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GUIDE TO
OBSERVATIONAL INTERNSHIPS
POSITIONAL MODELLING

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Douglas
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EDITION

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CREDITS AND MENTIONS

This guide was produced thanks to the support of Health Canada, the Minister of Health and Social Services, the Douglas Mental Health Institute.

"The views expressed here don't necessarily reflect those of Health Canada."

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GUIDE CONTENT

WHO IS THIS GUIDE INTENDED FOR?

This guide is a reference document in which the objective is to facilitate the task of teams who wish to put in place a Cross-Training activity. Three other guides regarding online trainings, virtual meetings of organizations and observational internships are available on our website as well: formationcroisee.com

The content is based on the experience of the Montreal South-Ouest Cross-Training project (Perreault et al., 2008). The online activities were developed in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Perreault, M., Wiethaueper, D., Perreault, N., Bonin, J-P., Brown, T., & Brunaud, H. (2008). Meilleures pratiques et formation dans le contexte du continuum des services en santé mentale et en toxicomanie : le programme de formation croisée du sud-ouest de Montréal. Santé mentale au Québec, 34 (1), pp. 143-160.

DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS USED

Internship Coordinator : a person (most often, but not exclusively, a manager, coordinator, or team leader) who identifies staff members within their organization who could benefit from an observational internship, selects the internship setting, and develops the internship objectives.

Internship Application: application to organizations where individuals (interns) would like to complete an observational internship.

Organizing Team: staff members of the local team responsible for organizing observational internships among the various organizations.

Research Team: staff members of Michel Perreault's research team who provide support to the organizing team in the organization of observational internships.

Internship Offer: series of activities proposed within observational internships by an organization for potential interns.

Host Organization: organization that welcomes interns.

Sending Organization: organization that sends interns.

Internship Supervisor: a person (most often, but not exclusively, a manager, coordinator, or team leader) who welcomes interns, develops and organizes activities in collaboration with the requesting team.

Intern: a person (most often, but not exclusively, an intervention worker, pivot worker, liaison officer, or team leader) who completes an observational internship within an organization.

WHAT IS CROSS-TRAINING?

At its origin, cross-training is an approach used to improve the work between team members, or among partners of different teams.

In summary

In general, there are three types of Cross-Training*

1. **Positional Clarification**
2. **Positional Modelling**
3. **Positional Rotation**

Common objectives: Better understand the role, expertise, and resources available to each partner. To this end, developing a common language is a prerequisite for supporting fruitful exchanges.

Sharing of Descriptive Expertise <<< >>> Better knowledge of the network and everyone's role

Positional Clarification	Positional Modelling	Positional Rotation
Better knowledge of the network and everyone's role	Better knowledge of an organization (stakeholders and functioning)	Acquisition de compétences en intervention
Activities	**Activities**	**Activities**
• Conferences • Case Discussions • Panels	• Short-term observational internships	• Medium- to long-term intervention internships • Clinical supervisions

* Perreault, M, Milton, D, Alunni-Menichini, K, Archambault, L, Perreault, N, Bertrand, K. Montreal Cross-Training Program: The contribution of positional clarification activities to help bridge fragmented prevention and treatment services for co-occurring disorders. Health Soc Care Community. 2020; 28: 1090– 1098. https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12942

