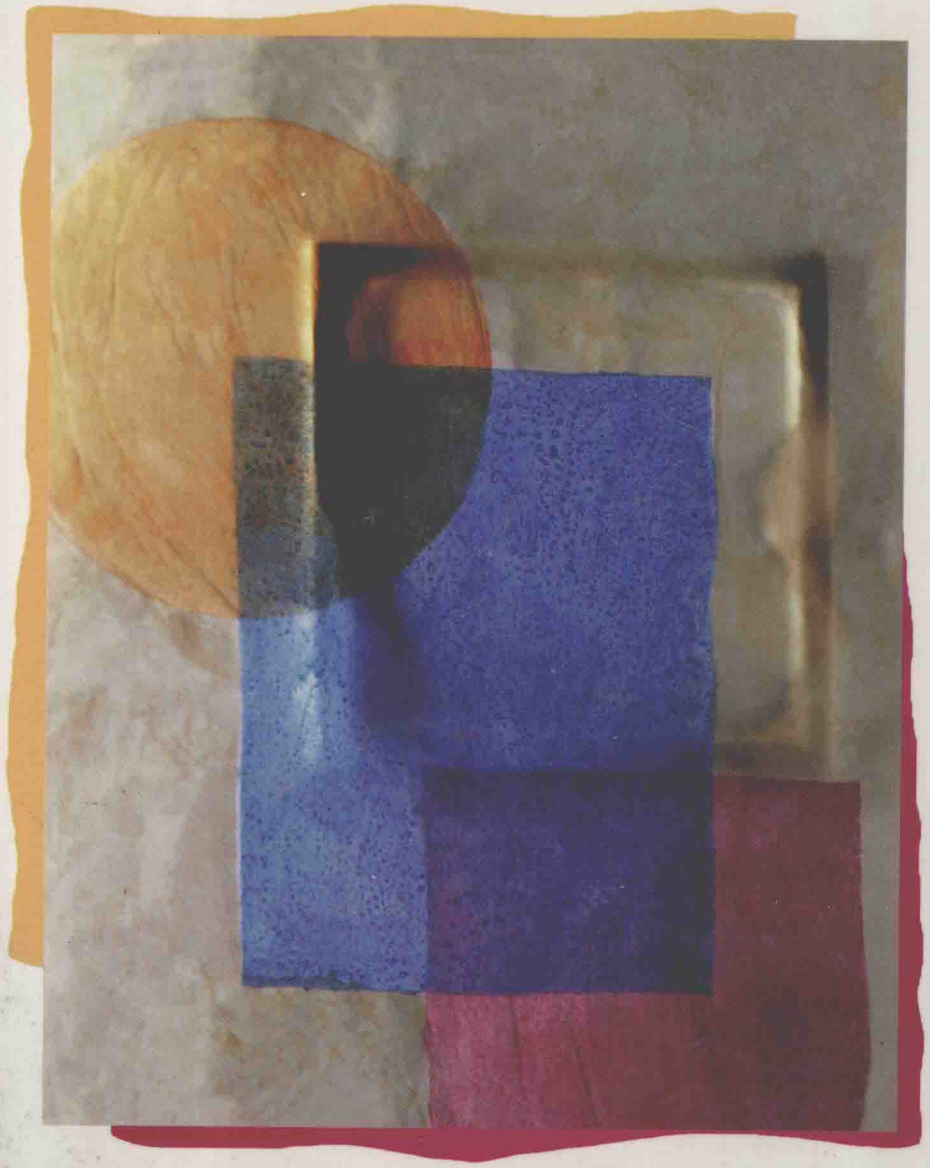
The Internship, Practicum, and Field Placement Handbook

A GUIDE FOR THE HELPING PROFESSIONS

Second Edition



Brian N. Baird

The Internship, Practicum, and Field Placement Handbook

A Guide for the Helping Professions

Second Edition

Brian N. Baird
Pacific Lutheran University

Prentice Hall
Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458

Baird, Brian N.
The internship, practicum, and field placement handbook : a guide for the helping professions / Brian N. Baird. — 2nd ed.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and indexes.
ISBN 0-13-923962-6 (pbk.)
1. Counselors–Training of. 2. Counseling. 3. Counseling—Practice. I. Title.
BF637.C6B26 1999
158′.3′07155–dc21 98-11860
CIP

Editor-in-Chief: *Nancy Roberts*
Executive Editor: *Bill Webber*
Assistant Editor: *Jennifer L. Cohen*
Managing Editor: *Bonnie Biller*
Production Liason: *Fran Russello*
Editorial/Production Supervision: *Publications Development Company of Texas*
Prepress and Manufacturing Buyer: *Lynn Pearlman*
Cover Director: *Jayne Conte*
Cover Designer: *Joe Sengotta*
Marketing Manager: *Michael Alread*

This book was set in 9.5/12 point Times Roman by Publications Development Company of Texas and was printed and bound by Banta Company.
The cover was printed by Phoenix Color Corp.

