

Internship Student Profile

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My Experience at Asha The Hope

2 months ago, our college asked us to look for organisations where we could do our summer internships. We were asked to choose internships in fields that interested us. I soon started researching in the field of counselling psychology and in this process, I googled “best psychologist Bangalore”, this is when I came across Asha The Hope and I visited their website to understand more about them and also look at the services they offered. I remember how fascinated I was when I looked at the qualifications of Dr. Asha ma’am as well as all the amazing services they offered such as Art therapy, and child counselling, among many others which were really interesting to me. Another aspect that was very interesting to me was how they used Sanskrit vocabulary as titles for their services and this further made me inquisitive about how they related psychology to all these Vedic concepts as these two areas are usually seen as very contradictory to each other in layman’s perspective. I soon called the center and got an interview with Ms. Pranjul Somani for the position of an Intern and I remember how easygoing this meeting was. She made me feel so comfortable and helped me understand what was expected from me as an intern during those days I would be working there. At first I did feel like 6 days a week was more like school and the hours would also be a lot but then I soon realized the knowledge and experience I would gain during these days would outweigh the challenges I was considering. I was right about this, I am so glad I took this internship as the experience and knowledge I have gained here have helped me become a better individual with skills I am sure would allow me to better myself and others in multiple ways.

Week 1**Date: 8th June 2022**

The First day at Asha The Hope focused more on learning more about the organization and understanding what was expected of us and what we would gain from this organization. We learned essential and exciting information about the organization and also about the founder Dr. Asha Ma'am. We also understood how we needed to work on the tasks assigned to us. The atmosphere and procedure that we needed to adapt to work here were completely different from college as there were no deadlines given to us, we were just given a list of tasks that we needed to complete. We had to work on these activities simultaneously for the whole month. From the second day onwards, we started working as a group along with four other interns. The first task that we chose to work on was the career counseling project that we needed to conduct on students from different schools.

On the first day, we were briefed about the pre-counseling stage of career counseling and we started working on this phase. We came up with a questionnaire individually and we then discussed as a group to create a consolidated questionnaire. Throughout the week we had multiple discussions on conflict management, problem-solving, how to approach the children, and the importance of it, among many others. These discussions helped us learn and know about different perspectives and also their experiences. We were then exposed to sessions about Basic Counseling skills as well as Art therapy which would help us when we would interact with children for Career Counseling. These sessions were taken by Ms. Swathi ma'am who had been practicing counseling and art therapy for over ten years. We got to learn a lot about what counseling really is and also what is required for the same. During the Art therapy sessions, we learn fascinating ways how patterns and styles of drawing could represent so much about an

individual. We also learned how to administer and analyze a tool in art therapy called the bird's nest tool which can help you understand a person's attachment style. Simultaneously, we also worked on infomercials for pitching career counseling to principals of schools as well as ways to interact with the children. The infomercials we worked on were PPTs, brochures, and the script for the pitch this week as well as the following. All of these contain information about what career counseling was and what the process included.

Week 2

Date: 18th June 2022

This week we began by reviewing the work we completed the week before. We worked on the feedback received and also made the necessary changes. We then started working on the Quora questions that we needed to work on. For this task, we each needed to select around 6-7 questions on Quora that were related to mental health and psychology. We then had to answer these questions from the perspective of an individual at Asha The Hope and these answers would be uploaded from the official account of Asha The Hope. We then had sessions with Ms. Jyothi ma'am, a counselor who has been practicing for the past 8 years. She was a mentee of Dr. Asha and during these sessions, we learned a lot about "Know thyself" and how important this is for anyone looking to take up counseling.

These sessions truly helped us learn a lot about ourselves and they were also very self-explorative and introspective. We also learned about how these skills and aspects would be the most important step to becoming a counselor ourselves. We were then made familiar with their courses and we were expected to learn about the course PG Diploma in Child Psychology and be able to answer questions regarding the same when students approach the organization for doubts. We then had sessions with Ms. Pranjul ma'am where we learned about initial counseling and emotional first aid. This session was very informative and interesting as it helped us gain the skills of the initial consultation and also ways to make the client open up and feel comfortable while talking to us. We learned important skills like summarisation and also about observing micro-expressions and body language. All of these skills would certainly help us become better counselors. We then started working on schools and pitches for career counseling. We researched schools nearby and started contacting them for an appointment to pitch our plan of career

counseling for their students.

