

DUE PROCESS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

DUE PROCESS AND RESOLUTION

POLICY

AK-PIC has developed a Due Process and Resolution process, which focuses on the prevention of and timely response to identified problems. This ensures that decisions made by the consortium are not arbitrarily or personally based and identifies specific steps that are applied to all interns. Further, clearly identified steps and a process are provided for an intern to address an issue with some aspect of the Training Program or one of its members.

Doctoral-level psychology interns are expected to maintain the highest standards of personal conduct, integrity, and professionalism. They are expected to support and comply with APA Ethical Guidelines and to utilize supervision effectively in order to grow professionally. It also is the responsibility of the intern's clinical supervisor and the AK-PIC faculty to assure that high standards of professionalism are attained by the interns under their supervision. Maintenance of these standards will promote effectiveness of both the professional training provided by the internship and the quality of psychological work provided by the interns to clients/constituent communities of the consortium agencies.

GENERAL DUE PROCESS GUIDELINES

Due process includes steps that assure fair evaluation of intern performance, intern awareness of options for resolution of performance issues and clearly defined steps for notice, hearing, and appeal. General guidelines for due process at AK-PIC include the following:

- A. The Training Faculty will present AK-PIC's program expectations for professional functioning to interns in writing, at the start of the training period. This is discussed in a group format during orientation and may be followed up individually during supervision. Interns sign an acknowledgement indicating receipt and understanding of, and agreement to abide by, these guidelines and other AK-PIC policies.
- B. The process for evaluation of interns is clearly described during orientation. Interns will be formally evaluated at least two times annually by their primary supervisor. The written evaluation is based on APA criteria and includes the profession-wide competencies of:
 - 1) Research
 - 2) Ethical and legal standards
 - 3) Individual and cultural diversity
 - 4) Professional values, attitudes, and behaviors
 - 5) Communication and interpersonal skills
 - 6) Assessment
 - 7) Interventions
 - 8) Supervision
 - 9) Consultation and inter-professional/interdisciplinary skills

- C. The various procedures and actions involved in decisions regarding inadequate skills or problematic behaviors are described to interns.
- D. The T-CDs and/or site clinical supervisor will communicate early and often with academic programs about any suspected difficulties with interns.

PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIOR

For purposes of this document, intern problem behavior is defined broadly as an interference in professional functioning which is reflected in one or more of the following ways:

- an inability and/or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into one's repertoire of professional behavior,
- an inability to acquire professional skills in order to reach an acceptable level of competency, and/or,
- an inability to control personal stress, psychological dysfunctions, and/or excessive emotional reactions which interfere with professional functioning.

It is a professional judgment as to when an intern's behavior becomes problematic rather than of concern. Trainees may exhibit behaviors, attitudes or characteristics that, while of concern and requiring remediation, are not unexpected or excessive for professionals in training. Problems typically become identified as impairments when they include one or more of the following characteristics:

- the intern does not acknowledge, understand, or address the problem when it is identified;
- the problem is not merely a reflection of a skill deficit which can be rectified by academic or didactic training;
- the quality of services delivered by the intern is sufficiently negatively affected;
- the problem is not restricted to one area of professional functioning;
- a disproportionate amount of attention by training personnel is required;
- the trainee's behavior does not change as a function of feedback, remediation efforts, and/or time;
- the problematic behavior has potential for ethical or legal ramifications if not addressed;
- the intern's behavior negatively impacts the public view of the agency;
- the problematic behavior negatively impacts the intern class.

INFORMAL REVIEW

When a supervisor or AK-PIC faculty member believes that an intern's behavior is becoming problematic, the first step in addressing the issue should be to raise the issue with the intern directly in an attempt to informally resolve the problem. This notice should be documented in writing, but will not become part of their professional file.

