



Community Counseling Center

Intern or Field Placement Responsibilities/Opportunities

- Coordinate and supervise visitations between parents and children
- Document supervised visits
- Observe or facilitate groups for adolescents and adults
- Review files for needed information, such as signed treatment contracts and release forms
- Preview new educational materials or videos for use in treatment
- Perform other administrative duties, such as
 - updating mailing lists
 - preparing folders/packets for clients
 - taking messages, payments
 - care for office and building
- Help with fundraising opportunities, outreach
- Help individual clinicians with research

Contact Information

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Read about students' experiences at this site below:

Spring 2024 – Lindsay Bernstein

The Community Counseling Center is a private, nonprofit organization that offers counseling services to residents of the Central Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. The CCC's mission is to provide quality mental health services for individuals, couples, and families of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County regardless of socioeconomic status. In line with their mission, they accept many forms of payment including insurance options, self-pay, Medicaid, and a generous sliding fee scales based on income. All the counselors on staff have a different background, and have with a variety of degrees (residents, LPCs and LCSWs). They offer an array of services: individual/children's counseling, family counseling, couples counseling, supervised visitation, group services and educational classes.

As an intern at the CCC, you will mostly work with the Office Manager and the Director of Supervised Visitation. The supervised visitation program is meant to encourages parents and their children to preserve their relationship when other factors may prevent them from visiting one another under more 'natural' circumstances. The supervised visitation program is designed to provide a safe environment for parents and children to visit and continue building positive parent/child relationships. These visits happen at the CCC, mostly in the visitation room, sometimes outside depending on the family's preference. However, if the opportunity arises, interns may be able to help with some of their group services (i.e. anger management) or educational classes (i.e. co-parenting).

At this placement, you will shadow (either other interns or the Director of Supervised Visitation) for your first few visits. You will be assigned visits based on your availability. Visits range in duration, frequency, and schedule. However, visits are typically an hour long, during the evening (Monday-Friday) and occur once a week. However, some visits are bi-weekly/monthly or even last for two hours. Standard procedure for the CCC's visit is that interns arrive 30 minutes before the visit starts, and visiting party arrives 15 minutes before the visit starts. Interns help process payments before the visit starts, and the child arrives at the start time. Interns sit in on visits and take notes. During visits, our top priority is the child. Interns can provide redirection to visiting party during the visit to ensure all our policies are being met. However outside of redirection, interns do not participant in the visit. Instead, they are note takers. In addition to taking notes, they are required to complete documentation about the visit, and file their paperwork.

The CCC is a great place to have your field placement. A great aspect of this placement is that there is lots of independence. You run your assigned visits on your own, and report back how it's going at weekly supervision. Additionally, a benefit to this site is that most of your hours will be during the late afternoon/early evening. You are easily able to schedule classes and maintain this placement. However, a downside of this placement is that visits are limited. There are not enough active cases for interns to get their whole 10 hours through the visitation program. Therefore, interns help the office manager with various clerical task to help ensure they are on track to complete their required hours.



I was excited to complete my field placement at the CCC as I had no experience working with children in a clinical setting. Through my visits, I did find it educational to witness first-hand how families interact with one another. I was also able to see how different family dynamics can be. As a psychologist, we strive to be culturally competent, and it is important to note that one can never become fully competent. Psychologists strive for this, and this placement has brought me closer to that goal. I also was fortunate enough to assist with a couple of the co-parenting classes, which exposed me to the educational side of clinical work. That experience was something I was very excited for, and I was happy to partake. I got to witness a group of strangers discover commonalities about their family situation and learn something from that experience.

My psychology courses prepared me for the note-taking experience. At first, I was afraid there was a specific way interns take notes during visits. However, I had learned that note-taking skills I learned throughout my psychology courses helped me learn how to write non-opinionated notes. Additionally, taking a social psychology course helped prepare me for how the people in the visit would view me, and how that would affect our interactions. Additionally, developmental psychology helped me understand why the children behaved the way they did in visits. Even our clinical psychology course prepared me on how to behave during visits and the mannerisms I should have, as body language is such an important part of these visits. The families can read my body language, as I need to be able to note take theirs.

