle with the most this week? If faced with a similar situation, what would I do differently in the future?
- How have I made the transition from classroom to field? What has been most difficult? What has been most positive?
- How have I worked on improving my own problem-solving skills in the field setting? Why is this important in social work practice?
- What theories have guided my practice with a particular individual, family or group?
- What are the key policies of my field agency? What are the constraints associated with these policies?
- Did I take a risk this week? What happened and what did I learn?
- In what ways am I presenting in a more professional manner?
- What supports and experiences would be helpful to me in field placement? What can I do to access these supports and experiences?
- Describe a situation in which you requested feedback from others? Describe a situation in which you were provided with critical feedback? How did you react?
- Why is constructive and critical feedback important in social work practice?
- How did I prepare for supervision this week? What type of supervision am I most comfortable with?
- What are the different styles and approaches taken by staff in this agency? What can I learn from these different approaches?
- What questions or concerns do I have that I plan to address with my field instructor during supervision?

Discussion ensuing from the journal helps to raise additional questions and enhance dialogue and shared learning among field students, instructors and liaisons.