

Lacey Oliver

Executive Summary

This summer I worked for Partnership for Families, Children, and Adults in Chattanooga, Tennessee as a social work intern in the Crisis Resource Center. Partnership's Crisis Resource Center deals with victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and homelessness. During my eight weeks, I mostly worked with domestic violence victims in the shelter. The shelter begins as a thirty-day program. If a client needs more time and has been working toward her goals, she can be granted an additional thirty days twice. In its entirety, the program can last up to ninety days. The goal is to discharge clients to safe and sustainable housing. The environment was incredibly fast-paced and unpredictable. I answered hotline calls, met with walk-in clients, completed intakes and assessments when clients moved into the shelter, made food boxes, cleaned rooms when clients left, assisted clients with their goals, updated paperwork, attended meetings, planned events and life skills training, requested donations, updated bulletin boards and calendars, and resolved conflicts and disagreements between residents.

The other women working in the shelter were phenomenal. I underestimated the value of being surrounded by strong female mentors. They both supported and challenged one another. They held daily communications meetings to staff hotline calls and intakes and to discuss pertinent issues. They had birthday parties and baby showers for co-workers, and when there was not anything to celebrate, they would hold a "Wellness Wednesday" and have a potluck lunch. They even threw me a huge party on my last day and gave me flowers and a gift card. They made everyone feel included, valued, and important. I never felt like "just an intern," as they asked and valued my opinions and intuitions. There was never a task they did not trust me to accomplish. While sometimes the amount of responsibility was overwhelming, I developed confidence in myself as they showed confidence in me. Even when I made mistakes or experienced failure, I received nothing but support and

reassurance. Though I am still discerning the specific work I am being called to do, I feel that I learned and grew through this experience. The women I met and stories I heard will stay in my heart, and I am grateful for this opportunity.