Simon & Schuster/A Viacom Company
Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 0-13-923962-6

Prentice-Hall International (UK) Limited, *London*
Prentice-Hall of Australia Pty. Limited, *Sydney*
Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., *Toronto*
Prentice-Hall Hispanoamericana, S.A., *Mexico*
Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited, *New Delhi*
Prentice-Hall of Japan, Inc., *Tokyo*
Simon & Schuster Asia Pte. Ltd., *Singapore*
Editora Prentice-Hall do Brasil, Ltda., *Rio de Janeiro*

To Rita Valentine,
who saw me through it all

PREFACE

Professionals and students in the helping professions consider internships, practicums, and field placements among the most influential experiences of their careers. At the same time, however, students also report that their normal coursework typically provides only indirect, and in many cases insufficient, preparation for their first "real world" exposure. This book is designed to bridge the gap between academic coursework and the knowledge, skills, and emotional challenges that are found beyond the classroom.

In writing this book, I sought to draw upon the best information available from psychology, psychiatry, social work, counseling, and other helping professions. Toward that end, I conducted extensive literature reviews of the leading journals and texts in each field. I also consulted with numerous faculty and supervisors in each discipline and in various types of academic institutions and internship settings. Drawing upon personal experience in the role of intern, and having supervised hundreds of students and trainees in beginning and advanced placements, I have tried to write a book that will be valuable at many levels. Whether you are an undergraduate student working for the first time in a field placement or a graduate student completing your final internship, I hope this book will help your work and learning be more effective and more rewarding.

OVERVIEW OF THE CONTENTS

A glance at the table of contents reveals that the book is organized along both chronological and thematic lines. The chapters have been organized sequentially to anticipate the stages interns pass through and the understandings or skills that will be required in those stages. Initial chapters deal with such things as selecting placements and supervisors, meeting staff and clients, and key ethical and legal issues. Middle chapters deal with supervision, working with individuals of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and self-care. Discussions of termination, finishing the internship, and lessons learned conclude the book. Finally, appendixes provide examples of forms useful for establishing learning plans, supervision agreements, ethical guidelines, evaluations, and other procedures.

Because internship training and clinical work involve a constant process of self-exploration and change, the textual material of each chapter is accompanied by self-exploration and experiential learning exercises. I encourage you to use these exercises and be open to the experiences. The more one works in this field the more acutely one realizes the importance of self-examination and understanding.

Since the initial publication of this book, the response from students, instructors, and supervisors has been tremendously gratifying. Students are finding many of their questions answered here, and the practical suggestions help them deal more effectively with both the challenges and the opportunities of internships. Instructors have found that students who have read the chapters are better informed and have a greater awareness of issues and information they need to know. Supervisors have reported to me that the interns who are using this book are much better prepared and more knowledgeable than others. Indeed, a number of on-site supervisors have told me they will not supervise any interns unless the intern has read this book.

This second edition builds on the base established already and reflects the very latest research and literature in the field. For example, since the last edition was published, the U.S. Supreme Court has issued important decisions regarding patient-therapist privilege. The effects of those decisions, along with other recent developments concerning managed care and computerized records, are discussed in the chapter dealing with professional ethics. I also have incorporated many of the helpful suggestions I have received from students, faculty, and supervisors. A discussion of portfolios, an expanded section on applying to internships, and tips on preparing for initial interviews are examples of such additions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book reflects the influence and contributions of many people, and it would not be possible to list everyone to whom I owe a debt of thanks. My many colleagues, friends, and students in recent years, as well as my instructors, supervisors, and mentors during undergraduate, graduate, and post

graduate training have all shaped this book and its author. I am grateful for all the positive, and even some of what at the time seemed to be negative, experiences they have given me.