FORMAL REVIEW

If an intern's problem behavior persists following an attempt to resolve the issue informally, if an intern has a grievance against them that is not resolved satisfactorily, or if an intern receives an average rating of a "2" or below on a broad competency on an Intern Competency Evaluation, the following notice and process is initiated:

- A. The supervisor will meet with one or both of the Training Co-Directors (T-CDs) and intern to discuss the problem and determine what action needs to be taken to address the issue. If one of T-CDs is the intern's direct supervisor, both T-CDs will be included in the meeting.
- B. The intern will have the opportunity to provide a written statement related to his/her response to the problem.
- C. After discussing the problem and the intern's response, the supervisor and T-CD(s) may:
 - 1) Issue an "Acknowledge Notice" which formally acknowledges
 - a) that the faculty is aware of and concerned with the problem,
 - b) that the problem has been brought to the attention of the intern,
 - c) that the faculty will work with the intern to specify the steps necessary to rectify the problem or skill deficits addressed by the inadequate evaluation rating,
 - d) that the problem is not significant enough to warrant serious action;
 - e) a written notice will be submitted to the intern and the Director of Clinical Training at the trainee's graduate institution.
 - 2) Place the intern on "Probation" which defines a relationship such that the faculty, through the supervisors and T-CD, actively and systematically monitor, for a specific length of time, the degree to which the intern addresses, changes and/or otherwise improves the problematic behavior or skill deficit. The probation is a written statement to the intern and the Director of Clinical Training at the trainee's graduate institution and includes:
 - a) the actual behaviors or skills associated with the problem,
 - b) the specific recommendations for rectifying the problem,
 - c) the time frame for the probation during which the problem is expected to be ameliorated, and
 - d) the procedures designed to ascertain whether the problem has been appropriately rectified.
 - 3) Document the problem and take no further action.
- D. If the problem is not rectified through the above processes, the intern's placement within AK-PIC may be terminated.

- E. If the problem represents gross misconduct or ethical violations that have the potential to cause harm, the intern's placement within AK-PIC may be terminated.
- F. If the intern's employment is terminated by the site, the intern's placement within AK-PIC may be terminated.
- G. The final decision to terminate an intern's placement would be made by the entire Training Committee and would represent a discontinuation of participation by the intern within every aspect of the consortium. The Training Committee would make this determination during a meeting convened within a reasonable timeframe following the conclusion of step A or during the regularly-scheduled monthly Training Committee meeting, whichever occurs first.
- H. The T-CDs may decide to temporarily suspend an intern's clinical activities or place an intern on paid administrative leave during this period prior to a final decision being made, if warranted.
- I. AK-PIC will adhere to APPIC's Policies on intern dismissal and secure a release from the Match contract.

APPEAL AND REVIEW PANEL

In the event that an intern does not agree with any of the aforementioned notifications, remediation or sanctions, or dismissal, an Appeal may be submitted by the intern to the Training Committee.

- A. The intern should file a formal appeal in writing with all supporting documents - an email will suffice- to the T-CDs. The intern must submit this appeal within 5 work days from their notification of any of the above (notification, remediation or probation, or dismissal).
- B. If requested, the Appeal review will be conducted by a panel convened by the T-CDs and consisting of themselves, the intern's primary supervisor, and at least two other members of the Training Committee. The intern may request a specific member of the Training Committee to serve on the review panel.
- C. The Appeal review will be held over a two week period. The review panel will review all written materials and have an opportunity to interview the parties involved or any other individuals with relevant information. The review panel may uphold the decisions made previously or may appeal or modify them. The review panel has final discretion regarding outcome.
- D. In the event that an intern is filing a formal appeal in writing to disagree with a decision that has already been made by the Training Committee and supported by the T-CDs, then that appeal is reviewed by the T-CDs in consultation with the Training Committee. The Director will determine if a new Review Panel should be formed to reexamine the case, or if the decision of the original review panel is upheld.

USE OF VIDEOCONFERENCE

Videoconferencing will be utilized for situations that require the meetings of interns and training staff who are located in geographically different areas of Alaska, if needed.

Reviewed/revised by AK-PIC Faculty on 05/14/20

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Alaska Psychiatric Institute, Aleutian Pribilof Island Association, Norton Sound Health Corporation,
Providence Family Medicine Center/Alaska Family Medicine Residency