



# Alcohol Safety Action Program

## Placement Description

The Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program site will provide students with experience in applied research, intake and assessment of court ordered probationers, substance abuse related psychoeducation, and habitual offender intervention.

Students will learn what happens to those convicted of Driving While Intoxicated (D.W.I.), by observing D.W.I. trials in the Rockingham / Harrisonburg General District Court. Students will have the opportunity to observe and perform enrollments, intakes, assessments, and drug screening for individuals ordered to VASAP. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to observe alcohol/drug education classes.

## Intern or Field Placement Responsibilities/Opportunities

- Assist with education/intervention groups
- Help compile reports for court
- Do follow-up calls
- Observe in court
- Case management
- Drug screens
- Enroll probationers

## Contact Information

- Contact Person: Pam Simmons
- Address: 350 N. Main Street , Harrisonburg, VA 22802
- Telephone: 540/434-0154
- E-Mail: [rhasap@juno.com](mailto:rhasap@juno.com)



- Website: <http://www.rhasap.com>

### **Read about student experiences at this site below:**

#### ***Kailee Corbett – Fall 2023***

The Rockingham/Harrisonburg Alcohol Safety Action Program's (ASAP) mission is "to reduce the level of accidents, injuries, fatalities, and property damage as a result of drunk drivers by evaluating such drivers as referred by the court and appropriately placing them in an education or counseling program, which is designed to change driving while intoxicated behavior". They are conveniently located downtown and offer a variety of services to their clients, such as intensive education, treatment education, young offender program, ignition interlock monitoring, driver improvement classes, suspended driving intervention interviews, and multiple offender evaluations. While many different types of clients come to ASAP for various reasons, the majority of them are referred on DUI convictions or as young offenders who were convicted of underage possession of alcohol.

During my first couple weeks at ASAP, I primarily would observe my supervisor, who is one of two case managers there. He taught me how to do all of his daily responsibilities while also providing me with some background information on his clients and what he needed to do to help them. I began to assist him with some of his work and become more familiar with his role as a case manager. After a couple of weeks, I was able to begin doing some things on my own, or at least with minimal supervision. Things that I was able to do at my site as an intern include setting up for and conducting new client intake interviews, scanning and filing client paperwork, observing ASAP court cases, observing young offender education classes, conducting breath tests on clients, and observing client drug screens.

Going into this semester I did not know anything about ASAP or what they did, so I was not totally sure what to expect on my first day. My first impression of the site was that it is smaller than I thought it would be. The staff consists of a director, an office manager, two case managers and a part-time special programs clerk. The small size of this office actually turned out to be an advantage to working here because even though I was mainly working with my supervisor, I was able to see what each staff member did and what their responsibilities are day to day. This allowed me to learn about more than just one role, which was more than I expected and was a pleasant surprise. What I enjoyed most about working here was how friendly and welcoming the staff were. It always made me feel good coming into the office to people who were also happy to see me. I also really admired how they interact with each other and are friendly and care for one another as well. The only thing that many psychology majors may consider to be a disadvantage



of this site is that I was primarily responsible for administrative tasks rather than experiencing face to face interactions with clients. There were still times that I interacted with clients, such as while conducting intake interviews, but it was less than you may expect from other sites.

The biggest accomplishment I made at my site was conducting intake interviews and getting over my fear of talking to and interviewing the clients. I have always been more of a quiet person, but my supervisor pushed me out of my comfort zone by having me conduct these interviews. In the beginning, it was very anxiety inducing but having my supervisor next to me in case there was anything I forgot did help me feel better. After a couple weeks I had gotten more comfortable with the process and started to feel less and less anxiety around it. Learning these communication skills and overcoming my fear has been very beneficial to me and my future career because no matter where I end up I am going to need these skills. I now feel much more comfortable going into any future job as I have had much practice communicating with all different types of people and will be able to apply those skills anywhere.