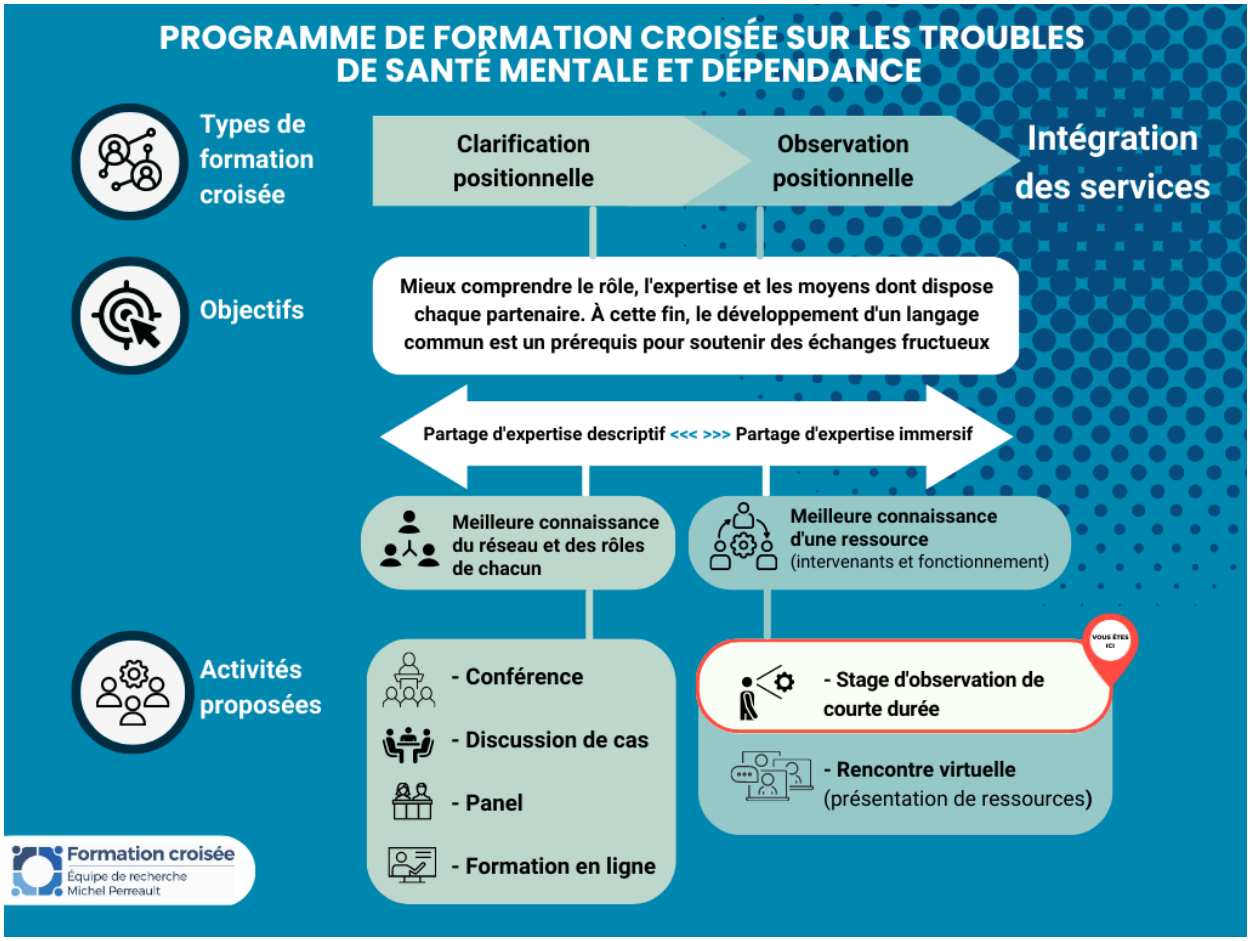
THE CROSS-TRAINING PROGRAM ON MENTAL HEALTH AND DEPENDENCE DISORDERS

Initiated by mental health partners located in the south-west of Montreal in 2002, the **Cross-Training Program on Mental Health and Substance use Disorders** proposes training activities as well as interdisciplinary and intersectoral observational internships.

The main goal of these activities is to improve the continuity of care for people at risk or already struggling with both mental health and substance use problems. Seeing as these individuals must rely on services coming from different networks (e.g., mental health, substance use, education, prevention, aging, public safety, public security), cross-training aims to facilitate connections between them in order to ensure better continuity of care.

What are the objectives of the program?

- ·Identify the training needs of practitioners working with individuals at risk or living with mental health and substance use disorders.
- ·Enable practitioners to develop a common language and a better understanding of available resources and fellow professionals in order to collaborate effectively.



PRESENTATION OF OBSERVATIONAL INTERNSHIPS

The goal of observational internships is to improve continuity of care for individuals at risk of, or living with, mental health and substance use issues.

Because these individuals must often rely on services from different networks (mental health, substance use, education, prevention, aging, public safety, public security), observational internships aim to facilitate connections among these systems.

By offering short visits, typically lasting one day, to partner organizations, interns can familiarize themselves with the environment, speak with staff members and with individuals who use or are supported by the organization, and take part in certain activities such as a team meeting. The activities vary depending on the nature of the services provided and the internal rules that govern what interns are allowed to do.

More specifically, observational internships allow participants to:

1. Become familiar with professionals working in another organization, or even in another service network;
2. Acquire knowledge about other organizations, other intervention approaches, and new areas of expertise;
3. Gain new knowledge and improve skills when working with populations at risk of, or experiencing, mental health and substance use disorders.

ORGANIZING INTERNSHIPS IN 7 EASY STEPS

1. DOCUMENTING THE INTERNSHIP OFFERS

The organizing team contacts organizations/resources that may be interested in hosting one or more practitioners for a full-day or half-day observational internship, and in sending some of their own practitioners (interns) to other suggested resources to complete observational internships.

Organizations interested in participating in the internships thus become both host organizations, which receive interns, and sending organizations, which send interns.

Once the list of organizations interested in participating in staff internships has been established, the organizing team sends these organizations an **Internship Offer Form** for completion.

