What is a Process Recording?

The Process Recording is an educational exercise in which the student makes a written record of a client interview or interaction, and then analyzes the interaction for learning purposes. The Process Recording assignment can help students develop their practice skills, apply social work knowledge to practice, and grow in their self-awareness. This tool also helps the student learn to assess their own practice.

In the Process Recording all communication, verbal and non-verbal, is recorded based on the student’s best recollection of the interview. The student also records personal feelings and reflections which occurred during the interaction with the client. This may include the student’s assessment of what the client was experiencing, or how the student applied social work knowledge during the interview. Students may also be asked to reflect on how effective they were, and how they might improve their interviewing skills.

Process Recordings are often used for direct practice interactions; however the Process Recording method may be used with any area of social work practice, including community practice, advocacy or administration. Therefore in the Process Recording assignment the term “interview” is used to indicate whatever type of intervention or client interaction occurs in the internship. Similarly, the term “client” is used to indicate clients, patients, community members, employees, or others, depending on the internship activities. If you are not sure how to do a Process Recording in your agency, talk to your Seminar Instructor about interactions that would be appropriate. The Process Recording must always be done with an actual client or professional interaction. Students should not simulate an interview or interaction for the Process Recording assignment.

Why do Process Recordings?

Process Recordings give students the opportunity to assess and improve their practice skills through reflection and feedback. The Process Recording is also designed to help students learn to intentionally apply social work theory and knowledge to practice. Process Recordings can help students structure their thinking about professional social work practice and learn to document client interactions accurately. Reflecting on an interaction can help students see their client interactions more objectively, and learn to distinguish between thoughts and feelings. Process recordings are also useful tools for supervision, allowing the supervisor to review the student-client interaction, identify strengths, note challenges, and help the student formulate alternative approaches for future interactions.

Process Recording Content

The Process Recording has three parts, the Introduction, the Interview and the Summary. The Introduction provides the background and context of the interview/interaction, and includes
information about the client and the agency setting. The Interview is the central component of the Process Recording assignment. The Interview has four sections: 1) a word for word report of the interaction, 2) student observations and assessments, 3) application of social work knowledge and theory, and 4) Field Instructor feedback. The final part of the Process Recording is the Summary, in which student gives a brief assessment of the client need or problem, the effectiveness of the interaction, and suggestions for future or alternate intervention strategies. This section also includes the student’s self-assessment of their performance, including practice skills and application of social work knowledge. More detailed information about the required content for each part of the Process Recording follows.

What should be included in the Process Recording?

All communication during the interview or interaction, both verbal and nonverbal.

Verbal communication includes everything that was said by both the client and the student. Record the interaction word for word, as well as you can remember it. Resist the urge to “improve” your comments or client interaction. Process Recordings are not graded on the success of the intervention, but on student’s ability to apply social work knowledge and skills, and to use self-reflection to assess their strengths and weaknesses.

Nonverbal communication is all other types of communication. This includes speech tone and speed, body language, eye contact and other non-verbal signals. When including descriptions be sure to include any “evidence” that supports your impressions and assessment. Also include a brief description of the setting and relevant observations such as an interruption by another worker or a ringing phone.

What about Confidentiality?

Students should ensure that confidentiality is maintained as required by the NASW Code of Ethics (2008) and the policies of the agency. Before starting a Process Recording, discuss the assignment with your Field Instructor and Task Supervisor (if applicable). Your supervisor will inform you of agency policies and processes regarding confidentiality and informing clients. If you will be doing an audio recording of the interview be sure to get permission from your Field Instructor and Task Supervisor (if applicable). Be sure to disguise all information that might make it possible for someone to identify your client, such as the name of the client or agency, the town, or location. Even when you have disguised the information, do not share the Process Recording with anyone other than as required for the assignment.

SOME PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- The interview should be written down as soon as possible after it occurs so it will be as accurate and complete as possible.
- Plan ahead to be sure you have sufficient time to record and analyze the interaction. Students should also allow a minimum of one week for the Field Instructor to provide their comments.
- Process recordings are a learning tool, and are not case documentation; therefore they do not become part of the client’s permanent record.

Preparing the Process Recording
Part I. The Introduction – 15 points

The Introduction provides the context for the interview including information about the agency, services and client. This section should include brief descriptions of the following:

- type of agency, agency purpose and any services it provides
- purpose of the current interview or interaction
- description of the client including basic demographic information such as age, gender, race, socioeconomic status, education, and occupation
- description of the client’s appearance and affect
- available information about the client’s context such as family structure, social support systems, and community or culture

II. The Interview/Interaction

Column 1: Interview Content – 25 points

In the first column record the dialogue of the interview, word for word as it occurred to the best of your memory. Do not summarize or paraphrase what each person said, or change the wording. The dialogue should be recorded in the drama format, like that used for a play. For example:

Intern: “How long have you been worried about this problem?”
Client: “For a very long time...ever since my son was born.”

