

Internship Student Profile

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My Experience at Asha The Hope

I joined Asha The Hope as an intern on June 1, along with my classmates. As part of the recruitment process, I took a career assessment test that was formulated by the founder of the organisation, Dr. Asha. This was followed by an interview, where I gave my feedback on the test as well; the test allowed me to express my thoughts and was not restrictive, like the previous test I have taken, it was subjective. In order to orient us on our duties and assignments for the month, we were called in for an orientation session where we were briefed about our tasks, which was then followed by a session on hypnotherapy by our mentor, Ms. Pranjul Somani. It was a very different experience for me and helped me overcome all the inhibitions and misconceptions I had about hypnotherapy. On the first day, we researched about the organisation and hypnotherapy, and had a session on Ikigai, where we worked on finding our own; ikigai is a Japanese concept that helps an individual live a purposeful and successful life. Using this, I was able to get a better sense of my interests and how they could help me be successful in the future.

In order to help us get to know ourselves better, our mentor asked us to do feeling and thought check-ins; everyday, as soon as we arrived and right before we left, we had to ask ourselves the following questions: What am I feeling? What am I thinking? This helped me introspect and organise my thoughts.

During the course of the internship, we worked on articles for the websites and had the opportunity to interact with the graphic designers, where we worked together on posts for the social media pages of Asha The Hope. We also had frequent sessions on basic counselling skills with the counsellors of the organisation. They helped us understand the procedures and efforts that go into counselling. We were given daily self-reflective activities that helped us get to know ourselves better, in all aspects.

The session that intrigued me the most was the Art Therapy Session. Coming from a background of Fine Arts, it peaked my interest and combined the two things that interest me- Art and Psychology. In the first session, we were asked to draw our past, present and future. The host of the session, Miss Swathi, was able to analyse a lot about us with just certain key aspects she observed in our samples. She gave us an activity where we had to stick newspaper words that stood out to us on masks. The next day, we were made to switch sketches with each other, in order to understand how we tend to conform with the world. After that, we had a mock counselling session and that turned out to be an eye-opener for me; I struggled to keep the balance between interacting with the client and thinking of what to ask them next, all while simultaneously analysing their answer. We were then made to do the Bird Nest Assessment Tool, where she analysed our attachment styles. I administered the same procedure on my friend and submitted it as a project, as part of the requirement. Overall, this helped me understand that a lot can be understood about a person merely through their art and their behaviour during the sessions.



We would have regular sessions with another counsellor, Ms Jyothi, and Ms Pranjul, where we learnt different techniques on how to deal with clients and by sharing experiences, I was able to get a better sense of how I would like to conduct my sessions in the future. We also had role playing sessions where I learnt the importance of voice modulation and noticing micro expressions of both the client and the counsellor. We were educated on topics or questions that might be trigger points for some individuals and how to make them feel comfortable, taking into consideration different aspects like gender and religion.

The sessions we had with Dr. Asha were extremely thought-provoking. Her perspective on life was fascinating to me and she shared her insights on psychology in terms of the Vedas, which was a topic that I did not know much about. She helped us come up with different ideas for all our tasks.

As part of the curriculum offered to the interns by Asha the Hope, we had to contact schools to offer career counselling sessions to the students. After a lot of effort, we managed to get an appointment with the Principal of Achieve School of Education. In order to celebrate, Dr. Asha cooked for all of us, the interns and other employees and it truly felt like a harmonious and welcoming community. The last few weeks were extremely chaotic, but fulfilling at the same time. We started with an introductory session for the students to introduce them to the concept of Career Assessment and Counselling. During the Pre-counselling sessions, I was able to get practical experience with certain aspects of counselling and although it was emotionally draining, it was an extremely enriching experience knowing that I was able to help some of the students in some way, and that they were able to express their pent up emotions. After assessing their tests, we could gain some clarity and help guide them towards their future.

Overall, this was a good experience for me. The atmosphere at the Centre was warm and welcoming and I felt comfortable with my mentor. She supported us throughout our internship and gave us advice on how to compartmentalise and work hard. Her energy motivated us to work hard and she was hands-on with all our tasks, ready to help us with anything we needed. I learnt techniques on how to become self-aware and frequent introspection. Asha the Hope has equipped me with the necessary tools to get to know myself better and in turn, get to know others. I was able to get a clear vision of my work ethics and understand how a workplace operates. The staff was cooperative and they ensured that our learning experience had different elements of fun, mixed with practical learning.

Feedback

My internship experience at Asha the Hope was extremely insightful; the emphasis placed on self-awareness and introspection helped me get a better sense of myself, in order to understand and help others. I was able to grow as an individual and learnt a lot about how important it is to reflect on every experience. I had the opportunity to gain practical experience in the field of counselling and was able to explore various branches of psychology. My internship mentor, Ms. Pranjul Somani, guided me throughout the whole process and made me feel comfortable. Overall, the environment at Asha the Hope was warm and welcoming.