The semester before my field placement, I took Biopsychology, Cognitive Psychology, and Developmental Psychology. These classes each gave me a little bit of background information about what I was about to experience as an intern at ASAP. In my Biopsychology class, I learned a little bit about alcohol, how it is processed, the different ways in which it affects males and females, and how it affects the brain. Cognitive and Developmental Psychology both taught me more about how the brain works and how thoughts are processed. In those two classes I was also able to learn about communication and some effective methods that I was provided with the opportunity to use. Having this information from prior psychology classes and my psychology background in general was very helpful in understanding more about the clients I worked with and allowed me to help them further.

For my contribution project, my supervisor suggested that I create something that could help his clients get less violations on their ignition interlock devices. In an attempt to accomplish this, I created a flier that could be handed out to each client that decided to pursue ignition interlock. Before I started to create the flier itself, I did large amounts of research on the topic. Research shows that including pictures to go along with the text can actually increase the chances of people reading the text, their reading comprehension, and their compliance to the instructions. With this information I began to create my flier, which involved summarizing some of the most important points on ASAP's Ignition Interlock Agreement and including colors, pictures, and making it overall visually appealing while still conveying the important information. Once I finished creating my flier, I showed it to my supervisor for feedback, and then integrated his feedback in order to complete my final product. I sent it back to him with hopes that ASAP would implement this contribution by handing out the flier to all ignition interlock clients, but did not completely expect this to actually happen. To my surprise, the director at ASAP sent it to



someone who is in charge of this stuff for the state, and he loved it. My contribution is now going to be used state-wide and I have translated it into multiple languages so it can get even more use.

### ***Fall 2022 – Rachel Pack***

The Rockingham/Harrisonburg Alcohol Safety Action Program's (ASAP) mission is "to improve highway safety by decreasing the incidence of driving under the influence of alcohol and other drugs, leading to the reduction of alcohol and drug-related fatalities and crashes." In order to fulfill their mission, there are 24 ASAPs throughout Virginia that offer a variety of services. The main services ASAP offers are education classes, intervention interviews, ignition interlock, driver improvement classes, and the oversight of cases for people convicted of DUIs or other alcohol-related charges (case management). Most of the cases at ASAP are people who have been convicted of a DUI, but they also handle cases for young offenders who received an underage possession charge. When a person is referred by the Courts to complete ASAP, they are interviewed by a case manager to understand what happened during the arrest and get a better understanding of their drinking habits to see what type of treatment is needed. Clients enrolled at ASAP are required to complete an education class. There are various education classes offered and clients are classified as needing either an intensive education class, a treatment education class, or a young offender class. The difference between the intensive education class and the treatment education class is that clients enrolled in the treatment education class must attend treatment (typically group counseling) as well.

My responsibilities as an intern included performing breath tests, collecting and packaging samples for drug screens, scanning documents, updating clients' files in the Enginuity Case Management System, attending court, and observing and leading intake interviews. The first few weeks I spent observing my supervisor, who was one of the case managers, perform his daily tasks while explaining to me what he was doing. After observing him complete tasks a couple of times, he then let me do the task with his help by telling me what to type and where different things were located on the computer. After a couple of weeks, I was able to take on more responsibility and do tasks on my own without his help. Other responsibilities I had the opportunity to do included answering the phones, taking payments from clients, and assisting with enrolling clients.

My first impression of the site was that it was small. There is a director, two case managers, a part-time employee, and an office manager. However, the size of the site was an



advantage because the interns are able to help out a lot around the office performing various tasks. Although my main role was to observe my supervisor who was one of the case managers, I often was able to assist with the office/front desk as well. This was an advantage to the site because if my case manager did not have something for me to do at the moment or was out of the office, I could help by answering phones and helping clients when they came to ASAP to pay fees or visit with their case manager. This allowed me to learn how to perform even more duties that will be helpful in future careers. Another advantage is that you are able to do hands-on work instead of just observing your supervisor. Once I learned how to do the tasks typical of a case manager, I was able to use the third office with its own computer to do my tasks independently. This was nice because I was able to help out around the office and contribute, rather than just observe. Since I typically did the same tasks each day, I had a good understanding of how to do each task without needing assistance. However, if I did have a question about how to do something, my supervisor and the other employees were very helpful. They always explained things to me when I needed it and made sure I knew I could come back to them if I needed more help or had other questions. Interning at ASAP had many advantages, but I think the most important ones were learning skills that could be used in various job positions, not just case management, and how to interact with people, specifically those with substance abuse issues.