Among the individuals who I want to thank directly, I begin with Andy Carey, who was instrumental in helping formulate the initial plan for this book and provided insightful comments and information throughout its development. Andy's understanding of how students learn and the challenges they face as beginning counselors has been extremely valuable. I have great respect for his skills as a counselor and educator and am fortunate to consider him both a friend and colleague.

I am grateful for the support of Pacific Lutheran University, which granted me the sabbatical leave during which much of the writing of the book was completed. The input and support of my colleagues in the PLU psychology department, especially that of Dana Anderson, Mike Brown, Jerry LeJeune, and Christine Moon, has been and is much appreciated. My secretaries, Karen Fleischman and Sharon Raddatz, and several student workers also provided great support typing, transcribing my garbled dictation, and helping with countless other details along the way.

In addition to the individuals acknowledged in the first edition, this second edition benefited significantly from the labors of Kristin Kvame, Chrissy Graham, Laura Johnson, and Steve Harris. I also wish to thank the reviewers: Ron Taylor, Southern Oregon University; Sherry Hatcher, University of Michigan; and William Kukuk, St. Cloud State University.

The editorial staff of Prentice-Hall; Susan Finnemore Brennan in the beginning, Pete Janzow, Heidi Freund, Mary Araneo, Fran Russello, and Jennifer Cohen have all been most helpful and a pleasure to work with. I have enjoyed working on this edition with the staff of Publications Development Company of Texas. The reviewers of this book—Phil Abrego, University of Washington; Rickey George, University of Missouri, St. Louis; Robert L. Barret, University of North Carolina, Charlotte; Charles R. Carlson, University of Kentucky; Anthony Di Cesare, Towson State University; James M. Benshoft, University of North Carolina, Greensboro; James Guy, Biola University; Vincent Hevern, LeMoyne College; Steen Halling, Seattle University; and Donald H. Wykoff, Slippery Rock University—provided many fine recommendations for references, content, and other modifications that significantly enhanced the final product. I want to thank each of them for their time, professionalism, and abilities to be direct with criticism and constructive in their suggestions.

Thanks also to some of the many professors and mentors who helped me get into the field and learn some things along the way: Thomas Schenkenberg, Raymond Kesner, Don Strassberg, Dick Hemrick, Randy Linnel, B. J. Fitzgerald, Wilson Walthall, Richard Pasewark, Judith Olson, Max Rardin, Karen Nicholas, Helen Crawford, Leo Sprinkle, Steve Bieber, Geoff Bartol, Lance Harris, Marvin Brown, Mark Seeley, Jarret Kaplan, Vic Ganzer, Katherine Mateer, and Tedd Judd. To peers, who shared the challenges and fun: Mike Hawkins, Rick Jensen, Walthall's Warriors, Doreen Daly, Dick Shepherd, Mike Whitley, Warner Karshner, Deborah Frank, and Kirk Strosahl. For friendship and support during dissertation work, Dave Droge and Ray Preiss.

Finally, for their patience and understanding as I spent so many hours on the computer, at the library, and doing everything else it takes to write a book, I owe a huge thanks and more than a few trips skiing to my wife and family.

FOREWORD

In the Foreword to the first edition of this book, I wrote that I considered it to be essential reading for students, interns, supervisors, and program directors. With the publication of the second edition, I continue to have that opinion. Dr. Baird has once again produced a valuable resource that should be read and re-read by every student and supervisor involved with internships.

My own experiences in graduate school, as well as my experiences serving as an internship supervisor, assure me that nothing is more anxiety-provoking for students than contemplating their internship. For the prospective intern, the tools of the profession have been well established in academic classes, at least at the theoretical level. The internship, however, is different. Now the intern must face the reality of his or her career choice. Does she or he have the ability, the stability, the knowledge, the courage, the humanness, and the skill to become a member of the profession? Will he or she be able to apply these skills to assist others? Is this really the right career path?

Now we have a definitive resource addressing the many issues that interns will face. This book contains almost everything interns, supervisors, and program directors need to know and consider to make the learning experience enjoyable and beneficial to all. There are in-depth discussions of the role of the intern as learner and the realistic, as well as the unrealistic, expectations interns may have. There are comprehensive discussions on finding suitable internship placements, the proper role and goals of the intern as learner, a review of ethical and legal issues, suggestions on how interns may enhance the learning experience through peer group activities, the distinction between supervision and personal therapy, the possible dangers and risks in working with certain patient populations, how to manage time and stress during the experience, and a recognition of the dangers of burnout in the budding professional, to name but a few of the topics covered.