This form makes it possible to identify:

- The mandate and clientele of each organization (e.g., organizational mission, client admission criteria, intervention approach, etc.).
- The list of activities that each organization would offer potential interns during an internship.

Indicating a few key activities that interns will carry out during their observational internship can help the sending organization determine which type of professional would benefit most from an internship within a given organization.

However, it is not necessary to plan all activities for the internship day in advance. In fact, when possible, interns may be invited to choose what they wish to observe, based on the relevance of activities to their professional practice.

CONTINUATION – DOCUMENTING INTERNSHIP OFFERS

Here are examples of activities that have been appreciated by interns:

- Observing an assessment or intervention session;
- Attending a team meeting (e.g., development of an intervention plan, shift changes, etc.);
- Sharing a meal on site with clients and intervention workers;
- Touring the organization accompanied by a patient/resident/client;
- Participating in an activity with the clientele (e.g., art therapy workshop, gym activities, etc.);
- Presenting the tools and therapeutic approaches used;
- Allowing time for the intern to explain how their own organization operates.

Interns generally appreciate having opportunities to interact with both clients and intervention workers from the host organization (by dividing the day into two parts, for example). This way, interns have a more global understanding of the host organization's work.

Host organizations complete the Internship Offer Form and return it to the organizing team.

2. DOCUMENTING THE INTERNSHIP APPLICATIONS

Once the organizing team has received all completed Internship Offer Forms, they compile them into a single document titled Internship Descriptions. This document, along with the Internship Application Form, is sent to the sending organizations. The Internship Application Form specifies, among other things, the deadlines for submitting an internship request and the period during which the internships will take place.

Sending organizations present the Internship Descriptions document to their teams. Together, the Internship Coordinator and/or the Internship Supervisor identify relevant organizations and team members who could benefit from an observational internship.

After identifying the organization(s), it is recommended that the team sets internship objectives (for example: gaining a better understanding of the organization's mandate, the clientele, tools used, or programs offered by the host organization). This approach enables the intern to share what they learned and information with their team based on previously identified needs (knowledge transfer). Once the choice of organizations and internship objectives has been determined, intervention workers will need to complete the Internship Request Form, indicating their choices in order of preference, and submit it to the organizing team.

It is not necessary, after completing internships within a host organization, for the sending organization to, in turn, receive intervention workers from that host organization. At all times, the relevance of the internship is the primary consideration.

3. ORGANIZING THE ASSIGNMENT OF INTERNSHIPS

Once all internship request forms have been received, the organizing team is responsible for assigning the internships. Internship assignments are made based on the order in which the forms were received and in a way that maximizes interaction among organizations.

4. ESTABLISHING CONTACT BETWEEN THE HOST ORGANIZATION AND THE SENDING ORGANIZATION

Following receipt of the Internship Request Forms and the assignment of internships, the organizing team provides the interns' contact information to the Internship Supervisor of the host organization. The host organization's Internship Supervisor then contacts the Internship Coordinator of the sending organization and, if possible, the interns themselves, in order to confirm the internship dates, duration, and the individual who will complete the internship.

Internship Dates
The host organization should agree on an internship date with the organization that has sent a request form. This allows for better planning of the day (e.g., staffing coverage, meetings to be scheduled, meetings to be rescheduled, etc.).

Given that some professionals participating in internships work in crisis settings, unforeseen circumstances may prevent them from attending the internship as planned. If possible, the sending organization may designate another colleague rather than cancel the internship at the last minute. Alternatively, it may be useful to schedule an additional date (a plan B) in case of unforeseen measures. Ideally, the host organization should choose the option that best suits its needs and discuss it with the Internship Supervisor of the sending organization.

Internship Duration
Internships usually last one day. However, depending on the types of activities offered by the host organization, it may be appropriate to shorten the internship to a half-day or extend it to two days. The host organization can discuss these options when contacting the sending organization.

The Intern
After determining the internship dates and duration, the host organization's Internship Supervisor contacts the intern who wishes to complete an observational internship within the organization. This communication should help establish a more personal connection and reduce the risk of last-minute cancellations.

Additionally, it also provides an opportunity to clarify the internship objectives and activities, as well as to confirm the exact timing of the internship, arrival time, and the organization's address.

5. ENSURING A FOLLOW-UP WITH THE ORGANIZATION TEAM

Once the internship timing, duration, and number of interns have been confirmed, the host organization's Internship Supervisor must forward this information to the organizing team so that a follow-up can be conveniently planned. The organizing team must be informed of the number of internships, number of interns, dates, and internship activities.

