



Alcohol Safety Action Program

Placement Description

The Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program site will provide students with experience in applied research, intake and assessment of court ordered probationers, substance abuse related psychoeducation, and habitual offender intervention.

Students will learn what happens to those convicted of Driving While Intoxicated (D.W.I.), by observing D.W.I. trials in the Rockingham / Harrisonburg General District Court. Students will have the opportunity to observe and perform enrollments, intakes, assessments, and drug screening for individuals ordered to VASAP. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to observe alcohol/drug education classes.

Intern or Field Placement Responsibilities/Opportunities

- Assist with education/intervention groups
- Help compile reports for court
- Do follow-up calls
- Observe in court
- Case management
- Drug screens
- Enroll probationers

Contact Information

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Read about student experiences at this site below:



Spring 2015 – Melissa Gilrain

The mission of the Rockingham/Harrisonburg Alcohol Safety Action Program (ASAP) is to reduce the levels of accidents, injuries, fatalities, and property damage resulting from drunk drivers by providing them with education or counseling programs. In addition, ASAP aims to prevent drunk driving by increasing awareness of the problem and modifying the public's attitude and beliefs concerning driving while intoxicated. The services that ASAP provides are education, intensive education, and treatment programs for people who receive DUI convictions from the court or drug charges. The office also provides habitual offender relapse prevention, driver improvement, driving suspended, and ignition interlock services. There are three case managers, an enrollment officer, two secretaries, and a director that work in the office. When clients are referred from court they undergo an intake process where they are classified and assigned a case manager. The office also handles transferred cases from other ASAP offices around the state of Virginia.

During my time at ASAP I was provided with a multitude of different opportunities. I was able to work closely with one of the case managers and learned a great deal about the paperwork required to manage her caseload. I was also able to sit in on client meetings with the case manager, which allowed me to learn more about an individual case. In addition, I learned how to perform intakes and classify a client as education, intensive education, or treatment. As the semester progressed I became responsible for typing up all intake notes into the database that ASAP uses and for putting together treatment referrals. During this time I would also set community service and drug screen reminders for the remainder of the clients time in the program. Clients who have received a DUI or a drug offense are required to be drug screened during their time on probation and I had the opportunity to learn how to properly conduct a drug screen. Performing intakes was my favorite aspect of my field placement at ASAP because it allowed me an opportunity to get to know the clients better and see how the program worked from the very start of a client's enrollment.

Another great experience that I had at ASAP was attending the Rockingham/Harrisonburg General District Court as well as the Circuit Court. Clients who fail to comply with the policies of ASAP or their probation are sent back to court and it was very interesting to observe their cases. While many of the cases are continued to allow the offender an opportunity to get back into compliance, there are also times when clients are revoked from the program and sent to jail. One thing that was especially interesting to me is that there were two different judges in the district court that had very different styles. One of the judges would continue almost every case while the other was much more strict and was more likely to send someone to jail. At the end of my time, the more lenient judge retired and therefore I expect that many of the cases handed over to the new judge will end up being revoked or sent to jail. As I became more familiar with the court process and how a show cause works, I was actually able to write the show cause and present a few cases to the judge with the assistance of one of the case managers.



Because I did my field placement during the spring semester, I was able to participate in the high school health fair at three of the local high schools. I was able to plan an interactive game using beer goggles to demonstrate why it isn't smart to drink and drive and also designed a poster about the effects of alcohol. I really enjoyed doing this because it gave me a chance to interact with students and inform them about the consequences of underage drinking as well as drug use. Many of the students were unaware of the penalties associated with underage alcohol use and had no idea what ASAP even was. It was nice to be able to educate them and hopefully prevent them from using alcohol or drugs at a young age in a fun, engaging way.

I absolutely loved everything about working at ASAP. All of the staff was extremely helpful and friendly which made going in very enjoyable and I actually continued to go even after I finished all of my required hours. However, there were a few downsides to doing my field placement here. Different days of the week are used for different purposes at ASAP and I was unable to go in on Tuesdays or Thursdays, which are used, for paperwork and habitual offender reviews so unfortunately I could not observe those. Court is also on Monday afternoons and since I had class I could not always stay to observe the full proceedings. There were also times when there would not be a lot of work for me to do for the case managers so I would just be filing or helping the front office. Despite these minor downsides, the overall experience was positive and I definitely learned a great deal and was able to have a lot of hands on opportunities.