The content of the interview must meet the following criteria:

- includes at least ten consecutive exchanges between the client and the student
- has a clear purpose which is consistent with the goals or services of the internship agency
- demonstrates student’s understanding of the use of communication skills in social work practice
- practice decisions should be based on social work knowledge, theory and values
- uses strategies that enhance social and economic justice, such as advocacy, negotiation and promoting client access to services and resources
- includes the termination of the interview— if the end of the interview is not included in the student/client exchanges you have recorded, make a note of this and then record the exchanges that terminated the interview

Column 2: Observations and Impressions – 15 points

In this column, record all nonverbal communication that occurred in the interaction. Students should also record their impressions of what the client might be thinking or feeling during the interview. Using reflection and self-awareness, students should identify and record their own thoughts and feelings during the interview.

Examples of student impressions and observations of a client:

“Client fidgeted in her chair and got up several times.”
“The client seemed sad when we talked about her mother, she stopped making eye content, and her speech became quiet and slow. “
“The client seemed angry about her son’s behavior. She frowned when she talked about him and her voice got louder.”

Examples of student self-observation:

“I really liked this client and wanted to help her.”
“I felt nervous when the client wouldn’t make eye contact. I wondered if he thought I didn’t have enough experience to help him.”

**Column 3: Theory or Knowledge Base – 15 points**

The learning focus for the application of social work skills, knowledge, theory and values is different for the different Field courses. The Integrated Process Recording focuses on two areas. The first is the student’s ability to critically apply social work knowledge and theory to guide practice, especially theories of human behavior and the social environment. The second focus is on student’s ability to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention, using objective and intersubjective information from the interview.

**Column 3 should include the following:**

- Note where you utilized your knowledge of human behavior theory to guide practice decisions and interactions with the client, for example, developmental, psychosocial, behavioral, cognitive and/or theories of needs and self-actualization. Consider both your actions and comments you made during the interview, and those you chose not to use.
- Identify examples where your knowledge of the social environment influenced your practice decisions. For example, the influence of culture, family, peer groups, and institutions. Again, consider both strategies you chose to use, and those you did not select.
- Note examples of objective information that indicate the intervention is effective.
- Identify any objective and intersubjective evidence of the effectiveness of the intervention. For example:
  - “I think my comment helped the client start to relaxed, as she sat back in the chair, and unfolded her arms.
  - “I think the client found this helpful, as he looked me in the eyes and shook my hand upon leaving, and expressed feeling more hopeful.”

**Column 4 : Field Instructor’s Comments – 0 points (required)**

In Column 4 the Field Instructor provides feedback on the interaction. This includes affirmation of the student’s practice skills or analysis, constructive criticism and suggestions for alternate approaches in the future. The Field Instructor’s comments are an important part of the Process Recording and this column must be completed before the assignment is submitted. Students need to notify the Field Instructor of the Process Recording assignment, and give the Field Instructor sufficient time to write their comments.

**III. The Summary – 25 points**

The Process Recording is concluded with a summary. This includes a brief assessment of the client problem and the client’s experience in the interview. In the summary the student should also critically assess his/her own performance in the interview. Students should address the following:

- Summarize your assessments of the client’s problem or issues, and the client’s experience in the interview/intervention.
- Where your practice choices based on your knowledge of theories human behavior? Why or why not?
- Where your practice choices based on your knowledge of the social environment? Why or why not?
• Briefly assess the effectiveness of your interaction with the client. How was the interaction successful? In what ways was it not successful? Note the theory and knowledge that supports your assessment. What could you do differently in future interactions to improve your practice?

• What were your strengths? In what areas do you need to grow as a social worker? Consider areas of practice, knowledge and use of self.

The summary should conclude with student’s plan for future interventions with this client.

IV. Writing – 5 points

The Process Recording assignment should be well organized and concise, with no errors in grammar or spelling.

Total – 100 points

MSW Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>85-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>77-84</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 76</td>
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</tbody>
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Sample - Process Recording Format

Sample is for demonstration purposes only. Actual Process Recording template is available on the ECU School of Social Work Field Education webpage, or from the Seminar Instructor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECU School Of Social Work – Process Recording Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student’s Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client’s Name: (do not use client’s real name)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction:</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Content</th>
<th>Observations and Impressions</th>
<th>Theory or Knowledge Base</th>
<th>Field Instructor’s Comments</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary:</th>
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