For my contribution project, I decided to focus on the beautification efforts of the office. The CCC staff have been trying to make the center feel more welcoming. While they have completed this by moving things around and re-furnishing, they needed help with the outdoors spaces. My contribution project was focused specifically on the backyard, as that is a space that supervised visitation also uses. I created the plan to build a rock garden in the backyard. However, during the spring the CCC participates in the Great Community Give, a community wide giving day for local partner nonprofit organizations. Most of their efforts went to helping raise awareness of the open house they were hosting. As they were slightly preoccupied, they appreciated the initiative the interns took in selecting their contribution project independently.

Overall, the Community Counseling Center has been a fantastic place to complete my internship. The site supervisors are accessible and make that known, yet they encourage their interns to work independently. Interns also learn skills that can be applicable to various clinical settings: such as how to build a relationship with clients and handle conflict. If you are looking for a site to gain more experience with family dynamics and have independence, this is the place for you.

Fall 2023 - Courtney Roberts

My field placement was at the Harrisonburg Community Counseling Center. The Community Counseling Center is a private, non-profit organization that provides counseling services to the Harrisonburg and Rockingham County area. The Community Counseling Center was the first counseling center to open in Harrisonburg. They provide a variety of services including individual counseling, children's counseling, couples counseling, family therapy, anger management groups, substance abuse groups, co-parenting classes, supervised visitation, and services. The main purpose of the center is to provide affordable counseling and services to



anyone who needs it. The mission statement of the center is “Our mission is to provide quality mental health services for individuals, couples, and families of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County regardless of socioeconomic status”

My main responsibility at the Community Counseling Center was conducting court-ordered supervised visitations. These visitations were set in place for parents who did not have custody of the child at the time were either waiting for a court hearing or have this in place as a permanent solution. My job was to coordinate visits between the custodial party and the visiting party. I would communicate with each party to schedule a visit during a time that worked well for each of them. For each visit I would meet the child outside while the custodial party waited in the car and escort them inside to the visiting party. This way the custodial and visiting party had no contact. During each visit I would sit in the room and take notes on the visit, I would only take note of things that I could see and hear and not my opinion. These notes are used when the families go back to court to reevaluate custody. Throughout the visits you are also making sure that the custodial party is following the center’s rules. Some of the rules included not speaking about the other parent, not talking about adult topics, not talking about the future with the child such as “when you live with me again...”. Depending on the rules set by the custodial party there may or may not be allowed to have food, photos, gifts, or videos.

My other responsibility at the Community Counseling Center included sitting in on the anger management group run by Shirley Jones. This group was court-mandated, but occasionally there would be members who were there without a court order. For the group the interns had to prepare a lesson plan and decide what topics would be discussed that day. The interns were also expected to participate in the group as well. This was a valuable experience for me, I was able to observe therapeutic techniques being used and practice them. Shirley often used cognitive behavioral therapy techniques.

Throughout the week I was responsible for some office administration duties. Before visitations and the anger management group I would accept payments, write receipts, and check people in. On Fridays I was able to work as an office assistant all day. I would collect day sheets from the previous day, match the moneybag to the receipts and square report from the previous day, review each of the counselors’ schedule and make note of which clients had to pay, and general housekeeping. I was able to set up and reschedule appointments on behalf of the counselors and prepared any needed paperwork for clients. This experience showed me some of the administrative responsibilities of being a counselor and what goes into running a counseling center.

Overall, the Community Counseling Center was a wonderful field site. The supervisors and entire staff created a welcoming warm environment for the interns and were a very useful support system. They were always available to help and answer any questions regarding the Community Counseling Center or the counseling field in general. There was a weekly meeting with the supervisors that only lasted 30-45 minutes. In those meetings we discussed each of our cases, how they were going, any problems that we might have had during the week, and possible solutions. The only disadvantage about this site is that your hours are mainly dependent on the supervised visitations, which can be canceled or may occur during a timeframe that does not fit your schedule. Some of the parents were also hard to get in contact with, however the staff at the



CCC would often try to contact them as well when you aren't in the office so that it was not solely on you.

