Identifying Opportunities and Building Competency

Integrating Advocacy and Policy Practice into your Field Organization
Advocacy and Policy Practice
Opportunities Throughout Contracts

• Advocate for client access to services
  – Brick walls to advocacy agendas
• Ethical decision-making
  – Resource allocation, means v. ends, informed consent
• Oral and written communication
  – LTEs, policy briefs, internal case statements
• Understand factors that underlie clients’ problems
  – Root cause analysis, story collection
• Collaborate to improve problematic conditions
  – Coalitions, Advocacy Days
Crafting Projects

• “Analyze, Formulate, and Advocate for Policies”
  – Review/propose agency policies re: access, due process, eligibility
  – Seek client guidance on policy obstacles
  – Research context re: funding source
  – Compile best practice information for policy change

• “Collaborate for Effective Policy Action”
  – Connect with state/national advocacy organizations
  – Organize clients to address policy concerns
  – Work with colleagues to propose internal change
Scaling Learning Commensurate with Student Ability

• **Leading/Initiating**
  – Designing evaluation of an advocacy strategy
  – Assessing advocacy capacity
  – Facilitating staff learning session on root cause/context
  – Testifying
  – Identifying advocacy priority
  – Facilitating client writing LTE
  – Using brief in policymaker meeting
  – Presenting on advocacy issue to Board

• **Participating/Joining**
  – Reflecting in group
  – Journaling about ethical issue in policy practice
  – Presenting to clients on policy issue
  – Going to hearing
  – Researching an identified priority
  – Collecting client stories in practice
  – Writing brief
  – Documenting impact of policy
Assessing Your Organization’s Advocacy Capacity

• Where could you strengthen your advocacy capacity?
  – Goals, plans, and strategies
  – Structures and implementation
  – Advocacy avenues
  – Resources and sustainability

• How can students help?
  – Assessing what peer organizations do
  – Staffing advocacy committee
  – Exploring a new approach (regulatory, judicial, legislative)
  – Researching grant options for advocacy
Scanning the Landscape for ‘Natural’ Openings

- Advocacy coalitions around your issue areas
- State/national advocacy organizations
- Peer organizations with advocacy efforts
- Reauthorization debates over funding streams
- Budget negotiations
- Advocacy capacity-building efforts by local foundations
- Client concerns re: internal and external policies
Getting Help

• ACOSA (includes readings, videos, and other resources)
  – www.acosa.org

• Journal of Policy Practice

• Journal of Community Practice

• AFJ’s Bolder Advocacy (advocacy capacity, legal regulations)
  – www.bolderadvocacy.org
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