Interns, indeed, even supervisors or program directors, need no longer rely on trial and error to discover successful ways to enhance the learning experience. Here the challenges and obstacles that must be faced and overcome are clearly laid out—both at the macro and micro level. For example, one finds a complete description of how interns conceptualize, develop, and implement peer group learning experiences—an activity that, historically, interns typically had to discover for themselves, often with less than positive outcomes. The chapter on record keeping offers another example of the usefulness of this book. Along with a thorough discussion of the demands of various institutions, issues relating to confidentiality, and recommendations regarding good and bad notes, there are ample examples and exercises to bring lessons about note taking and writing styles rapidly into reality. Many senior clinicians could benefit from this discourse alone. Supervisors and interns will also benefit from the discussion of the similarities and differences between supervision and therapy. Supervision and therapy are not the same, and the proper time and place for each, as well as admonitions to avoid harmful risks of dual role problems, are discussed in a straightforward manner.

To complement such practical information, Dr. Baird also provides a refreshing number of personal experiences designed to help interns realize that everyone makes mistakes, especially those struggling to apply classroom learning to the real world. Throughout the book one finds a great deal of sensitivity to the everyday anxieties, fears, and concerns of interns. Interns will be put at ease with the knowledge that the wide array of feelings they will experience during this learning phase are normal and expected. Interns need not be ashamed or deny their insecurities and fears. These are part of the growth experiences that come with the internship and are to be expected and not avoided.

To his credit, Dr. Baird recognizes that many issues in the field are controversial. Thus, although there are several areas where I hold somewhat different opinions, when discussing these matters Baird states his opinion on the issue with a well thought out rationale, while acknowledging the viewpoints of others and permitting the reader to follow a different course if desired. In many areas, especially those dealing with ethical and legal matters, the recommendations are stated succinctly and, fortunately, without apology.

No major topic is left untouched by this book. There is an excellent and detailed chapter dealing with the all important but often overlooked issue of diversity in the field.

Taboo subjects in graduate programs are openly discussed, including boundary problems between interns and superiors, as well as issues related to the economics of the profession and the guilt many new professionals feel in charging a fee for their services. Dr. Baird has added useful new exercises throughout the second edition and has included practical suggestions to help students prepare for further study or employment.

All of the topics covered in this text should be mandatory aspects of internship seminars and/or professional issues courses. This book will help to strengthen and upgrade the training experience to the benefit of all.

Bruce E. Bennett, Ph.D.
Executive Director
American Psychological Association Insurance Trust

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

PREPARATION

I've learned more in this experience than I have in any of my classes. Every student should have the opportunity to do a practicum.

Every day there was something new that I realized I didn't know. If for no other reason than that I'm glad I did an internship.

Comments from student evaluations of their practicum and internship experiences

THEORY INTO PRACTICE

A friend of mine who was working overseas in the Peace Corps decided it would be fun to teach the children of his village how to play baseball. The children were enthusiastic and eager to learn, so he rounded up some equipment, drew pictures of the playing field, explained the rules of the game, and had everyone practice throwing, catching, and hitting the ball. He even gave them a test that included questions about the number of balls and strikes allowed, how many outs per inning, the distance between bases, and famous players of the past. With the basics mastered, the class improvised a field in a nearby pasture, divided up into two teams, and prepared to play ball.

As the villagers looked on, the excited children took the field. The teacher asked the children if they were ready, and all assured him that they understood what to do. The leadoff batter, a wiry young boy of thirteen, looked nervous but determined. My friend surveyed the field and aligned his players. Then, taking an exaggerated windup, he delivered the first baseball pitch the village had ever witnessed.

To everyone's astonishment, the batter smacked the ball into deep left field. The boy was so shocked by this that he just stood watching as the teacher shouted for him to "Run, Run, Run!" Turning to see how his team fared as fielders, my friend found that all of his players had left their positions and were running as fast as they could around the bases, tagging each one, screaming, laughing, and heading for home plate. The ball, meanwhile, rolled to a stop far out in the field with no one making any effort to chase it.

