



# Children's Case Management

## Placement Description

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Provides intensive case management services to children to link to and monitor needed services at the CSB or in the community, such as therapy, medication management, school placements, and teaching of parenting skills. Practicum students are expected to abide by rules and regulations as outlined by the Standard Operating Procedures and the Student/Volunteer Agreement. Practicum students are expected to maintain effective relationships with co-workers and customers based on courtesy, compassion and respect.

## Intern or Field Placement Responsibilities/Opportunities

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### Position One (total of two positions available)

- Role model appropriate parenting techniques
- Assist families in learning life-skills such as shopping and money management
- Write treatment plans
- Sit in on family sessions in home
- Networking with other agencies in town
- Demonstrating appropriate social skills by taking children out into the community
- Attend parent teacher conferences and other school meetings such as IEP or eligibility
- Accompany clients to doctor's appointments
- Accompany clients to psychiatric appointments
- Participate in staff meetings twice a month
- Participate in assessment and planning meeting (interagency) once a month

### Position Two

- Similar to position one above except case load specializes in children with intellectual disabilities

## Contact Information

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- Contact Person: John Wilson, Supervisor of Case Management
- Address: Harrisonburg-Rockingham Community Services Board-McNulty Center 463 East Washington Street Harrisonburg, VA 22802
- Telephone: 540/433-3100
- Fax: 540/432-6989
- E-Mail: [jwilso@hrccb.org](mailto:jwilso@hrccb.org)
- Website: [www.hrccb.org](http://www.hrccb.org)

**Read about students' experiences at this site below:**



*Fall 2017 – Kristin Gross*

McNulty Center for Children and Family Services is a part of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Community Services Board. Its mission is to “help people maintain their independence while living with severe and persistent mental health, substance use and developmental disorders.” The McNulty Center evaluates the situation and needs of a child and then links them to suitable services while consistently monitoring their care and conditions. They serve children, 18 years or younger, from Rockingham County and Harrisonburg City of all gender, races and ethnicities. No two clients ever look the same. They can range from showing signs of ADHD to needing hospitalization for suicidal thoughts. The McNulty Center is made up of many services: Case Management, Out Patient Therapy, Medication Management, Family Care Coordination, Mobile Crisis Service, and Early Intervention Specialist. I worked in the Case Management Department during my field placement experience.

My first day immediately set the tone for what was expected of me as an intern. Only a few hours on the job, I was asked to use an agency’s car to go to a client’s house and fill out a Food Stamp Application with the mother because she could not read English well. I remember feeling slightly uncomfortable because I had never filled out a ten-page government document before, let alone interacted with someone whose preferred language is Spanish. Due to my supervisor, John and case manager, Stephanie, I learned how to quickly embrace situations that were outside of my comfort zone.

One of the first things I learned was that for every interaction with a client, there must be a contact note documented. Interactions can range from calling a client to inform them of a doctor’s appointment to a face-to-face interaction like filling out social service documents with them (Food Stamps, TANIF, Fuel Assistance, etc.). The main source of my contact notes came from transporting clients to and from their med management and therapy appointments. During these interactions I was able to gain clients’ trust and develop deep connections with them. I will never forget how excited a client was when her grandmother let her bring in real mash potatoes to her class Thanksgiving Day Feast. She informed me that they only get to eat the “real” kind for special occasions. This is just one of the many instances where I realized how absorbed I was in the “JMU bubble.”

During my internship, I witnessed the one-hour intake process where the case manager has to ask the client’s parents everything about their family, school, social and behavioral aspects. I accompanied Stephanie on many “surprise” in-home visits for the clients. This is where we were able to get a sense of the real environment the child is living in and address any problems. I also attended John’s anger management group called Choices where I was able to analyze the progress of the children throughout each session.