One of the things I learned while working at the Community Counseling Center is the importance of having a diverse set of counselors so that everyone in the community is able to be served. At the Community Counseling Center, you have a diversity of different races, genders, gender and sexual identities, and languages spoken. This allowed for a larger clientele group to be served, especially the Spanish speaking community. There is one counselor who is able to provide services in both English and Spanish. I also learned that counseling services do not need to be expensive especially for those who do not have insurance. The CCC offers a sliding scale payment option that is based on an individual's annual household income. This payment option allowed for individuals to receive counseling services for as little as \$25 per session. The counselors are also able to set up a self-pay option in which the client and counselor discuss and decide how much each session should be. This site placement influenced my career goals through the supervised visitation program. Working with the families and observing the family dynamics and seeing how important the parent-child relationship is helped me decide that I want to go into family and couples counseling. My experience at the CCC has also influenced me to work with diverse populations and provide affordable counseling.

For the contribution project I researched the benefits of different theoretical frameworks and group therapy compared to individual counseling for anger management. The anger management group at the Community Counseling Center typically follows a cognitive behavioral therapy framework and many of the group members did not receive other counseling. Due to the different backgrounds of each of the members I was curious if using a different framework based on the group members would be more beneficial. I was also curious if the members would see greater results if they received individual counseling as well, so they could share things that they may not have felt comfortable sharing in group and have time dedicated specifically for them. Through conversations with the different group members I was able to make suggestions for the program moving forward.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Community Counseling Center. I learned a lot about counseling techniques, administrative processes, and the importance of diversity within this profession. I highly recommend the CCC as a site for students who are passionate about counseling and are eager to have early experience with clients. The staff became like a family to me and were an amazing support system throughout the semester.

Fall 2022 – Jaclyn Snyder

My field placement was at the Harrisonburg Community Counseling Center. It is a private, non-profit organization offering affordable counseling services to the people of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. The CCC strives to provide quality services to people of all socioeconomic statuses. It is the oldest of its kind in the area and celebrated its 50th anniversary this year. The services the CCC offers include individual counseling, group services



(anger management and substance abuse groups), family counseling, couples counseling, children's counseling, co-parenting classes, and supervised visitation.

My primary responsibilities as an intern surrounded supervised visitation and the substance abuse group, with the former making up the majority of my hours on site. I was responsible for managing a caseload of families in the supervised visitation program, which usually totaled 4-5 families at any given time. I maintained constant communication with my families to schedule visits and address any questions and concerns. During visits, I was responsible for documenting all interactions and intervening if/when necessary to enforce the CCC's rules or the restrictions set in place by the custodial parent. Even though it is a non-therapeutic setting, I learned a lot of clinically relevant skills during supervised visitations including communication, rapport building, and confrontation. Working directly with families also taught me a lot about managing family dynamics and the impact this can have on mental health. This has inspired me to focus on family systems as part of my graduate school education and my future career in clinical psychology.

Regarding the substance abuse group, the majority of my time was spent observing the group, which was very informative. I learned a great deal about facilitating discussions in group therapy with particular emphasis on cognitive behavioral therapy. I also gained insight on the client's perspectives from listening to their stories each session. I assisted the group leader by choosing discussion topics and worksheets from the curriculum, contributing to the discussions, and sometimes checking clients in and accepting payment.

For my contribution project, I researched the effectiveness of different forms of substance abuse treatment. I then used the findings from my research to determine the most appropriate form of treatment for our group at the CCC and created additional materials for the existing curriculum in the style of that treatment approach. Specifically, I made a worksheet about guilt, shame, and how to practice self-forgiveness to combat these feelings. The coordinators allowed me to use this worksheet as the lesson for one of our meetings and lead a discussion on these topics.

As others have said before, you will get out of this experience what you put into it. There are so many valuable experiences to be had, you just need to take the initiative to experience them. My greatest example of this is my time with the substance abuse group. I was interested in learning more about counseling, so I asked the coordinators of the substance abuse group if there was anything I could do to help. They were more than happy to allow me to observe the group and gave me many opportunities to practice leading group discussions myself. In general, it's best to find where you are needed and help in those areas. Some examples of how I achieved this are assisting with administrative work each week and organizing the filing cabinets during down time. Being able to explore and help out in many different areas of the CCC is something I greatly enjoyed about my time there because it resulted in a body of knowledge with both breadth and depth.

