

Professional counselors are expected to engage in regular self-assessment and continuing education. Thus, in keeping with that expectation, in lieu of a final examination, you will submit a self-evaluation paper (four to five pages) that describes your personal and professional experiences during internship. In this paper, you will discuss the following:

- *What did you learn as a result of your time with clients, peers, and supervisors?*
- *Review the objectives for this course; how has your experience during internship this semester increased your competency in these areas?*
- *What progress did you make toward your learning goals?*
- *What areas (in the course objectives) do you think are your key strengths and growth areas for your next clinical experience?*
- *What are your new learning goals as you move forward toward your next clinical experience?*

Self-Assessment, Cristina Pearse | December 2025

The culmination of my Internship II experience at Clinica Family Health & Wellness (CFHW) represents not merely the fulfillment of an academic requirement but a profound period of professional and personal synthesis. Guided by the exceptional mentorship of my primary supervisor, Arielle Fertman, and the SUD IOP team, and enriched by every client interaction, this internship has been the most significant developmental milestone in my clinical training to date.

This self-evaluation paper serves as a reflective map of that journey, structured around the core learning objectives of CNS 745 Internship II. It will detail the integrative lessons learned, assess my growth in specific competency areas as evidenced by formal assessment and personal reflection, evaluate progress toward initial learning goals, identify emergent strengths and areas for continued growth, and establish new objectives for my impending transition into post-graduate professional practice.

I. Synthesis of Learning: From Clients, Peers, and Supervisors

My learning was multi-sourced, with each relationship offering a distinct and invaluable curriculum.

From my clients, I learned the paramount importance of authentic human connection as the vehicle for change. I echo Yalom, who posits the therapist (herself) as the intervention. I learned that therapy thrives in a climate of genuine safety and positive regard. Clients taught me resilience in the face of trauma, the complex interplay between substance use and emotional pain, and the courage required to confront deeply ingrained patterns. For instance, my work in the SUD IOP, where I was commended for contributing to “co-occurring trauma and PTSD” discussions, solidified my understanding that behaviors are often adaptations. Learning to “confront clients with hard truths or inconsistencies” while maintaining unwavering compassion was a skill forged directly in the therapeutic dyad, teaching me that challenge and empathy are not opposites but necessary partners.

From my peers and the broader treatment team, I learned the operational meaning of systems theory and collaborative care. Engaging in case consultations, team meetings, and co-facilitation across

settings illuminated how a client's ecosystem within the agency directly impacts their progress. As one example, the feedback from my exceptional IOP supervisor that I contributed to the "overall cohesiveness of the group" and was an "asset to both clients and staff" highlights this lesson in action. I observed and participated in the delicate balance of maintaining one's clinical perspective while integrating the insights of psychiatrists, case managers, and fellow therapists. This experience underscored that professionalism ("strong communication and teamwork") is not merely about punctuality but about being a reliable, insightful, and respectful node within a healing network.

From my supervisors, particularly Arielle Fertman, I received a masterclass in developmental supervision that transformed my clinical lens. The evaluation's repeated emphasis on my "openness to feedback" and initiative ("listened to podcasts... brought in her own resources") speaks to a supervisory relationship that was both challenging and supportive. I learned the art of nuanced case conceptualization—moving beyond symptom management to understanding core beliefs and values, a skill noted in my "excellent reflections of meaning." My supervisor modeled how to use self-disclosure "thoughtfully and therapeutically," a skill I practiced under guidance and which was recognized as a strength in group facilitation. Perhaps most critically, I learned the ethical mindfulness of knowing my limits; the feedback that I "always asked thoughtful questions and did not try to take on things by herself" reflects the internalization of a principle more vital than any single intervention: the wisdom to consult.

II. Competency Growth Relative to Course Objectives

Reviewing the course objectives through the lens of my formal evaluation reveals significant, documented growth across all domains of clinical practice.

Counseling Skills & Interventions: The evaluation scores (all 5.0s except one) demonstrate advanced beginner/competent proficiency in core skills. My ability to convey "attunement and empathy" nonverbally and to use "insightful, thoughtful questions" evolved from conscious application to more integrated practice. I progressed in synthesizing information, using summaries to "consolidate themes" and employing confrontation and Motivational Interviewing to "develop discrepancies." The specific recognition of my work in the SUD IOP, where I utilized "self-disclosure thoughtfully" and demonstrated "strong clinical skill," shows the application of these micro-skills within complex, co-occurring disorder contexts.

Professional Practice & Ethics: This domain was rigorously tested and reinforced. Adherence to "ethical guidelines" was consistently demonstrated, particularly in navigating dilemmas with appropriate consultation. "Professional behavior" and "boundaries" were identified as strengths, characterized by congruency ("her personality shines through") and appropriate limit-setting. The diligence in "record keeping & task completion," improving in "succinct" notes over time, reflects a growing understanding of documentation as integral to care, not merely an administrative task. It is a balance to accurately document client interaction for clinical use, particularly when mandated reporting is required.

