

Supervisor's List of Dos and Don'ts for a Positive Experience For you and your Student

Don't assume the new intern will be like your last intern or that the experience will be identical. Each internship is a unique experience and brings both excitement and challenges for the supervisor and student.

Do spend time getting to know your intern so they become comfortable with you and understand the boundaries of your relationship. Ask them about other commitments they may have such as class schedule, being a student athlete, a job, or caregiving responsibilities.

Do be clear and specific about communication expectations. Find out the quickest way to reach the intern on short notice. Be clear on how they should communicate an illness or emergency to you.

Do be clear about the intern's personal use of a cell phone during internship hours and explain the limitations regarding the use of the agency's phone, email and internet for personal and work-related use. Clearly state unprofessional and unacceptable behaviors related to these issues.

Don't expect students to use their personal phone or email account with clients or other agencies.

Don't assume the intern understands confidentiality—be clear about what interns may share and with whom.

Do discuss safety considerations with your student.

Do schedule weekly supervision with your students and teach students to prepare for supervision with questions and topics to focus on. The learning contract can guide developing a supervision agenda.

Do encourage students to provide assignments in advance of supervision so that the supervision time can be used for assignment discussion.

Don't allow interns to take comments by clients or staff members personally.

Do encourage interns to express empathy with all clients and staff members.

Do support the strengths-based perspective which values the experiences of all persons.

Don't allow students to complete school work during downtime. Provide students with suggestions of meaningful activities, including ongoing projects that may be helpful to the agency.

Don't fail to see the strengths the student brings to the internship.

Do enjoy the satisfaction that comes from mentoring and professionalizing your student intern.