The University of Hong Kong
Department of Social Work and Social Administration

Overseas Fieldwork Placement
(June 5 to August 29, 2017)
Student’s Summary Report

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Program of Study: BSW FT Year 3
Placement Agency: Taipei City Hospital

1. Introduction of the Placement Agency

The branches of Taipei City Hospital are merged from ten municipal hospitals into one unit and has become the largest healthcare organization in Northern Taiwan, and owned by the government of Taipei City. The merge aimed to improve the hospital services in Taipei City, and also develop better community based healthcare services.

Taiwan has a system for dividing levels for the healthcare institutions, in the past, people will usually go to the higher-level care services provider for even basic treatments that can be done by small hospitals or even clinics. Thus, The Taipei City Hospital aims to promote the community-based health care services, for a better resources allocation and utilization in the Taipei City community.

Taipei City Hospital, as owned by the government of Taipei City, will have to fully support in the implementation of different new policies, for example, the promotion of Advanced Care Planning, Organs Donation, Palliative Care and Do Not Resuscitate forms. The whole hospital, as well as the social work team have to give their support to the new policies accordingly.
In my summer placement in the Taipei City Hospital in Renai Branch, I mainly serve in the hospice and terminal illness ward, thus I had some chances to come across with the policies of palliative care, DNR and ACP in my case. Also, I had a promotional programme with my fieldmates on ACP as Taiwan has just passed the law on ACP and now is the preparation period for the implementation of ACP.

2. Brief account of the work assignments

Case: 7
Group: 0
Programme: 2

In the placement period, I have mainly had my learning experiences on casework and conducting 2 programmes. Before receiving and handling cases alone, I had many chances to have shadowing and observing her in handling the cases with discussion on the assessment and intervention used by her. I then have my own experiences in handling cases. In total, I have had 7 cases on my own, which include different kinds of assessment, intervention and cooperation with medical team throughout the working period. I also had chance in conducting two programmes on Advanced Care Planning(ACP) and nursing home activity for the residents. The ACP programme is a two-week promotional programme that could also be regarded in the work of community development, to promote on the ideas and organizing activities. The nursing home activity is a one-off activity that aim to celebrate Father’s Day with the residents and enhance interactions between the residents and caregivers. I also observed and assisted in home visit and home hospital services.
3. Reflections on professional and personal growth gained from this placement

First, I expected myself to understand how medical social worker can provide their services in the cooperation with multi-disciplinary approach under the secondary settings. I have learnt and experience both the strengths and limitations in medical social workers in rendering professional help from my case and programme experiences.

As I have my overseas placement in Taipei, it is also my aim to understand about the medical system and services in Taiwan, especially in the field of end-of-life services because of my own interest. I have had trainings and own working experiences on the services so I have enough understanding about the systems and services.

On the other hand, I wished to learn more on palliative care and bereavement. I was able to learn about the services and took part in the services delivery to the clients. Also, I have come across with the relationship between palliative care and bereavement and have good discussion with my supervisor.

Last but not least, I expected myself to learn to face death, as I have chances in witnessing client receiving CPR and died, the dead of my own clients and working with terminal illness patients, I am able to face death in a more neutral manner with my controlled emotions, and helped myself in reflecting about death.

Sharing of feelings

As this is my first placement, I have had a lot of expectations to myself and which might have given myself some stress unconsciously. I am glad to have my supervisor to point out my blind-spots of pushing myself too hard. I think I can
slow down my pace and take everything step by step. Slowing down my pace can allow myself for more reflection and learnings as we can also pay attention to the details of the progress.

Although my self-awareness has given me strength, but it also acted as a boundary limiting my learnings. Self-awareness is important as I might be easily find out my interests in certain area of services for social work, for example the end-of-life services. But I should not only limit myself in what I found interests on, but also open to new experience that might provide me new insights. I am glad that I also took challenges and grasp the learning opportunity by raising them out actively.

Rome is not built in a day. The experience in my first placement have certainly given me a strong foundation on my social work path. Carry on the good work, and keep reflecting on my own limitations with action could help myself to be a good social worker. I am sure my confident can support me through the ups and downs.

**Ups and downs**