

## **KEEPING A REFLECTIVE JOURNAL**

One useful way of keeping track of what you are learning and the kind of service you are providing to the community is to keep a personal journal or log of your activities. This will force you to think about your experiences and can help provide insight into what you are experiencing and how you are feeling about it.

Your journal can take many different forms. However, a few ingredients are essential. Probably the most important advice to journal writers is that you do not edit as you write. Instead, you should write your thoughts freely, without regard for syntax, spelling or punctuation. Editing can be done later, if you wish. The point is not to stop the flow of your thoughts. Other requirements of journal writing are candor and keen use of your senses and observational skills. Not only will your writing be more interesting as you develop your senses and observational powers, but your experience will be enhanced as well.

Remember, it is important that you not think of your journal only as a work log in which you itemize and record events, tasks and statistics. Your journal, as a reflective and analytical activity allows you to grapple with problems and frustrations as well as identify your accomplishments and other positive learning experiences. The journal is your means of daily charting your growth and development both academically and personally.

You will find the journal less of a chore if you take a few minutes at the end of each day to review your learning objectives and reflect upon your experiences of the day.

### **Suggestions for a Daily Journal**

What's the best thing that happened today/this week?

What's the most difficult/satisfying part of your work? Why?

What do you think is your most valuable/valued contribution?

Tell about a person there who you find interesting/challenging to be with.

How do people there treat you? How do they see your role?

Is this congruent/in conflict with how you see your role?

How does this experience relate to your class topics, concepts etc.?

What does it take to be successful at your agency?

Could you do this?

Did you take or avoid taking risks this week?

Did you receive and compliments/criticisms?

What did you learn from this?