My future career plans are to eventually become a licensed substance abuse counselor and working at ASAP has definitely confirmed that this is something that I would like to do. Even though I was somewhat nervous at the beginning of the semester about interacting with the clients, I am now much more comfortable with it and feel as though I can better explain the program to them and answer their questions. While some of the clients can be difficult to work with, many of them are friendly and cooperative and it is very rewarding to see them successfully complete ASAP. Working at ASAP has definitely improved my communication skills, which will be useful for any future career opportunities I may have.

Overall, I am so happy to have had the opportunity not only to participate in field placement, but also to have completed it at a site that afforded me such wonderful experiences. Going in to the office was one of my favorite parts of the week and I will be sad to leave and say goodbye to all of the wonderful people I worked with.

Spring 2015 – Mark Mullenex

The mission at the Alcohol Safety Action Program is to, “to reduce the level of accidents, injuries, fatalities, and property damage as a result of drunk drivers by evaluating such drivers as referred by the court and appropriately placing them in an education or counseling program, which is designed to change driving while intoxicated behavior.” It is also the mission of the Alcohol Safety action Program to, “prevent citizens from driving while intoxicated by increasing the awareness of the problem, modifying the general public's attitude and beliefs about driving while intoxicated to a position where they choose not to drive while intoxicated.”



While at ASAP, I was allowed to do a variety of tasks that a case manager does on a daily basis. When I first started at ASAP, I would help the case managers file while learning more about the ASAP program. After getting more familiar with the program, I was then allowed to participate in the intake process. Intake is the first appointment the offenders have with their case manager. During the intake process I would set up the room by getting all the necessary paperwork ready. Once all the clients had filled out their paperwork, I would then read to them the conditions of their probation as well as the confidentiality guidelines. Once this was done I would hand out the different cases to the case managers and the clients would then be brought back to complete an intake questionnaire. After asking the questions to the probationer, both the case manager and myself would determine whether the client should be classified as education, intensive education, or treatment. In addition to the intake process, conducting drug and alcohol screens was another thing that I was able to do. I was also able to work in the front office. In the front office I was asked to answer phone calls and collect ASAP fees from clients. All in all, my supervisor allowed me to do everything that a case manager was expected to do.

Like any field placement site there will always be advantages and disadvantages. Some of the advantages that I found while being at ASAP is that they gave you a lot of opportunities to get hands on experience rather than just making you observe all day. I was constantly moving all day, whether that was leading intakes, conducting drug screens, or working the front office. Another advantage to working at ASAP is that the staff is extremely nice and helpful. Disadvantages to working at ASAP is that the program is court mandated and many people are angry that they have to complete this program in order to get their driving privileges back. Another disadvantage is that ASAP is an education program through the court and doesn't allow you to be as helpful to your clients as many psychology majors want to be. At ASAP, the case managers are unable to provide any form of counseling but rather they are only able to educate clients on the rules of their probation and answer any questions they may have about their time at ASAP. Overall, if you like interacting with others and like a fast paced work environment, then ASAP will be a good fit for you.

There are many things that I have learned throughout my time at the Alcohol Safety Action Program. Some of things that I have learned while being at ASAP are the laws/regulations of drug and alcohol charges, the duties/responsibilities of a case manager, how to perform a drug /alcohol screen, learning to work in a fast paced environment, how to prepare documents for court, and how to deal with difficult clients. These are just a couple of the things that I have learned while at ASAP, but the list could go on and on. My experience at ASAP has strengthened my desire to help people. While this program is structured more on educational components than it is on counseling, it does offer some opportunities where a case manager can act in ways with clients similar to how a counselor would. ASAP is great entry level job for people who enjoy helping people but also for individuals who want to take some time off before going back to school to get their masters.

Because the position of a case manager is an entry level job, there are a lot of employment opportunities for someone who is looking for a job after finishing their bachelor degree. I knew about this before starting my field placement, and that is one of the reasons why I decided to choose ASAP as my placement. By learning all the responsibilities and duties of a case manager, it will set you up perfectly for any case manger opening that may come about from surrounding ASAPs. Due to the case manager skills that I learned throughout my field



placement, I was offered a case manager position at the Alexandria ASAP before I graduate from JMU. In conclusion, if you really apply yourself to learning the duties and responsibilities of a case manager you will have a very good chance of being hired at any Alcohol Safety Action Program.