While working at that McNulty Center I was able to immerse myself in a variety of new experiences. I attended truancy meetings where an Attendance Improvement Plan is held to correct the absenteeism of a student. If the student does not follow the plan then a referral is made to the courts. I was able to attend a court hearing for a client that did not follow the plan. My client was sentence to ten days in a detention facility and issued a family planning meeting to be put in place. I had the opportunity to visit the detention center to have a face-to-face visit and see the structure of the facility. I also attended the family planning meeting where a CPS, truancy, case management worker all discussed the next steps for the client after detention. The



result of the meeting was made to remove him from his current living situation and move him into his relative's house.

I also had the opportunity to attend FAPT (Family Assessment and Planning Team) meetings. When Medicare does not cover a service a client needs then the case manager will make an argument to FAPT to allocate funding for the service. Usually this is for clients who have severe behavioral problems and need to go to a residential facility where there is 24-hour care, guidance and protection. During my internship I took a trip to Richmond with my supervisor and case manager to visit clients who have been in a residential facility for years.

If it weren't for my field placement site, I would have never been exposed to the diverse community in Harrisonburg. I now understand the responsibilities and expectations for a case manager and how to connect with people who come from a different background.

A clear advantage for working at this field placement site is that you will never get treated like a "typical intern" –one who just does desk work for their supervisors. You truly get hands on experience where no two days look similar. For example, I accompanied John to Sentara RMH Medical Center where we visited a client who tried to commit suicide the night before. Being close in age to the teen, John let me give my input and advice to her. Afterwards he applauded me for how well I was able to connect with her. I loved working for an organization that consistently gives feedback to help develop your professional skills. The biggest advantage of working for the McNulty Center is the culture they have created amongst their employees. There was never a dull moment in the office between the seven case managers. Everyone is so supportive of each other. Whether it's a client in crisis or a difficult meeting, the case managers are great outlets to debrief your experiences.

Being exposed to children was one of my favorite aspects of this internship because I had never worked with this population. Sometimes I found it to be emotionally challenging when I found out that a guardian was not complying with the case manager's recommendations to improve their child's well being. Even though I found this frustrating, I learned how to keep my composure and act professionally. One of the reasons I believe I had such an incredible experience is because I was able to work a half day on Tuesday and the whole day on Thursday. If I worked on a Friday I could see how this would be a disadvantage because an intern would experience a lot more downtime and missed out on invaluable experiences. Therefore, for future interns I recommend setting up your class schedule so you could avoid this.

At the McNulty Center, I learned how to assess the situation, connect the child with the proper resources and then do a follow up with the client to make sure the resources were the best fit. This is important for my future career goal as an Industrial Organization Psychologist. I will assess the company's current situation, discuss options to make the company more efficient and then make sure these options were the best fit for the company. I also improved my communication and networking skills, which built up my confidence in myself. I am extremely grateful to have had the chance to work with such inspiring people that had such an impact on my JMU career and future career.

### ***Spring 2017 – Samantha Tanzola***

I completed my Field Placement at the McNulty Center for Children and Families, which is a branch of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Community Services Board. The mission of the McNulty Center is to provide effective and community-based services to children and



adolescents who have physical, mental, and intellectual disabilities. There are many services offered at the McNulty Center, the most notable being individual and group therapy, psychiatric and nursing services (there is an on-site doctor and psychiatric nurse at the McNulty Center that both prescribes and monitors psychiatric medication), preventive services (this includes regular therapy and medication appointments, and routine check-ups), behavioral wellness services (such as support groups and the Choices group that is tailored to adolescents with substance abuse problems), and the infant and toddler connection. The infant and toddler connection is an at-home early-prevention service for toddlers with intellectual and physical disabilities. The McNulty Center also offers case management services. Case managers are assigned to clients to assess the needs and preferences of those individuals and link them to services in the community. The case managers then continually monitor those services and regularly (every two weeks or so) see the client. During my field placement I worked solely with the case managers.