Another major benefit of working at the CCC is the amazing staff. My supervisors were incredibly supportive of me throughout the entire semester while also giving me the space to grow on my own. We had weekly meetings to discuss progress, questions, and concerns. I always felt comfortable to reach out to them outside of meetings when I needed to, though. Not only that, but the rest of the staff is so kind and helpful. I learned so much just from talking with



each of them about counseling and their area of expertise. You are truly made to feel like part of the group from the first day you are there. I also enjoyed the ability to create my own schedule. There are no specific days and times you are expected to be there and they are very flexible with regard to your school and work schedules. The caveat is that you have a greater degree of responsibility to make sure you meet your hours requirements each week, but I personally did not have any problems with that.

There are very few disadvantages to mention. Sometimes supervised visitations are cancelled at the last minute, which can be an inconvenience but will most likely not affect your ability to meet your hours requirements. You are also expected to do a good amount of administrative work on Fridays when the office manager is not there. The work is not difficult, though, and provides some useful down time that I used to work on my contribution project and other homework.

The areas of my psychology education that most prepared me for my site experiences were my courses in developmental psychology, psychology of learning, and biopsychology. Assisting in the supervised visitation program means working with children, many of which are in difficult circumstances. Having a background in developmental and learning psychology helped me to have a better understanding of the children's perspectives and behaviors. It also allowed me to help their parents work through difficulties, such as tantrums and refusal to leave at the end of visits. With regard to the substance abuse group, psychology of learning and biopsychology gave me a foundation of knowledge in addiction. Actually being in the group and hearing the participants' stories, though, added the personal element that was missing from my understanding of substance abuse disorders.

My experience at the Community Counseling Center was excellent overall. Not only did I enjoy my work, but I felt that it was truly worthwhile and that I was able to make a positive impact on people's lives. I have grown so much from when I first started and I am very grateful for all of the learning opportunities the CCC provided me. I feel much more prepared for graduate school and the workforce after my time here, especially since I was able to gain skills that can be applied in many different settings. I could not have asked for a better internship!

Fall 2022 – Rachel Hester

This semester, my field placement was at the Community Counseling Center located in downtown Harrisonburg. The Community Counseling Center is a non-profit, private organization that has been providing services to the community for the last 50 years, and it is the oldest of its kind in our area! The main focus of the center is to provide affordable and professional counseling to any and all individuals who come to the center to receive mental health services. Their mission statement is as follows: "Our mission is to provide quality mental health services for individuals, couples, and families of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County regardless of socioeconomic status." The counseling center offers many services to the public, such as individual counseling, couples counseling, family therapy, children's counseling, co-parenting classes, supervised visitations, anger management classes, and substance abuse classes.



I had many experiences at the center that opened my eyes to the world of counseling and social work. My most important duty at the center was to participate in the supervised visitation program. This program is for individuals who no longer have custody of their child or children and is a way to provide a safe and stable environment for them to interact with their child. My responsibilities included contacting both the custodial party and the visiting party to schedule visits, taking payments, taking detailed notes about the visit, and making sure all visitation rules are followed by both parties. The visitations typically last one hour, but I did have one family that had a weekly 2-hour visit. Some families also choose to do visits every other week instead of every week. This experience has exposed me to the difficult world of divorce, separation, custody, and court, and those are not always easy factors to try to balance.

I also participated in the weekly anger management class offered by Shirley Jones at the center. I would help Shirley by checking the clients in and taking their payments, giving new clients the necessary paperwork, gathering materials for the group, and occasionally leading the group using one of the worksheets from the anger management binder. This was a very valuable experience for me because I got to see therapeutic techniques being used in real-time by a counselor. I would often witness Shirley making use of cognitive-behavioral therapy to change the faulty thought patterns of some of the participants in the group, and I also learned that it is okay to ask questions that may make your clients feel uncomfortable in the moment because it can lead to great strides in their own personal mental health and anger management journey.

The Community Counseling Center is a wonderful field site that offers a supportive and warm environment to all of its workers. I felt very welcomed and my supervisors made it clear that they were a support system I could turn to if I needed help with anything, or if I ever felt overwhelmed with my caseload. We had a weekly meeting that usually lasted about 30 minutes where we had the opportunity to discuss any concerns we had, get assigned new cases, and share how our visits were going. I would say the only disadvantage to the supervised visitation program is that it can sometimes be difficult to get in touch with certain parents, which can obviously make it difficult to get a visit scheduled. This was hard on me because I really wanted to make sure every visit happened every week and I would feel personally responsible if it did not. However, as the semester went on, I learned that sometimes things are out of my control and I cannot make something happen if the parent is not actively communicating with me.