I think the only disadvantage to this site is that some clients are not happy to be there and will vocalize their feelings. Luckily, most of the clients I interacted with were very respectful and enjoyed talking with me. I occasionally would have a client who was in a bad mood because they did not want to be at ASAP or pay fees, so they would not directly answer questions during the intake interview which made my role harder. However, my supervisor was always there to step in when I did not know what to say to a client which helped me learn how to handle different situations. I loved meeting with the clients and getting to know new clients during intake interviews, and I looked forward to going to ASAP twice a week because I never knew what to expect. Some of the clients started to remember me as well and would talk to me about their lives when they came in to visit with their case manager. I loved seeing how happy clients were when they made progress towards completing ASAP or other improvements in their personal life.

While interning at ASAP this past semester, I learned the skills needed to be a case manager and confidently complete tasks independently. This site was an amazing place to be an intern because I felt that each employee wanted me to learn and grow and would go out of their way to help me. I was able to do a wide variety of jobs while interning there and learned so much about case management, substance abuse, the court system, and what happens after someone has been convicted of a DUI or other alcohol-related charges. Most importantly, I learned that I am



capable of being professional and learning new skills quickly. Not only did I grow professionally, but I also grew as an individual by being able to talk to a wide variety of people and be more confident in myself and my abilities.

Before doing Introductory Field Work, I wanted to become a mental health counselor but had some interest in substance abuse counseling as well. After this semester at ASAP, I have decided I am more interested in substance abuse counseling and want to pursue that after graduating. However, before I get my license to become a counselor, I hope to get a job as a case manager working with people who have substance abuse issues. I have loved my time at ASAP and learned so much from each employee and would recommend it to any student looking at potential field placement sites!

### *Fall 2022 – Jordan Edmunds*

The mission at the Rockingham/Harrisonburg Alcohol Safety Action Program, also known as ASAP, “is to reduce the level of accidents, injuries, fatalities, and property damage as a result of drunk drivers”. This is realized by placing these drivers, who are referred from the court, into either an intensive education or treatment program. The program’s purpose is to create awareness of drunk driving and reduce its occurrence in the future. ASAP does not only work with DUI cases, but under age possession of alcohol cases are managed as well. ASAP works with the DMV and court to break clients’ habits of resorting to alcohol, and then choosing to drive a vehicle while intoxicated. Therefore, the goal is that once these clients are educated and given proper counseling through ASAP’s program, they will refrain from driving while intoxicated.

The services provided by ASAP include evaluation, referral, and monitoring of a client's case to aid their unhealthy drinking habits. Each client is assigned to a case manager. The case manager is in charge of managing an individual's file which entails signed release and consent forms, posted fees, the client's history, and case progress updates. All of this information and monitoring from the case manager ensures that the individuals will follow all of the steps they need or are required to close their case. For example, if there is a person charged with a DUI and they have to go in ASAP to speak with the case manager, they will be given a breathalyzer test before they can start the process. Then the case manager will perform intake assessments, and depending on the client’s status, administer a drug screen test. ASAP is partnered with law enforcement agencies, mental health resources, and community service agencies to help



individuals become the best version of themselves. In doing so, these agencies survey the clients' progress and success rate over ASAP's alcohol education course to evaluate their likelihood of becoming sober. Some individuals within the ASAP program are there because it is court ordered. Furthermore, the case managers at ASAP go to court once a month on a Monday so the judge can decide if the specific client needs to be doing more mental health work for his or case. This could involve attending more appointments/classes at ASAP, performing more community service hours, or possibly stern counseling so that he or she does not skip counseling program sessions.