My responsibilities at my site where accompanying case managers to home visits, attending parent-teacher conferences and child-specific meetings, transporting clients to appointments, linking clients to other services in the community, writing contact notes for clients, and helping parents assist their children with basic needs (such as making them doctor appointments and finding their children transportation to school). During home visits I would take notes and assist the case manager with anything else that they needed. I attended child-specific meetings and parent-teacher conferences with case managers to give me perspective about how the case managers work with the schools in the community to help their clients. A big part of my responsibilities were linking clients to other services in the community. For example, if a child was misbehaving at school, I would network with other agencies in the community (such as Big Brothers Big Sisters) that I believed would help this client. I also helped the client's parents with anything from helping them file for disability, finding transportation for their children to get to school, and making doctor appointments for their children.

I really enjoyed my experience at the McNulty Center, the work environment was very welcoming and laid-back, but not so laid-back that I felt that I was not being challenged. However, there is a lot of down time at this site. For example, if the case managers did not have an appointment for me to go to or a client they needed help linking to other service, there was not much for me to do. Therefore, this site might not be suited for someone that wants a lot of hands-on experience. There can be a lot of down time, and a lot of my job responsibilities was shadowing the case managers. I enjoy shadowing a lot, but this may not be suited for someone that likes to do everything themselves. Because of the fast and slow past of the McNulty Center (as in it is either really busy or not busy at all), this site requires you to have a pretty flexible schedule. I had a full course load (16 credits) while I was at this site, and was only able to come in the morning and early afternoons. Since the case managers do a lot of their work in the later part of the afternoon (2 pm-5 pm) when kids are out of school, my schedule caused me to miss out on a lot of opportunities, like mentoring. Interns are encouraged to mentor clients, but in order to do so, you have to be available after school hours.

An advantage of this site is that every day is different and things never get dull, and you also have the opportunity to work with six different case managers and their clients, so you get to work with a wide variety of clients. A disadvantage of this site that I think prospective interns should be made aware of is transporting. Since children and adolescents are at school during the day, and most of their parent's work during the day, they do not have a way to get to the



McNulty Center for their appointments. Therefore, either a case manager or an intern will go to pick up this child or adolescent at their school to bring them in for their appointment. The intern may also have to pick up the client's parents if the parent is attending the appointment. You use the McNulty Center agency vehicle to do this transporting so nothing is coming out of your own pocket. There is an advantage to transporting because you get the opportunity to talk to clients you may not have had the opportunity to do otherwise, and you get to interact with a wide variety of people. However, not everyone likes to drive or would feel comfortable transporting clients. Therefore, I feel that it should be made more cognizant to prospective interns that transporting is a part of the job responsibilities as an intern.

I have learned a lot from my experience at the McNulty Center, but the most valuable thing I learned is how to network with other people and agencies. At the McNulty Center a big part of my job was calling other agencies in the community and forming a partnership with them to help a client. This required networking skills, communication skills, and proper phone etiquette. These will surely help me at any job, but especially the career field of human resources that I am interested in. While working in a human resource department in a company, a huge part of my job would be effectively communicating with people, and networking with other departments within the company to create a cohesive working environment. Through my field placement I have also learned about different kinds of therapies, which will not only be helpful in the mental health field, but in any field I choose to pursue after college. In any career path you are going to have to be able to understand people, how they work, and how to help them. Through sitting in on countless therapy sessions I have learned effective therapy techniques and conflict resolution skills that will surely help me in any career.

My field placement at the McNulty Center for Children and Families was a very positive experience. I am particularly impressed with the way the case managers help their clients, their efficient work methods, and my supervisor John Wilson, who created a welcoming and cohesive working environment for all.

### ***Fall 2015 - Kayla Palfrey***

Children's Case management is a part of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham County Community Service Board (HRCSB). The mission statement of the HRCSB is to provide "services that promote dignity, choice, recovery, and the highest possible level of participation in work, relationships, and all aspects of community life for individuals and families whose lives are affected by behavioral health or developmental disorders". At Children's Case Management, we help our clients, who are under the age of 18, gain access to all of the services in the community that they could benefit from. We work with parents, schools, psychiatrists, therapists, and other professionals to create the best possible environment for our clients.