One of the biggest things I learned from my time at the counseling center is that counseling does not have to be ridiculously expensive, even for individuals who do not have insurance. Before my time here, I was under the impression that anyone without insurance would have to pay at least \$100 for counseling, and even if you have insurance it could still be very pricey. Although this is the case for a lot of counseling centers, the Community Counseling Center is unique in the fact that they offer a sliding scale fee for individuals who do not have insurance and opt to do self-pay for their sessions. This has influenced my career goals because I now really want to find a non-profit to work at once I begin my career as a therapist in a few years, and I would love to have the ability to offer affordable counseling to individuals with or without insurance.

The psychology classes I have taken so far at JMU definitely helped me be successful at this field placement, particularly abnormal psychology and counseling psychology. Although I was not sitting in on individual therapy sessions, I was able to see therapeutic techniques in



action during the group anger management sessions. Having background knowledge of mental illnesses and different types of treatments allowed me to integrate myself into the group more easily than if I had never taken these classes. I also believe developmental psychology provided me with important knowledge for the supervised visitation program. Many of the children participating in the visits were under the age of 10, and it is important to know where they are developmentally. For example, I would be less alarmed if a 2-year-old threw a tantrum because I know they cannot regulate their emotions as well as a 12-year-old can.

For my contribution project, I decided to design and print a brochure for new members of the anger management group to receive at their first class. I designed my brochure on a website called Canva and it was a lot of fun being creative and deciding what information to include. I decided to put the definition of anger, symptoms of problematic anger, at-home anger management strategies, statistics about anger, and the contact information for the Community Counseling Center. My goal when creating this brochure was to give the participants of the group some anger strategies they can do on their own, provide them with some general information about anger, and I wanted to include statistics to emphasize that anger is a normal emotion to feel for all individuals from time to time. I was able to print 50 of these brochures and they are now in the office at the center. However, I was not able to bring my brochure to the group seeing as the group was canceled for the weeks following when I finished my project, but I am excited for them to use it once the group starts up again next semester!

Overall, I had a wonderful semester working at the Community Counseling Center and I am so grateful for all the amazing people who work there who I had the pleasure of getting to know better over these last 4 months.

Fall 2021 – Ashlee Youngblood

The Community Counseling Center (CCC) is a private, non-profit organization that has served the Harrisonburg and Rockingham communities since 1972. The CCC is focused on providing accessible and affordable mental health services to all groups of people. The Community Counseling Center's mission statement is "to provide quality mental health services for individuals, couples, and families of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County regardless of socioeconomic status." CCC's services include children's counseling, couples and marriage services, family counseling, group therapy (anger management, substance abuse, group counseling), individual services, co-parenting classes, and employer services.

My experience at the Community Counseling Center has been very valuable, and I am so grateful for the hands-on experience that I received during my field placement. My main responsibilities included supervising visitations and leading discussions in the anger management class. In the visitations, I took notes on what happened during the visits. Additionally, I kept in constant communication between the families that I supervised in order to keep a schedule for each family. The visits typically entail taking payments, note taking, communicating with both the custodial party and the visiting party, and scheduling. The visitations range from one to two



hours and allow you to observe the different dynamics that are involved with court-ordered visitation cases.

With regard to the anger management group, I gathered materials for the weekly groups, lead discussions, checked clients in, and managed the paperwork. During anger management, I was able to see how therapeutic techniques are used in a group setting, which is an amazing opportunity to have. The anger management group was one of my favorite experiences while at the Community Counseling Center, because I was able to gain hands on experience in planning for a therapy group. Additionally, I was able to watch each client grow in their own ways.

The experience at the Community Counseling Center is really what you make it to be. During my time, I created a binder for the anger management group to keep track of the topics discussed each week, I partook in administrative office duties, assisted in orientation with new clients, participated in staff meetings, and I organized the filing cabinets. It is important to find where you are needed and find ways to fulfill that need. The staff at the center are also very helpful in helping you find your place and supporting you in your growth. I was interested in shadowing a therapy group, and the staff at the Community Counseling Center was very helpful in showing me the ropes for the anger management group and giving me the opportunity to shadow.