As I began my internship with ASAP, I did not know much about the in depth legal process of handling DUI and alcoholic offenses. I was always very curious as to "why" some clients had to do intensive education vs the "why" for treatment referral. During my internship, I was constantly learning new skills of managing a case, how to organize files pertaining to certain clients, and the punishments for DUI or underage possession of alcohol. In my time at ASAP, I learned by shadowing a case manager. The many tasks he would perform included administering drug screen tests and packaging them to a lab, conducting intake interviews, making calls to witnesses and clients, scanning and copying documents, organizing paperwork for a client's file, conducting breathalyzer tests, and updating a client's case on the Engenuity Case Management site.

After a month or so, I was able to start doing some of these tasks as a case manager myself while also working as a team with my manager. For the drug screens, my supervisor would let me seal and package the urine samples, then I would work with the donor to sign proper release documents while my supervisor would communicate with the client about their case. Additionally, I was able to learn how to conduct intake interviews. I was very nervous conducting my first one. However, my supervisor really helped me become comfortable with this process by practicing with me. These "intakes" are a critical part of client registration and an introduction into ASAP for them to begin the process of mental health recovery. After some practice and time, I was fully able to conduct the interview all by myself. Specifically, I would ask the clients to provide details about the charge and a description of their offense and what happened. I would also gain information regarding their history with alcohol or drug use and if they have ever been treated for alcohol use before. Furthermore, after each intake session I was able to proficiently update the client's responses from the interview into the Engenuity Case Management Platform while my supervisor was able to catch up on work that he needed to complete. One other process used at ASAP I never heard of was ignition interlock. This is a device used to disable vehicles from starting until the driver demonstrates sobriety by blowing into the device. Since I wrote a paper on the interlock process, I really dove in with my



supervisor and discussed the details and issues clients have with violating the in-vehicle breathalyzer devices. During this experience, I was able to become much more educated about the alcohol penalty adherence process.

I received a number of benefits from interning at ASAP. First of all, I've been thinking my career path would head towards becoming a paralegal someday. Therefore, acquiring case management skills, having one on one time with clients, and updating progress on these cases has some alignment to the role of a paralegal. Another advantage of interning here is that I learned how to appropriately communicate with particular types of clients from diverse backgrounds. These individuals in intake sessions would sometimes question my case manager's reasoning for referral to treatment assessment, or interlock violation issues. Observing my case manager, I saw how well he handled those who struggled with past addiction. I learned that careful wording such as, "It's not based on my opinion, but off of ASAP's guidelines", was the best way to calm down the clients who disagreed with the policies. The only disadvantage I would say was that I was not able to observe the court trials as often as I wanted or anticipated. Unfortunately, around the time I was interning there wasn't as much staff to cover the front desk, so I would help out at the front answering calls.

Overall, I'm so happy that ASAP was my very first internship because I got to experience some elements of the justice system, help in keeping the community safe, as well as assisting individuals to make better choices when it comes to alcohol. Managing DUI cases allowed me to realize that I would also enjoy a career in aiding those with alcohol and substance abuse addictions as well as being involved in the legal system. Alcohol can alter a person's personality and cause so much damage to a person's life. It helped me realize how passionate I am about this problem and I want to be involved to help individuals with substance abuse in the future. Additionally, I learned that I want to deal with more criminal cases in my future career and be involved with the justice system. Lastly, ASAP could be very busy and the time went by fast which I loved about this internship. Since there was always a client to see or case updates to be completed, I realized I need a career in the future that can be challenging and allows me to be productive at all times. My internship at ASAP only strengthened my interest in the justice system and passion for helping people.





*Spring 2022 – Faith Fischetti*

The mission of the Rockingham-Harrisonburg Alcohol Safety Action Program, also known as ASAP, is to “reduce the level of accidents, injuries, fatalities, and property damage as a result of drunk drivers by evaluating such drivers as referred by the court and appropriately placing them in an education or counseling program, which is designed to change driving while intoxicated behavior”. It is also the intent of ASAP to educate others on driving under the influence, create awareness within our community, and modify the public’s attitudes towards drunk driving. Most of the clients that ASAP sees are DUIs, but they also work with those who receive underage possession charges. ASAP is a non-profit organization that works with the DMV and court system to change one’s drinking behavior and ensure the community’s safety.