During my time with Children's Case Management, I have been fortunate to have various experiences with a lot of different types of people. I have worked most closely with a mother of one of our clients, who speaks Kurdish. I have been helping her fill out paperwork to apply for citizenship, and my supervisor and I have helped her apply for and move into a new apartment. Originally, I was very nervous about working with someone who does not speak the same



language as me, but I learned how to use our interpreting service and how to use body language and facial expressions to communicate with this client.

I was also able to sit in on and participate in various different meetings with families, such as home visits, school visits, and psychiatry appointments. During home visits, my supervisor and I would discuss how the child's behavior has been at home and any concerns that the parents have. During a school visit that I went on with one of the case managers, we observed a kindergartener in class, talked to her teacher about her behavior, and talked to her therapeutic day treatment worker about her progress since starting school. We then went and had a home visit with her mother and grandparents. It is interesting to gain input from parents and professionals to get the big picture of a child's performance. I also had the opportunity to visit a teenaged client in a detention center with one of the case managers. This client had been in and out of the detention center many times. We discussed with him about what would happen when he got out this time. Seeing a client in this environment was very interesting. Being able to see how all of these different aspects of a child's life come together has been very eye opening for me.

One thing that I was able to do that may not seem as interesting as the field work, but I really enjoyed, was completing quarterly performance updates for some of our clients. For each client, the case manager creates goals and objectives that are to be worked on. Every quarter of a year, case managers must submit a performance update for these goals and objectives. I learned how to pull information from contact notes, medical notes, and any other information on the client, to write the quarterly updates. This was a good learning opportunity for me because I am studying to be a special education teacher. Special education teachers do similar paperwork on goals and progress for their students, which must be updated annually.

Working with Children's Case Management has been extremely eye opening for me. I have had so many great experiences during my time there. All of the case managers were so friendly and always happy to have me tag along to their meetings with clients. On slow days, there can be a lot of down time when the case managers are doing paperwork or making phone calls that they do not need assistance with, but there is usually something you can help out with around the office. My favorite part of working with Children's Case Management has been going on home visits and talking with parents about their children. Often times, the parents will talk about difficulties they have with their child's teachers, which has helped me realize how I can better connect with parents in my future as a teacher. I also really enjoy listening to the similarities and differences between the parent's descriptions of their children's behavior and the teacher's descriptions of their behavior.

The biggest thing that I have learned since working with Children's Case Management is to take into account my biases towards people who are different from me. Before I met one family that one of the case managers was working with, she told me that the mother lives in a trailer and relies on her parents for everything. So, I assumed that she probably would have a messy home and probably would not care a lot about her child's education. This was not true at all, the home was neat and tidy, with a few kids' toys on the floor, and when we spoke to her about her child at school, the mother was extremely knowledgeable about everything going on at school. This is the day that I realized I needed to notice my biases before making judgements about people that I



have not gotten to know. That day I also learned that parents, no matter how uneducated themselves, are usually experts on their own children.

The lessons that I have learned since working with Children's Case Management will help me in my future as a special education teacher. I now have the skills to better understand how to work with diverse children and families, something that will really come in handy for teaching in the DC area, which is where I hope to teach one day. I also have the skills now to work with parents in a more respectful and unbiased way, which is important in being a teacher for students with special needs. I have enjoyed my time with Children's Case Management and I have learned a lot.

### ***Fall 2015 – Hayden Heath***

The experience at the McNulty Center for Children and Family Services was one that was filled with valuable lessons, as this site experience was able to foster my professional skills. Services provided by my site included: "case management, individual and group therapy, psychiatric and nursing services, prevention services, in-home and in-school services, mental health support services, developmental evaluations, and the infant and toddler connection program (a.k.a. PACE: ages 0-3)". The mission of this site explicitly states that they want to provide adequate services that promote 'dignity, choice, recovery, and the highest possible level of participation in work, relationships, and all aspects of community life for the individuals and families whose lives are affected by behavioral health or developmental disorders.'" During my time at the McNulty Center, I was able to watch this mission statement in action because every day that I worked with the child case managers, I was able to see their collaboration with the therapist and psychiatrist in an attempt to provide the best possible services for their clients.