When the commotion subsided, my friend was the only player left on the field. All of his team, and at last the batter, had raced from the field to home, thrilled with how many runs they believed they had just scored. "Somewhere," my friend declared to himself, "we've got a gap between theory and practice." With that, he ran for first base and raced around the diamond just as his players had. When he crossed home plate, he made baseball history by scoring the tenth run from a single hit. His students loved it, and the village still talks about the game today.

Students beginning their first practicum or field placement can identify with my friend's players. Enthusiasm, nervousness, determination, and uncertainty will be familiar feelings. Regardless of all the coursework and study one may have, there is no substitute for real experience. Only by getting out there and trying things can we discover what we do or do not know.

That is why field placements are so valuable. They give you the chance to experience firsthand what you have been studying in your readings and classes. You will quickly discover that reading in a textbook about schizophrenia, alcoholism, child abuse, or other issues is not the same as meeting and interacting with real people who experience the situations or conditions you have studied. So too, reading about, or role playing, therapy and counseling techniques in a classroom differ greatly from actually participating in therapy sessions.

You will also discover that many things you need to know in the "real world," such as ethical and legal issues, how to write case notes, how to deal with supervision, and a host of other topics, probably have not been addressed sufficiently in your academic classes. Even when subjects have been studied in class, as my friend learned from his baserunning fielders, instructors too often assume that students will be able to transfer what they learn in the classroom directly to the field. Students recognize this error the moment they enter their internship and say to themselves, "Now what do I do?" My goal in writing this book is to help you answer that question.

TERMINOLOGY

FIELD PLACEMENTS, PRACTICUMS, OR INTERNSHIPS?

A few words are in order about terminology and the people this book is designed to assist. Rather surprisingly, there is no clear consensus about what certain terms, such as internship, practicum, and field placement, mean.

In psychology, for example, the term *internship* is used to describe the yearlong placement for doctorate-level students. Many undergraduate programs, however, also refer to their field experiences as "internships." Still others use terms such as *practicum, externship,* or *fieldwork* (Hevern, 1994). Social work and counseling programs typically speak of fieldwork or field placements rather than internships, but this too is by no means universal, and many social work or counseling programs use terminology from graduate programs to describe their undergraduate fieldwork.

Because this text deals with issues that are common across multiple disciplines and for students at various levels of study and training, the question of terminology poses an interesting puzzle. After reviewing the various options, I elected to use the term *internship.* This choice does not reflect preference for one discipline over another or for a specific level of training. Rather, I chose internship simply because it carries with it the easy-to-use term *intern* to designate the person doing the learning.

Thus, throughout this book, internships and interns are simply convenient labels referring to any applied field studies beyond the classroom. The key point here is to avoid semantic debates over terminology so we can move on to what you need to know, whatever your setting or role may be titled.

THERAPY, COUNSELING, AND TREATMENT

For most beginning interns, the primary focus will be observation or informal interactions with clients. At more advanced levels, interns will be involved in direct service delivery. Some interns will manage cases, others will participate in assessment, and many will be involved in therapy or counseling (Stedman, 1997).

With so many different activities, no single word can encompass all of what interns might do. For convenience, I have chosen to use the term *treatment.* As used in this book, treatment encompasses a wide spectrum of activities intended to assist clients including any of the activities of disciplines and professions that refer to their work as therapy, counseling, or by other related terms. Treatment can include physical or other interventions by interns in physical, occupational, or speech therapies. In its broadest sense, treatment can also refer to case management, assessment, play with children at a day-care center, and other such activities designed to help clients.

SUPERVISORS AND INSTRUCTORS

With the exception of the final internship training for advanced graduate students, in most internship experiences students will be under the guidance of persons in two different roles. To clarify the terminology regarding these individuals, I will use the word *instructors* in reference to faculty from the student's educational institution who monitor the student's progress and interface with those employed by the field placement site itself. Those who directly monitor and direct the student's work at the placement site will be referred to as *supervisors.*

In all fieldwork, students should work closely with both their academic instructor and their field supervisor. Although the amount of direct contact students will have with instructors or supervisors will vary from program to program and across placements, throughout this book I will emphasize repeatedly that both instructors and supervisors should be kept closely informed of the intern's activities and should be notified of any concerns or problems that develop.