Fall 2014 – Jamie Erlemeier

The Rockingham/Harrisonburg Alcohol Safety Action Program, also known as ASAP, was established in 1975. ASAP's primary mission is to increase highway safety by reducing the incidence of drunk driving. The three case managers, enrollment officer, two receptionists, and a director work toward this goal by receiving referrals from the court system. The top three referrals are community service, driver improvement and driver suspension. Last year 2,312 people were referred to ASAP from the court system. In addition, ASAP conducts intakes for DUIs, drug offenders, and young offenders. Based on the intakes, case managers place clients in either a class that is held in the ASAP building or refer them for a substance abuse assessment. ASAP is not federally or state funded; it is funded solely on the fees of their clients.

I was fortunate in the experiences and opportunities ASAP provided me. I learned how to do a lot of the paperwork to support the case manager's jobs. Furthermore, I learned how to handle transactions when clients came in to pay their fees. I was also able to conduct intakes and then place the clients in an education class, an intensive education class, or treatment. Then, I was responsible for typing up the intake into the database that ASAP uses and creating reminders for drug screens and/or community service in the future. Drug screens were another experience I had the opportunity to participate in because all DUI and drug offenders have to be drug screened. One thing I loved about my site was the trust they instilled in me by allowing me to handle transactions, intakes, and drug screens.

I had the opportunity to learn a wealth of knowledge about drug screening, how clients fake drug screens, and false positive drug screens. If a drug screen comes back positive and the client is adamant that the test is wrong, then the protocol, with their consent, is to send the urine sample to Redwood in California for further testing. I have witnessed a few times where the drug screens were false positives; one was a false positive for methamphetamines and the other for opiates. The methamphetamines false positive was linked back to an over the counter acid reflux medication and the opiates false positive was linked back to the client eating a poppy seed bagel that morning! I always thought that eating a poppy seed bagel and then testing positive for opiates was a myth, so needless to say that was eye opening to witness first hand. Furthermore, clients are also sometimes tested for alcohol with an EtG that can detect alcohol in their system for up to 72 hours. I witnessed many clients fail EtGs because they were naïve and didn't believe how reliable these tests actually were.

One of my favorite experiences was going to court. It was fascinating to me to see how the court system worked in Rockingham/Harrisonburg City. An interesting observation I witnessed was that many of the case reviews for the show causes, which are clients that are sent



back to court for noncompliance, had different outcomes despite being very similar in nature. One case would be dismissed, and then the next case would be sentenced to a few days in jail. Additionally, I observed the judge to rule differently with regards to community service for the exact same charges. It seemed that as it got later in the day the judge would increase community service hours. Furthermore, another interesting observation from court was that the lawyers seem to control the courtroom. They try to make deals with the commonwealth's attorney before court has even started then sometimes the ASAP case manager is blindsided in front of the judge.

Like with any field placement, there are always a few downsides and my field placement at ASAP was no different. I often did receptionist duties if there were no intakes or court in session. In addition, in November there were two government holidays where things slowed down at ASAP and I was not really needed. I was doing busy work to essentially just get hours.

My future career is to be a therapist for individuals suffering from the disease of addiction; I personally would love to work with 18-24 year olds. I plan to get my MSW to become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. From the beginning of the semester until now, I have grown much more comfortable with the clients at ASAP and conversing with them. In the beginning of the semester, I was more timid when I was conducting the intakes; now I am more relaxed and feel more at ease leading the intake. This will help me in my future career goals because this is what I want to do for the rest of my life. The intakes remind me of what a first session with a client may resemble. In addition, I am much more relaxed talking to coworkers, people of power such as the commonwealth's attorney, or anyone else that I may have to interact with. I would say ASAP has helped me develop my confidence as well as communication skills.

Overall I am extremely grateful for my time with ASAP; in fact I cannot believe it is over. It has become such a part of my routine that I look forward to going, seeing the coworkers, and the clients. One of the best parts of ASAP is that every single day is different; you never know what adventure is going to occur that day when you walk into