One thing I cannot speak highly enough about is how amazing the staff is at the Community Counseling Center. This semester was one of the hardest semesters during my time at James Madison University, and the staff at the center were so willing to work with my schedule and work with me during my hard times. Whether I needed help finding materials for anger management or I needed help with a client, the staff were willing to support me and help me grow as an individual. Another advantage of this site is the hands-on experience that you get to have when it comes to therapeutic services. Through the supervised visits and the anger management classes, I was able to see what it is like to be in a therapeutic environment. The visitations are non-therapeutic; however, you are still able to experience the different dynamics between the parents and children, and think about how these dynamics might also influence a therapeutic environment. These experiences allowed me to gain insight on what it would be like to work in a counseling center in the future.

Another amazing opportunity that I had while at the center, was the ability to further my skills in research and the ability to adequately apply it at my field site. For my contribution project, I analyzed the influences of meaning and purpose, the adolescents mind, and self-awareness and the effects that these factors have on experimental behaviors in college students. Additionally, I applied these findings to the Community Counseling Center by creating materials based on cognitive-behavioral therapy and logotherapy. These materials were given to the center so that they can be used in individual and group therapy for substance use and/or abuse.



The disadvantages of the Community Counseling Center are very limited, as you get to work with an amazing staff that is willing to work with you. The only disadvantage that I could think of is how inconsistent the visitations can be. The visitations are court ordered so it shouldn't be this way; however, there were a few times when a family would cancel, and I would be short a couple of hours for that week. On the other hand, you get what you put into this field experience, so it is very easy to make up the missed hours as there are many opportunities to get involved at the Community Counseling Center. When I was short on my total hours, I asked my supervisor what I could do to help out around the Center, and they helped find me opportunities to help the clientele and/ or staff. Like I said before, you also have to find areas where you are needed and step into those opportunities. Additionally, the skill to find a need and fill it will help you in any work setting.

Overall, my experience at the Community Counseling Center was amazing and this opportunity has helped me grow exponentially. This experience has allowed me insight on what my future would look like if I were to choose to become a therapist. The hands-on opportunities have also helped me gain a confidence that I did not know I had. I was very nervous to answer the phones and balance the schedules for multiple families; however, I now know that I can do these things with excellence and that I am more capable than I thought I was. Also, the support and care from the staff really helped me get through the semester and work to grow myself into the person I want to become. While at the Community Counseling Center, I have continued to realize my passion for helping people. Being able to witness people have breakthroughs into how they can grow as individuals is one of my favorite things in life, and I was able to realize this during my field placement.

Fall 2021 - Sarah Dunn

The mission statement of the Community Counseling Center is “to provide quality mental health services for individuals, couples, and families of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County regardless of socioeconomic status.” The Community Counseling Center (CCC) offers affordable pricing as well as a sliding scale model when paying for counseling, which is based on an individual's income. The CCC offers a variety of services such as individual, family and couples counseling, court-ordered visitations, anger management groups, co-parenting classes, and substance abuse assessment and treatment.

My main responsibility at the CCC was facilitating court-ordered visitations. We would occasionally accept non-court-ordered visitations; however, under these circumstances, the parent would not be allowed to see their child outside of the center, even with supervision. This may be due to a variety of reasons, but sometimes this is a permanent situation for the parent, or they are awaiting a court hearing. My job was to coordinate between the visiting parent (the parent doing the visitation who does not have custody) and the custodial (the parent/person with



custody of the child), and schedule a time for visitation that works for them both. I would get the child from the car so that the visiting and custodial parents had no contact. When I was in the room with the parent and child(ren), I would take detailed notes on what the parent and child(ren) were doing. I would not insert my opinion at all in the notes, rather I would just write what was going on. These notes would be used when the parents went to court to see how the visiting parent is with the child. There were some guidelines that the parents had to follow. For example, the custodial parent could decide if the visiting parent could bring food, presents, and take pictures and whether or not there were certain topics that were off limits to discuss. Also, the parents could not talk about court, the custodial party, or adult topics. The custodial could also not give "false promises" to the child(ren) by talking about future events that are for the court to decide.

