Behavioral Health

POLICY & PROCEDURE

Program/Department: Psychology

Subject: Psychology Interns, Problem Performance

I. Policy

Psychology Interns who experience significant competency problems or disruption in training sequence will be carefully evaluated to establish a plan for remediation and/or termination as may be required. This policy addresses procedures in the case of problem performance. The intern's employment is employment at will, and this policy does not create contractual or legal obligations for WellSpan Philhaven. WellSpan Philhaven may refrain from following the policy when deemed appropriate. For other employment related issues, WellSpan Philhaven Human Resources policies apply.

In many cases problem performance is identified after: 1) initial efforts to support the psychology intern in improving competencies and skills (such as providing extra education, supervision, or training activities) have not yielded expected improvements; and/or 2) the WellSpan organization's Just Culture practices are employed where relevant, and yet performance problems/concerns persist.

II. Definition-Problem performance may include any of the following:

A. Psychology Intern is unable to fully participate in internship due to absence from the program or reduction in hours. Absences from the program will be considered and reviewed on a case by case basis.

B. Psychology Intern is unable or unwilling to perform the basic functions of the internship, including clinical assignments and educational/training activities.

C. Psychology Intern's performance in any area of competency is rated "1" on a Competency Observation Review (remedial level rating), or the intern otherwise demonstrates performance that is below internship expectations.

D. The quality of services delivered by the Psychology Intern is below organizational standards.

E. Psychology Intern demonstrates carelessness, negligence and/or poor work attitude.

F. Psychology Intern violates ethical/legal standards as set by APA, Pennsylvania law, or other authoritative bodies.
III. Procedure for identification of problem performance and intervention when problem performance is determined:

A. Problem performance will be evaluated when (one of the following):

1. One of an intern’s Clinical Supervisors has given written notice of suspected problem(s) to the Internship Training Committee or the Internship Director;

2. The Internship Training Committee identifies and documents a suspected problem in one of its meetings;

3. A Competency Observation Review, completed by a Clinical Supervisor, documents a competency at the lowest (remedial) level (rating of “1”).

B. Within two weeks from the time the concern is identified, the Internship Training Committee or Internship Director will convene a process to determine a course of action, in consultation with appropriate administrative staff such as the WellSpan Philhaven Medical Director and the WellSpan Philhaven Director of Human Resources. This may include:

1. Performance Improvement Plan.
   a. The PIP is aimed at supporting improvement in areas of identified weakness/concern.
   b. The plan includes clear goals for improvement, activities identified to help reach the goals, support resources available or required, expectations for achievement and related timeframes, etc.

2. Corrective Action Plan
   a. Setting Up the Plan-The Corrective Action Plan may either function as the initial step to address Problem Performance or as the follow-up to a Performance Improvement Plan that was not completed successfully. In either case the Internship Director collaborates with the Director of Human Resources or other HR leader to form a Corrective Action Committee. In addition to the Internship Director and Human Resources leader, the committee shall include at least two of the following: members of the Internship Training Committee, the intern’s current clinical supervisor, other administrative supervisor. Initially, the Corrective Action Committee will:
      • Specifically identify the performance problems
• Determine if any corrective or disciplinary action must be taken immediately
• Ensure communication and collaboration with the intern’s graduate program throughout this process
• Assess and make recommendations/requirements for any or all of the following:
  ➢ Written Plan of Remediation (in all cases other than suspension) including time frame for expected remediation.
  ➢ Use of EAP
  ➢ Leave of absence
  ➢ Reduction of workload/hours
  ➢ Termination from the internship program.

• Inform the intern of the outcome of the committee meeting, including all recommendations.

b. Monitoring the Plan-The Corrective Action Committee will collaborate with the Internship Training Committee to monitor the intern’s progress and make decisions about the intern’s problem performance status, including decisions about whether he/she will complete the internship. Additional representatives from Human Resources and WellSpan Philhaven administration who are not already on the Corrective Action Committee will be consulted as needed. The intern will be given verbal and written feedback which speaks to their progress in this process and any recommendations from the Corrective Action Committee. This may include feedback in supervision meetings, written evaluations, verbal and/or written updates from supervisors or program staff that have been involved in the remediation process, feedback from direct observations, verbal and/or written updates from the Internship Director, etc.

C. Due Process and Appeal Procedure

1. The psychology intern may select an advocate from among the WellSpan Philhaven staff (not another intern) at any point in this process to attend meetings involved in addressing the psychology intern’s problem performance and remediation. The advocate will be expected to maintain confidentiality as appropriate.

2. Interns may formally appeal the Training Committee’s determination of problem performance or any other actions initiated by the Training Committee or Corrective Action Committee in this remediation process.
A decision to suspend or terminate the intern from the internship may also be appealed. All appeals should be made in writing and will be considered by WellSpan Philhaven's President. Any appeal should be initiated within two weeks from notification of the action. The review by the President or his/her designee will occur within two weeks from receipt of the appeal.

3. Psychology Interns are not eligible to participate in the WellSpan Grievance Procedure and shall follow the process as outlined in this section for any appeals.

D. Leaving the Problem Performance Status

1. Successful completion of remediation plan.

2. Approval of Internship Training Committee and, if applicable, Corrective Action Committee.

E. Psychology Intern Feedback on Process

1. The Internship Training Staff will request written feedback from the intern at the conclusion of a remediation process. The Internship Training Staff will review this feedback for the purpose of process improvement.