At ASAP, every client is assigned a case manager, who then monitors and reviews their case. The ASAP case managers work with the court, law enforcement, mental health professionals, community service agencies, and social services to monitor the individual cases. They attend court every other Monday and play an important role in communicating the status of the client, discussing their progress, and helping the court decide next steps. ASAP also serves as a support system for their clients, for they are always meeting with the clients when necessary, performing drug screens to ensure abstinence, and encouraging them to make the right decisions. Aside from DUI and young offender services, ASAP offers driving improvement courses to educate on safer driving strategies.

Throughout my time at ASAP I was able to gain a lot of responsibility and independence. I started out shadowing my supervisor, learning the roles of a case manager, gaining an understanding of the legal system and becoming educated on the consequences of receiving a DUI in Virginia. As time went on, I began to complete more tasks on my own and interact with a plethora of clients. There was always something to do at ASAP, for there are only three case managers who have around 300 clients each. My tasks included attending court, organizing client files, updating the Engenuity Case Management System, scanning documents, performing breath tests, observing and conducting client drug screens, and packaging these drug screens. I also began to lead the intake sessions, with my supervisor present. Intake sessions occur when a new client enrolls in ASAP, so we sit down with them to understand what happened on the day of their charge, what their history looks like, and determine what services they need from us. I was able to conduct this interview with a multitude of clients and then write up their classification report. I also gained the opportunity of enrolling clients into the ASAP program,



communicating with clients on the phone, monitoring Ignition Interlock devices and writing up violation reports when necessary, preparing show cause documents, and taking client payments.

There are a plethora of advantages of interning at ASAP. First off, you gain a significant amount of skills, even if case management is not the career that you wish to go into. The online case management system, Enginuity, is widely used in a lot of companies. I have full understanding of how to navigate this system and how to document important/confidential information, which will be beneficial to future jobs. Another advantage of ASAP is getting to interact with clients who struggle with substance use. Although not every client has an issue with drugs or alcohol, I did meet numerous clients who do. It was interesting to gain an understanding of how those struggling with addiction act, the way they are able to manipulate others, and overall learning how to determine the best way of helping them. Furthermore, ASAP is a fast-paced environment and there is never a moment that you will have nothing to do, which I feel is a big advantage of the site. The staff really cares about the experience of their interns. I cannot think of any disadvantages of this site, besides the fact that you may deal with some angry clients. The majority of people you encounter are at ASAP because they have to be, not because they want to be. Therefore, they often get upset at the money that they need to pay or how long it will take them to complete the program. Having rude clients is challenging in the moment, but it really did improve my communication skills and teach me how to handle difficult conversations.

ASAP was an outstanding experience and I am so thankful that I was given this opportunity. I actually finished my 80 hours quite early in the semester because I enjoyed going to ASAP so much that I did around 8.5 hours a week. Once I finished my hours, I continued to spend time at the site and worked as a part-time employee. I learned more than I could have expected and I am sad to leave. Given that ASAP was always so busy, I was always learning new things, expanding my skills, and challenging myself. ASAP is not one of those internships where you are simply able to put it on your resume but feel like you did not gain something from it otherwise. I did not sit there and do clerical work, grab coffee, or any of the other little things that some people expect when they are an intern. Rather, I was treated as an employee and my supervisor, as well as the rest of the staff, were beyond supportive of me wanting to learn. They were always happy to answer any questions that I had and teach me everything that they were doing. The employees at ASAP really do have the best intentions for their interns. I have enjoyed this experience so much that it has redirected my career plans. Prior to this experience, I believed that I wanted to go into therapy for eating disorders. Now, I have plans of applying to graduate school for social work and getting a career in social services or helping others who struggle with substance abuse. It sparked an interest in the legal system and taught me that I really enjoy working with others. My time at ASAP has been nothing shy of amazing, eye opening, and the best learning



experience.