Multicultural & Diversity Competence: This objective moved from abstract knowledge to engaged practice. My supervisor noted I was "open to learning," "practiced broaching culture as instructed,"

and treated all with “respect and curiosity.” Working with a diverse client population in both individual and group settings required me to move beyond generic cultural awareness to specific, humble inquiry, acknowledging my own positionality while striving to understand each client’s unique cultural worldview.

Assessment & Diagnosis: I gained practical, applied experience in “administering and interpreting assessment instruments” like comprehensive assessments, NOMS, GAD assessments, the PCL-5 and using the DSM-5 for diagnostic purposes. This shifted diagnosis from a classroom exercise to a dynamic, ongoing part of case formulation that directly informed “focus of counseling” and intervention planning.

Group Counseling: This was a major area of growth. The extended, verbatim feedback from the IOP supervisor is a powerful testament to my competency in “facilitating or co-facilitating a group.” I learned to manage group process, use linking and drawing out skills, and balance content with emotional process, contributing to a “cohesive” therapeutic environment.

III. Progress Toward Initial Learning Goals

At the outset of Internship II, my primary learning goals were to: 1) Deepen my ability to conceptualize cases from a trauma-informed lens; 2) Develop confidence and skill in group facilitation; and 3) Refine my integration of theory into a cohesive personal style.

The assessment results and supervisor comments indicate substantial progress on all fronts. My contribution to trauma discussions in the IOP and the accurate reflection of client “values, core beliefs, and worldviews” demonstrate advanced case conceptualization. The glowing report on my group skills confirms the successful development of confidence and competence in that modality. Finally, the feedback describing a clinician who is both “warm and friendly” (Humanistic) and able to use structured confrontation and goal-focus (CBT) suggests a promising, integrated therapeutic identity. My “congruence and genuineness” provide the relational foundation upon which these techniques effectively rest.

IV. Key Strengths and Growth Areas for Future Clinical Experience

Based on the evaluation and self-reflection, my key strengths entering my next clinical experience are:

- **Foundational Relational Skills:** My innate capacity for empathy, respect, and creating a safe, attuned therapeutic environment (“naturally warm and friendly presence,” “exceeds expectations – respect and compassion”).
- **Professionalism & Collaborative Spirit:** Reliability, ethical diligence, openness to feedback, and the ability to be an effective team member (“model intern,” “asset to both clients and staff”).
- **Integrated Core Counseling Skills:** Proficiency in the essential micro-skills portfolio, from reflection and questioning to summarization and appropriate confrontation.
- **Motivation and Reflective Practice:** A genuine “passion for learning” and the self-awareness to engage in continuous growth.

My primary growth areas, informed by the one criterion scored at 4.0 and the natural trajectory from advanced student to independent practitioner, are:

- Goal-Setting: As my supervisor noted, I “followed instructions about goal-setting” but will need to “develop more nuanced, tailored goal-setting skills.” My next step is to lead this process more autonomously, co-creating complex, multi-faceted treatment plans that seamlessly integrate client voice, diagnosis, theory, and measurable outcomes. I will continue working with clients using SMART goal structures.
- Deepening Theoretical Integration: While my integration is beginning, I aim to move from competent generalist to developing sharper expertise in specific evidence-based modalities for trauma and substance use (e.g., advanced training in DBT, ACT, EMDR, brainspotting, and psychedelic-assisted therapies and integration).
- Supervision: As I transition toward licensure, my focus in supervision will shift from skill acquisition to more complex issues of countertransference, therapeutic impasse, and the nuances of private practice and/or specialized clinical work.

V. New Learning Goals for Future Clinical Experience

As I prepare for post-graduate clinical work, my learning goals are:

- To achieve autonomy in comprehensive treatment planning, by developing and implementing three complex treatment plans that I design independently (with supervisory sign-off), demonstrating sophisticated goal-setting that links assessment, theory, and intervention.
- To pursue specialized training in several evidence-based trauma therapy modalities (e.g., begin foundational training in EMDR or become certified in DBT skills groups, IFS, mindful meditation, and brainspotting) to deepen my clinical toolbox for my population of interest.
- To refine my professional identity as a supervisor-in-training, by seeking opportunities to provide peer consultation or, when appropriate, mentor a newer student, focusing on articulating my clinical reasoning and modeling reflective practice.

Conclusion

My Internship II experience has been transformative. The exceptional evaluation I received is not a final verdict but a snapshot of a clinician in vigorous development, blessed with supportive mentorship and challenging clinical opportunities. It validates the strengths I bring to the field: my relational core, professional integrity, and earnest curiosity. More importantly, it illuminates the path forward with clarity and purpose. I leave this internship not with a sense of completion, but with a renewed commitment to the lifelong process of learning that defines our profession. I am deeply grateful for the guidance I have received. I am confident in my foundation as I take the next step toward independent practice, carrying these lessons, relationships, and a clear-eyed vision for my continued growth with me.