FINDING AND SELECTING A PLACEMENT

Considering the importance of field experiences, it is surprising how little has been written about how placements are selected and how interns should be matched to specific placement sites. Holtzman and Raskin (1989) studied the process of field placement selection across different social work programs and concluded that the procedures used vary widely. At one end of the spectrum are academic programs that leave almost everything up to the student. In such programs, students are tasked with locating potential internship sites, contacting staff, arranging for permission to participate, finding a supervisor, and coordinating with an academic instructor. By comparison, other schools exercise control over every element of the internship experience. These schools have identified certain internship sites and supervisors with whom they work every year. Students seeking internships are required to work with one of these placement sites and all students are expected to perform specific learning activities. Sometimes students are allowed to select among the various prearranged internships, but in other programs the choice is made for the student based on the department's assessment of the student's abilities and learning needs.

Just as the process of field placement selection varies, academic institutions and field placements also use various models to conduct and coordinate field learning experiences (Bogo & Globerman, 1995). In some programs, the educational institution continues to have primary control over the student's education in the field. In others, educational responsibility is largely left to the field setting and supervisor.

Because there is such variability in approaches to selecting or assigning internships, some of the material that follows regarding internship selection may not be as relevant to all readers. If your academic program makes all the internship arrangements for students, the sections on finding internship sites and supervisors may be of less interest to

you than it will be for those who are given relatively little structure in their internship studies. If you find that some of this initial material is not pertinent to your situation, you may wish to skim it and move on to the discussion of internship agreements. On the other hand, if your program provides little structure or support for its interns, the material that follows should be helpful.

MEETING WITH YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Your first task as an intern is to meet with the academic instructor who will work with you during your internship. Some academic programs offer structured classes to go along with internships. Other programs leave internship support or supervision for students and instructors to arrange individually. In either case, initial contact with an instructor is vital for a number of reasons.

The most important reason to work with your instructor from the outset is to ensure that you receive the best possible educational experience from your internship. Instructors can help you select placements or supervisors that are best suited to your needs and they may assist in making contact with placement sites or individual supervisors. If your department has established procedures governing internships, meeting with your instructor from the beginning will ensure that you follow those procedures. Necessary paperwork may be required before you begin an internship, and there may be certain requirements for you to receive credit or a grade for your internship.

An additional concern that many interns do not take into account is the liability risks that instructors and supervisors face when their students work in the field (Zakutansky & Sirles, 1993). Given this shared liability, the faculty in your department must be involved in all aspects of your internship, from the very beginning until the conclusion.

PEERS AND CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR LOCATING INTERNSHIPS

While instructors will generally be your primary source for internship recommendations, other students who have done internships may also recommend potential internship sites. Along with identifying placements to pursue, your peers may be able to suggest places to avoid. Such information can be valuable, but keep in mind that another student's experiences will not necessarily match yours. Still, if a student advises that a certain internship amounted to little more than typing data into a computer or watching TV on the midnight shift, you can predict that the placement may present limited learning opportunities.

Along with instructors and students as resources, many campuses have offices dedicated to coordinating field learning experiences. These often go by names such as "Cooperative Education" or "Community Learning" programs. Agencies with available internship positions typically send position announcements to these offices, which then post them for students. Even though you may not have heard of a program of this sort on your campus, check around to see if one is available. The program at my institution is outstanding, but I am continually surprised at how many students do not take advantage of its services or even know that it exists.

While on the subject of campus resources, one other resource to check is your campus career services or job placement center. You may be less likely to find internship openings there, but you should become familiar with the services available through these offices. Internships provide an excellent opportunity to begin developing your job application file and honing the interview skills that you will need when you eventually apply for employment (Pitts, 1992). Career service offices can help you develop those skills. They can also help you write a curriculum vitae or resume, and many offices will help you establish a complete job application file including letters of reference and other material commonly requested by employers. These offices also receive regular announcements of position openings, so stop by periodically to see if they have received word of any openings in your area.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Interns who look to faculty or campus resources sometimes overlook the many community resources for information. If there is a community mental health center in your area, you can call and ask whether they have lists of local agencies that you might contact. Many communities also have volunteer coordinating programs to help match programs with volunteers. United Way sometimes supports such programs. Another possible resource would be a telephone crisis line. This may sound surprising, but because crisis lines make referrals to programs of all kinds, many of these lines have books listing different agencies.

