Clinical Writing

A UW SSW Writing Center Workshop
Workshop Agenda

I. Overview

II. Formal vs Informal

III. Activity

IV. Clinical Case Example

V. Questions?
What Do You Already Know?

- Think about how you communicate with different types of people

- Do you use the same tone, words, and phrases to communicate as you do with your teachers/supervisors?

- Know your audience & purpose
  - Communicating to inform, entertain, persuade?
Informal Writing

- Tone is more personal
- Use of empathy and emotion towards the reader regarding complexity of thought
- Use of contractions, slang, colloquialisms
- Casual language, used when communicating with friends/family
  - Text messages, emails, conversational
- Usually shorter sentence structure
  - Mimics rhythm of spoken English
Formal Writing

- Objective, serious, polite tone
- Focus is more on word choice
- Does not use:
  - Colloquialisms
    - sticky situation, rowdy
    - “The patient got over his illness”
  - Contractions
    - can’t, won’t, don’t
  - First person pronouns
    - we, I
- Use of third person
Activity!

- “The patient got over his illness.”
- “I don’t believe the results are accurate.”
- “During the assessment I asked the patient about their experience.”
Activity!

- “The patient recovered from his illness.”
- “The results are not believed to be accurate.”
- “During the assessment the patient was asked about their experience.”
Clinical Writing

Purpose:

- Organized method of planning, giving, evaluating, and recording client interaction
- Provides important information about client/history, presenting issues, & relationship between client & you
- Provides ongoing assessment of both the client’s progress & treatment interventions
Clinical Writing

● SOAP Method
  ○ Subjective Objective Assessment Plan

● Standard Case Consultation
  ○ Presenting Problem
    ■ Who is client: age, race, gender, appearance
  ○ Client Demographics & Info
    ■ Family relationships, living arrangement
  ○ Assessment/Impressions
    ■ Safety risks, current/past attempt to harm, substance use
Example Assessment

“Samantha presents to social work citing ongoing symptoms of anxiety. She expressed that financial stressors are a primary stressor for her, most of which are related to her former relationship with her ex-boyfriend.

She recently was made aware that her former roommate did not move out his belongings and now being held responsible for January’s rent payment. This news caught Samantha by surprise and is a source of stress.”
Questions?

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