My other responsibilities at the CCC were administrative duties such as, taking payments, filing documents, faxing visitation notes, and answering phones. I would also help co-lead the anger management group. This group met once a week and individuals had to participate in 13 court-ordered anger management classes. I would help come up with lesson plans for the group and then help to lead the discussion. I also got to sit in on the weekly staff meetings and got to hear about the counselors' clinical patients that they may have wanted input or advice on how to handle. The interns also had weekly meetings to discuss visitations with each other and our supervisor. For my contribution project I made a lesson plan for a depression and anxiety group for adolescents that the center had been working on implementing, which was originated by a previous field placement intern.

Overall, I had a great experience at the CCC. All of the staff was very supportive and understanding, as well as the other interns with whom I worked. The center had a great atmosphere and was very flexible with my schedule. I also worked with the other interns to make our visitation schedules. I really enjoyed getting the opportunity to work at the CCC, and was able to use my background in psychology to learn about and observe individuals. This experience allowed me to work with clients and come up with solutions when an issue was raised. The only negative experiences were at times when a visiting or custodial party would be disrespectful or not follow the CCC's guidelines that they agreed to follow. However, I would expect to have these same issues in any psychological setting, and my supervisor and fellow interns were always very supportive. The CCC set me up to be able to work in a variety of counseling settings, I was able to work with diverse populations and each visitation case was unique. I really enjoyed my time at the CCC and would recommend it to anyone interested in working in counseling with diverse populations. Working at the center furthered my interests in counseling, and helped me realize that I would like to work in family and couples counseling with diverse populations. It allowed me to see the need for couples and family counseling, especially for folks that may not necessarily be able to afford it, and I would like to be able to help serve these groups in the future.

Spring 2021 – Emily Flaherty



The mission statement of the Harrisonburg Community Counseling Center (CCC) is to provide services to all of their clients regardless of their socioeconomic status. In order to serve all of their clients, they use a sliding scale payment, and they accept a wide variety of insurances. The CCC is a non-profit organization that serves all individuals, couples, and families. There are many services at the CCC, these include individual counseling, couples counseling, family counseling, co-parenting classes, anger management counseling/classes, substance abuse counseling/classes, as well as supervised visitations.

My main responsibility at the CCC was to supervise visitations. Supervised visitations are for parents who are court-ordered to visit the CCC to see their children. In addition, I was also responsible for conducting orientations for the visitations. During the orientations, I would explain to both the custodial and visiting party the rules and procedures of visitations. The procedure of visitations is quite simple. The visiting party must arrive 10 minutes before the start of the visitation to check-in and be sent to the visitation room before the custodial party arrives. Once the custodial party arrives, the visitation supervisor goes outside to the front of the building where the custodial party is parked and brings the child(ren) inside for visitations. The visitations are typically one hour and once the time is over, the visitation supervisor will take the children back out front to the custodial parent. As soon as the visitation supervisor sees the custodial party drive off, they give the visiting parent the OK to go. The rules of visitation are as follows, there is no discussion of the custodial party or court and all discussion must be appropriate, we ask that the parents don't make "false promises", and we allow no physical reprimanding of their children. False promises refer to making promises to the children (telling them they will be home soon or that they will be able to come to their home, etc.) that may or may not end up being true. Our main goal of visitations is to make sure everyone is happy, comfortable, and safe.

Aside from visitations, I was also responsible for administrative duties. Such as making copies, faxing documents, organizing files, as well as other clerical duties. Additionally, I would sit at the front desk to answer calls and take payments from the clients. When the office manager wasn't in, I would sit in for her and assist clients and staff. I was also able to sit in on a few anger management classes which were very interesting to watch. For my contribution project, I helped the CCC come up with a new therapeutic counseling group. That was also a great experience.

Overall, I had a very positive experience at the CCC. All of the counselors and other staff were extremely welcoming. I am very thankful for this opportunity. I learned many valuable skills both as a professional and as a psychology student. The only negative experience I had during my time at the CCC occurred during a visitation. One of the parties got very frustrated during a visitation and made some disrespectful comments towards me. However, my supervisors were extremely supportive and helped me through this experience. They spoke to the party who was disrespectful towards me and let them know that we do not tolerate that treatment towards our staff. I always felt very supported and appreciated at the CCC. My supervisors and all of the other staff members created a fun and inviting environment. I really enjoyed my experience at the CCC, so much that I will be working there over the summer!