This site provided many opportunities to shadow the activities of the daily tasks of a child, family, and case manager, as well as the opportunity to perform some of these daily tasks. These experiences include: documentation opportunities, client-transport and in-home visits, and lastly opportunities to shadow assessments. Initially working with my supervisor Sarah Deavers, I was able to shadow her on her home-visits to check-in on families, as well as get families to sign treatment plans for the clients. Another opportunity found at the McNulty Center was the chance to document interactions with or for clients. For example, making phone calls is part of the linking process when you are a case manager, and after a conversation with an agency, school, or other service provider about a particular client the case manager must document each contact in a note. The case manager must also document interactions with the client as well. These opportunities gave me the time to experience how to document contact notes to meet the stringent HIPAA requirements for the agency to be funded appropriately. Client-Transport and in-home visits were initially conducted with my supervisor, but eventually I was able to complete my own home-visits and client-transport. These experiences allowed me the opportunity to show my professionalism and convey my competence in the field work experience. These experiences required much planning to make sure that the appointments were confirmed, as well as knowing when to pick the client up for their appointments. These moments



were the highlight of my experience because I was able to work with the clients hands on without supervision. Knowing that I had the confidence from my supervisor to complete these acts alone made me feel needed in this opportunity. Lastly, I was able to observe many assessment types at this site, and eventually conduct one my-self. The first assessment that I was able to observe was called a VICAP, where I was able to watch John assess a client for TDT. This client struggled at school and needed some assistance during the day because of the lack of focus and aggressive behaviors. I was able to gain a valuable experience from this observation, and towards the middle of the semester, I was able to conduct an assessment. During this opportunity, I contacted a client and helped them fill out an intake form over the phone. This was a great experience to see the initial process that families must go through to acquire services. An opening intake assessment was the last thing that I was able to observe at the McNulty Center, and I traveled with Sarah to a client's home and conducted a 2-hour intake assessment to sign the client up for a treatment plan and case management services. I was able to observe the aggression of a very young child that was oppositional defiant, and this experience allowed me the opportunity to see the hardships that the case workers deal with on certain cases. The child was calling my supervisor many derogatory names which was unwarranted.

The impression that I have of this site is that it could have been better and could have had more opportunities if I was able to spend more time at the site. This site necessitates that the intern have a light academic schedule because this site does not always lend itself to constant work throughout the day. For example, my schedule only allowed for me to work Monday, Tuesday, and Friday, and as a result, I was only able to work these days rather than coming in when my supervisor needed me. MY chaotic schedule created a disadvantage for me, and I would caution the next intern because of this issue. I think if I would have had a fluid schedule, I could have attended more opportunities at this site, but my schedule was pretty set in stone (Mondays and Tuesdays). An advantage of this site is that the supervisors are willing to offer every opportunity that is available, and the advantage of this site is that when your supervisor is not available the other case workers are willing to offer you opportunities. This site has many opportunities to offer as stated above that allow the intern to learn how to document interactions with clients as well as learn to transport clients to appointments and coordinated services. I thought that the work environment was very laid back rather than extremely formal, which I was expecting at first, and each staff member is willing to offer help and assistance. I recommend the next intern to work through the orientation process as quickly as possible, so that you can start working hands on with the supervisor at this site. Again, my impression is that if you want to get the most from this site you need a fluid schedule where you can plan around your supervisor to come in ahead of time to gain access to these opportunities.

I learned a great amount of skills over the course of the semester and the mid-term evaluation made it clear what attributes I really needed to focus on. Psychology does not lend itself to working as a social worker, and honestly, I felt incompetent while at this site. I made a mistake initially at my site because I did not dress appropriately enough to show professionalism. I think for my future career and vocational goals have been influenced a great deal because of this experience. I was able to learn that I didn't want to be a case manager in my future, as well as gain a sense of direction for where I wanted to go after graduation. During this experience, I slowly developed my desired future career goals, and now I know that I would like to work with





a different population of people. I am now applying for graduate school for a master's program in applied behavioral analysis.