6. ENSURING THAT INTERNSHIPS RUN SMOOTHLY

On the day of the internship, a member of the host organization (possibly the Internship Supervisor) should ideally welcome the intern at the agreed-upon time to ensure that the established schedule is respected.

Although flexibility is necessary during internships, it is expected that the announced activities will be carried out as much as possible. This helps meet the intern's expectations and learning objectives.

7. EVALUATING THE INTERNSHIPS

Inter-organizational internships rely on the ability of participating teams to welcome interns and comply with the rules that apply within their setting, including those governing the reception of student interns (e.g., confidentiality agreement form, restricted participation in certain activities, etc.).

It is therefore important to conduct ongoing follow-up with interns and host organizations regarding their experience, both to address issues as they arise and to improve the internship offerings based on participants' feedback.

A self-administered questionnaire is provided at the end of the internship to document interns' experiences. Brief semi-structured interview guides are also available to facilitate more in-depth consultation with interns and internship organizers regarding their participation.

Intern Satisfaction

Following completion of the internships, the organizing team provides each intern with an Internship Evaluation Questionnaire to collect their feedback on the content and organization of the internship they completed.

Internship Coordinators from the sending organizations must ensure that their interns complete the questionnaire and return it to the organizing team.

It may also be beneficial for host organizations to gather feedback directly from the interns they welcomed in order to improve the internships they offer. Host organizations may therefore set aside time to briefly discuss what was most appreciated and what could be improved.

Organizational Satisfaction

The organizing team, which oversees the internships, conducts a brief follow-up with each Internship Supervisor (from organizations that hosted an intern) and each Internship Coordinator (from organizations that sent an intern) to gather their feedback on the organization and delivery of the internship.

INTERNSHIP OFFER FORM

GENERAL INFORMATION

Organization / Resource:

Service offered / Department / Unit: :

Address:

Person responsible for internships

Phone number:

Email:

Proposed internship period(s) (days of the week and months)
Minimum of one period must be proposed.

1.

2.

Number of available placements:

Internship duration (1 day or ½ day):

Mandate and clientele of your organization:

Proposed activities during the internship:

Your internship offer must be sent by email to the following address:

EVALUATION FORM

GENERAL INFORMATION

NAME

ORGANIZATION

PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL

INTERNSHIP LOCATION

DATE

DURATION

What did you appreciate most about your internship?

What could be improved?

1- The content of the internship was...	Very interesting	Mostly interesting	Somewhat interesting	Slightly interesting	Not at all interesting
2- The goals I set at the beginning were...	Entirely achieved	Mostly achieved	Somewhat achieved	Slightly achieved	Not at all achieved
3- The activities offered were those I wanted.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4- The amount of time allocated to the internship was...	Much too long	Too long	Adéquate	Too short	Much too short
5- The internship was relevant to my practice.	Entirely	Mostly	Partly	A little	Not at all
6- I am satisfied with how my internship was prepared by the host organization.	Extremely satisfied	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Not at all satisfied
7- I would recommend this internship site to a colleague.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8- During this internship, I obtained useful information to orient the people I work with.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9- During this internship, I learned more about how the host organization operates.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10- During this internship, I was able to identify professionals whom I could potentially consult in my practice.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

INTERVIEW GUIDE – INTERN

This interview aims to document your internship experience as part of a cross-training activity.

Date : Host organization / program:

Evaluation of the internship day:

1. Could you briefly describe your internship day?
Probe for: Reception; Flow of the day; Activities completed.

2. What did you appreciate most about your internship?

3. What could be improved?
Probe for: Reception; Other activities; Preparation by the host team.

4. To what extent did your internship experience allow you to:

a. Build partnerships?

b. Acquire knowledge?

c. Develop skills?

Internship organization:

5. What do you think of the way the internships were organized?
Probe for: Registration process; Internship sites offered; Missing partners.

Preferences for a future internship

6. What would be your preferences for a potential future internship?
Probe for: Type of internship (prevention vs. clinical); Duration (minimum and maximum); Timing of day/week/year.

INTERVIEW GUIDE – INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR

This interview aims to document your evaluation of the observational internships you offered.

Evaluation of the internship day

1. Could you briefly describe your experience hosting interns?
Probe for: Number of interns (including absences, if any); Background and profession of interns; Reception; Flow of the day; Activities completed.

2. What did you appreciate most about hosting interns?
Probe for: Partnership benefits; Knowledge or skill acquisition for the host team.

3. What could be improved for future experiences?

Organization of the activity:

4. What do you think of how the internships were organized?
Probe for: Support from the research team; Assignment procedures; Date selection.

5. What could be improved in terms of the organization of the activity?
Probe for: Suggestions to facilitate future internship organization. Future activities

6. Would you be interested in offering internships again as part of a future cross-training activity?