We also came up with a script for this pitch that included aspects such as “what is career counseling”, “why is it required”, and “the process of career counseling“, among many others.

We then practiced for the same. We then had a very realistic ‘what is life’ conversation with Pranjul ma’am where she told us about how the world will actually be and how we need to strive no matter what. She gave us quite a few reality checks as well and things we needed to think about and plan in the future. She also emphasized how we need to live our lives but at the same time observe and understand everything around us. This way we’ll experience and learn at the same time and we’ll be better people and counselors at the same time.

Week 3

Date: 22nd June 2022

This week again, we first reflected on all the activities we had done till then and made a plan about how we would work from now. We then had a discussion with the graphic designers right after and we pitched our idea for posts. But during this discussion, We realized that the designers did not know what they were supposed to be doing with the content for the posts that we had created. We soon understood that we needed to help them with the basics of the work they were doing. We then helped them with the content they were doing for the courses and the description of the courses needed to be changed to be more interesting. We helped them change this. We also realised that we worked better as a group when we divided tasks among ourselves and took the work step by step, not all at once. This way we would work most optimally.

We then had a session with Dr. Asha ma'am, and this was one of the most insightful and inspiring discussions I have ever had. Her perspectives and thoughts were so interesting and inspiring, and the way she explained concepts and related them to Vedas was so interesting. We learnt a lot in this session, we learned about counselling in general, how to be a better counselor, what kind of clients we would get and so many other aspects. She also related Ancient Vedas to modern psychology and this was very fascinating to me. -

Later, throughout the week, we worked individually on multiple articles on topics such as Hypnotherapy, Ikigai, Art therapy and career counselling. Researching and constructing these articles was very informative and we learnt a lot in this process. We also wrote about our experience with each of these topics and this was a very reflective process for me.

We then went back to working on career counselling so we contacted schools and we found a school that was interested in taking up this program. The school that accepted our proposal was Achieve School of Education that is located in Basavanagudi. We had a meeting with the Principal and they agreed to let us career counsel the students of grades 8th, 9th and 10th.

Week 4

Date: 30th June 2022

This week we focused on Career counselling. We visited the school almost every day this week. We first went to the school on Wednesday and we had our first interaction with the students. We had prepared a small interactive session for the students to understand what career counselling was and why 5 strangers from Christ University came to their school on a Wednesday morning. There were 95 students in total in the grades of 8th, 9th and 10th and this session was to just let them know that we were going to be coming to their school and conduct some counselling sessions with the students.

We then went back to the school the next day to explain what career counselling was in detail and also explain some aspects of the assessment that we would administer to the students later. These aspects included interests, skills, abilities, aptitude, work values, among many others. We also conducted a n interactive activity for them to understand their skills better.

Later, we conducted pre-counselling sessions with each of the students from 8th, 9th and 10th grades. We were 5 interns so we each had 18 students under us. These sessions took around 20-40 minutes with each student and we used the questionnaire we had created in the first week of the internship. This questionnaire was designed to understand their background, their interests, abilities, values and their ambitions to help us better understand them and also to guide them better after the assessment. These sessions truly helped us realize how counselling actually works and also gave us practical experience with counselling and career assessment.

We then administered the assessment that had around 10 worksheets that were made by Dr. Asha herself. This assessment is a subjective career assessment that has four parts which are; interests

assessment, skills, and abilities assessment. personality assessment and the work values assessment. These tests helped us get a more in-depth understanding of the students' goals in life. It will also help them understand themselves better. We gave them 2 days to complete the assessment. We then went back to school to collect it.

We then had multiple sessions with Dr. Asha ma'am to learn about the assessment and also analysing the results of the assessment. It was important for us to learn this as we were dealing with the lives of students and also helping them by giving them different perspectives on their careers. We also learnt how to make reports based on the results and also conducted debriefing sessions with the students after that. We also had very interesting and enlightening sessions and discussions with the students as well as Asha ma'am and we had amazing learning experiences throughout the internship.

Feedback

My experience with Asha The Hope is one of the most transcendental experiences I've had. I have been an Intern at Asha The Hope for over a month now and the exposure I got to the field of psychology and counselling will be something I will truly be grateful for. I learnt so much about myself in this journey along with valuable knowledge about people and counselling. I also got to experience practical counselling as well as practice it with other interns and also I had the opportunity to help students by conducting career counselling sessions for them. I am so grateful and honoured to be a part of the Asha The Hope team.