Fall 2020 – Peighton Corley



The mission of the Community Counseling Center is to provide accessible counseling services to the Shenandoah Community. The CCC provides individual, group, and visitations which include court ordered services. As far as group counseling sessions, there are anger management and substance abuse groups. The individuals in these groups are usually court ordered to attend whether it be due to a DUI or to domestic violence that they are facing legal action with. The supervised visitations are another court ordered services that are provided when the courts have determined that one parent is not able to see their child without direct supervision. Many times, visitation services are offered through the community counseling center in order to provide a more neutral environment for the child, as opposed to having a relative supervise the visitation. For most of these services, if the client does not have insurance, then the cost is determined by their income, making it one of the most affordable counseling services in the area.

During my time at the CCC, I was able to assist with administrative duties, co-facilitate group counseling sessions, and coordinate and facilitate supervised visitations. Because of extenuating circumstances with another staff member, I was the primary administrator at the front desk for a few weeks during the course of the internship. With these administrative duties, I helped coordinate clients with counselors, created client files, took payments, and managed client information and payment for the billing company. Through working this role and having to coordinate clients and counselors, I learned about insurance policies and the difficulties with becoming affiliated with each one and about counselor workloads/schedules. I was also able to co-facilitate the group sessions. Initially, I was under the impression that I would just be observing, but eventually I was asked to provide input and help facilitate the group along with the licensed counselor. This was one of my most valuable experiences at the counseling center, as it allowed me to develop basic counseling skills and understand what goes into a curriculum/treatment plan in the group setting. I was also able to realize the limitations of counseling, especially for individuals facing legal issues and learned about other social services such as case management that I tried to refer clients to when needed. Lastly, I was able to coordinate and facilitate supervised visitations. When new clients came to start supervised visitations, it was my job to schedule their orientations where we discussed rules and details about their situation. From there we scheduled weekly or bi-weekly visitations between the custodial and visiting party and held these visitations. During these visitations, I took notes of what happened during the session and enforced rules such as refraining from inappropriate conversations during the session.

This site is a well-rounded experience that I would recommend to anyone who wants to work as a counselor in the future. As an intern, you can participate in almost anything, short of individual counseling. Since it is a smaller counseling center, there is less of a formal structure and most of the other counselors see you as a collaborator rather than an undergraduate who is just interning there. The goal of the counselors is to support you and help you be successful during your time there. Because there is less structure within the center, it also means that you



have to take initiative with your projects. Since you are seen as a collaborator, there are very few times where you will be asked specifically to do something for anyone. The intern must take the initiative to find the projects and things that they want to make better, find the groups that they want to go to, and facilitate the visitations that they want.

This site reaffirmed that I would like to continue counseling in the future and that I would like to do non-profit work. I saw how crucial it was for individuals to be able to have their services, and with how many centers price their services, a lot of clients would not be able to access them without places like the CCC. The most important thing I learned at my time with the CCC is how to be more empathetic. Before my time with the CCC, I was not sure how I would be able to help individuals who have done things or feel ways that I disagree with on a very fundamental level. However, I realized through working with our clients that everyone is on their own recovery journey and I am on that journey with them so that they can generally have a better quality of life. So even when working with a client who might be easy to judge, it is important to refrain and realize that they are in counseling to get help and be in a better place.

For my contribution project I decided to focus on program evaluation. I researched models for evaluating programs and tried to make a model that implemented that process. There are many constraints within a counseling center to implement an evaluation since many of the counselors have hefty client loads. For my project, I tried to break down what program evaluation is, the steps to implement it, and how the counseling center might do that in their own context. This was in an effort to alleviate the use of ineffective practices and to better understand the CCC's impact on the community it serves, and if there is anything that can be done to help serve sections of the populations better.

The CCC was a wonderful place to intern and I highly recommend this site for students passionate in non-profit counseling. The staff there were not just supervisors, but friends and were a wonderful introduction to professional counseling. I felt supported and appreciated with everything I was able to do there and if I were in the area, I would probably continue to work there.