Two other sources that all communities have are newspapers and phone books. In the newspaper, classified advertisements sometimes list position openings in agencies that also offer internships. Try looking in the Employment Offerings or Help Wanted section under the headings of "Counselor," "Mental Health," "Therapist," or under your specific discipline's title. These may be listed alphabetically in the general section or in special sections for "Health Care" positions. The added benefit of finding positions this way is the possibility of locating a paid position for an internship. The disadvantage is that such positions may require more job experience than beginning interns have. Also, in some paid positions it may be more difficult to find suitable supervision. That should not discourage one from calling to discuss a position. Interns often start a position as a student in an unpaid

status but are later hired in a paid capacity as openings become available. If you inquire about a position that requires more experience than you presently have, do not be afraid to suggest working as an unpaid intern to gain the requisite experience.

Because advertisements in newspapers will only identify agencies with current position openings, your phone book is a more reliable source of placements. The yellow pages listings under "Counseling," "Mental Health," and "Social Service Organizations" will have numbers for many agencies. Some phone books include special pages listing numbers for community services and agencies. Depending on your area of interest and the requirements of your program, helpful listings may include "Schools," "Clergy," "Child Care," and "Hospitals," as well as any other directory headings for your specific discipline.

National, state, and local professional associations also can be useful resources. Most organizations have membership directories that you can use to locate individuals working in settings or areas that interest you. Many professions maintain national catalogs, listing available field training opportunities. These catalogs tend to be directed toward graduate training, but there are often opportunities for undergraduates as well.

CHOOSING A PLACEMENT

Finding potential placements is the first step. The next step is to select an internship from among the possibilities. I encourage interns to approach this process thoughtfully because it is important that your first clinical experience be positive. As an intern, you may feel that you cannot afford to be too critical when choosing an internship because, after all, you are the one seeking the position. Nevertheless, you will be giving substantial amounts of your own time and resources to the internship so you should consider carefully where you are likely to get the most benefit.

One way to evaluate what features to look for is to consider what other interns have found important in their selection process. The features that will be most important to you will depend on your program and your level of training, but surveys of interns have shown several key variables that influence decisions: the match of interests between the training site and the intern, the reputation of the training site, special training opportunities, the breadth of clinical populations available, location, quality of supervision, and the intern's gut feeling about the site (Stedman, Neff, Donahoe, Kopel, & Hays, 1995).

After you have given some thought to the features that are most important to your own interests, the next step involves matching those interests with the internships available. Several approaches have been suggested to make the process of matching students and placements more efficient and successful. In a useful article describing multiple aspects of the internship selection and application process, Stewart and Stewart (1996) refer to a paired comparison technique that ranks internship features on a grid along with personal selection criteria. Brownstein (1981) described a comparable, but somewhat less complicated, process for organizing data on placement opportunities and student characteristics.

Building on Brownstein's model, I have developed information forms for placement sites and for student interns. These forms are provided in Appendixes A and B. On one form, interns list their interests, experience, available times, and other information relevant to internship selection. The parallel form presents agency information such as location, types of clients, treatment approaches, supervision, and available days and times. Comparing information from the intern and agency allows instructors, students, and the agency to make informed decisions about the suitability of a given placement for a specific intern. Such information may also reduce the likelihood of placements that do not work out (Holtzman & Raskin, 1989).

Another approach to selecting internship sites was described by Brill, Wolkin, and McKeel (1987) who noted that students seeking predoctoral internships in clinical psychology must choose from several hundred possibilities. Brill et al. suggest that prospective interns can narrow this field by using a visualization exercise to imagine ideal short- and long-term training goals and opportunities. The intern and instructor then consider insights gained from that process as they review information and materials collected by previous interns. They place special emphasis on seeking acceptance to programs that have provided positive experiences for other interns from the same university. Applicants are also advised to apply to a limited number of sites rather than dissipating their resources on many different locations. This allows them to focus greater attention on the sites they choose and tends to improve the quality of applications to those locations.

While applying to a limited number of sites and focusing your efforts may be a good strategy for some students, other authors (Mellott, Arden, & Cho, 1997) have suggested that as competition for a limited number of internship sites increases, particularly for graduate internships (Gaw, 1997), graduate interns may consider applying to as many as 15 to 20 sites to increase the probability of being accepted. Multiple applications, however, can substantially increase the costs involved both in time, transportation, and in application fees (Oehlert, Lopez, & Sumerall, 1997).

SUPERVISION

Although many interns select placements based on clients served, location, treatment approach, or other considerations, perhaps the most important factor to consider involves