Medical Setting Social Work Services
Placement Setting: Medical Setting Social Work Services

Target Group(s): Patients receiving or have received medical treatment in hospital or clinics, and their family; Volunteers serving in hospitals (for patient/health resource centre)

Nature and Purpose of Service:

Purpose of service:
Through working with the individual, and collaboration with the medical/paramedical team, the family, community partners, and even volunteers, to:

✧ facilitate physical, psychological, social and spiritual rehabilitation or recovery of individuals suffering/suffered from illnesses, including the improvement or maintenance of their quality of life despite the illnesses;

✧ enhance acceptance and coping with illness, including death and dying counseling for patients and bereavement work for their family

Nature of work:
Casework – Pre-admission planning, psycho-social assessment, discharge planning and follow up service, referral for practical assistance, counseling for individual and/or the family, psycho-education on illness and its course, consultation and collaboration with other health-care professionals

Group work – Therapeutic, developmental, educational, mutual support groups for patients and/or their caregivers; volunteer training group in patient/health resource centre

Mass program/Project – Developmental, educational, recreational programs/ projects for patients and/or their family; May involve in some large scale project conducted in partnership with the Hospital or Community

Probable setting-specific nature of work:
✧ In medical social service units (Both general unit and psychiatric unit): Case and group work mostly

✧ In some specialist clinics/centres (e.g. Adolescent Medical Centre, Hospice Centre): Casework and group work is predominant, with chances of conducting programs

✧ In patient/health resource centres (e.g. Patient Resource Centre, Cancer Centre) : Groups /programs /projects are the usual practice

Nature of Fieldwork Assignments and Learning Opportunities:
Multi-disciplinary approach is adopted – there may be opportunities for team collaboration with other professionals, and for attending ward rounds and case conference.

Most workload assigned would be illness related, sometimes with a specific illness or condition, e.g. breast cancer; total joint replacement; DM; while at other times, a wider spectrum of illness types would be assigned for broader exposure of students’ learning opportunities, e.g., in a psychiatric setting, cases with different illness, like schizophrenia, depression, anxiety disorder, etc., would be assigned.

**Working Hours:**
- Normal office hours for medical social service units operated by SWD (Monday to Friday from 8:45-17:15, Saturday from 9:00-12:00, with slight variations according to different offices’ practice);
- Most medical social service units operated by HA would also have normal office hours; Only the Caritas Medical Centre would have extended office hours till evening (i.e. opens from 9:00 to 22:00 on Monday to Friday, and from 9:00 to 17:00 on Saturday) but the service during the non-normal office hours is limited.
- For Adolescent Medical Centre (in QEH), the placement hours are restricted to either Monday to Friday (except Thursday) from 9:00 to 18:00; and Thursday from 13:00 to 21:00.
- Patient/health resource centre: normal office hours, some operates till 18:00 in the evening, but would not open at night; very occasional Saturday & Sunday opening due to programs and activities.

*Evening or weekend duty may be required for running groups and programs or for home visits in the different units/centres.*

**Special Characteristics/ Requirements:**
Since team approach is strongly emphasized and the cases tend to be more serious in nature in psychiatric and some specialist clinic (like Adolescent Medical Centre and hospice settings), with possibility of sudden turn of events, like death and suicide, the student must be mature, independent, and able to relate well with other professionals. Some service units would only accept Masters students and/or students in their final placement.

Students who want to work in medical related fields but cannot attend placement during the day time should expect that there would be very limited choices of placement setting for them. Interested students could consider choosing the rehabilitation service, where there would also be service users having illness-related issues, including chronic illness and mental illness in residential service as well as in...
the community (For example: Community Rehabilitation Network; Halfway House; Integrated Community Centre for Mental Health, etc.)

There is a very fast pace of work in acute settings, like the general wards of major hospitals, in which a case needs to be handled within one or two days. Students would need to work efficiently and at a quick pace, with readiness to handle crisis situations due to sudden turn of events in the medical condition of the patients.

Recent placement settings/ agencies and corresponding websites:
Social Welfare Department (for Schedule I Hospitals and Psychiatric Services):
http://www.swd.gov.hk/
Current/Previous placement settings: Medical Social Services Units at Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital (Psychiatric Unit), Castle Peak Hospital, Northern District Hospital (Psychiatric Unit), West Kowloon Psychiatric Centre, Western Psychiatric Centre, Queen Elizabeth Hospital (General Unit)

Hospital Authority (for Schedule II Hospitals or Patient/Health Resource Centres): http://www.ha.org.hk
Current/Previous placement settings: Caritas Medical Centre (Department of Medical Social Work), Ruttonjee Hospital (Medical Social Services Unit), Yan Chai Hospital (Medical Social Services Unit & Patient Resource Centre), Pamela Youde Eastern Hospital (Community and Patient Resource Centre), Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Patient Resource Centre; Hospice Centre), Grantham Hospital (Medical Social Services Unit; Hospice Centre; Patient Resource Centre), Queen Mary Hospital Cancercare and Support Unit, Apleichau Out-patient Clinic, Adolescent Medical Centre, Haven of Hope Hospital (Medical Social Services Unit)

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