**Operation House Call** ***The Arc***

***Families teaching health professionals*** ***Massachusetts***

Dear Student;

Welcome to Operation House Call (OHC) of The Arc of Massachusetts. Operation House Call is designed to support health professionals in building confidence, interest and sensitivity in their work with individuals with intellectual and developmental challenges, using parents and families as teachers. Our hope is that your skill in learning from your future patients and families will be enhanced by this experience.

This is your checklist of course requirements:

* Attend class and visit the OHC website, today, to check your access, and review materials posted there, including the learning objectives of this experience. The OHC website log in information is below, and will also be emailed to you after class.
* Contact your assigned family within the first week after class to plan a visit date.
* Find a time to visit, which is convenient for your host family. The visit will be for two hours.
* Deliver your student evaluation form to your family at the beginning of the visit.
* Document in the OHC Forum by posting the date of your completed home visit in your OHC website forum and contributing a comment on your experience. Please follow a 400 word minimum.
* Consider the IP questions developed by your department (you can access these under “Course Requirements” link on the OHC website.) Email your answers to Annette Coscia, Department Administrator: [Annette.coscia@simmons.edu](mailto:Annette.coscia@simmons.edu).

We hope you will enjoy your opportunity to learn outside of a clinical setting. The volunteer OHC families are eager to meet you and to be part of this new teaching program that Simmons in offering to students.

*It is important to remember that you are not to offer any care during your home visit. You are there to explore and learn using the OHC learning objectives.*

Remember: check your log-in for the OHC website today. In addition, contact your host family, with your partner, this week. Be persistent! These are busy families. There is a major holiday in your semester, and it is likely that the visit will need to be scheduled on a weekend to accommodate your family’s school/program/work schedules.

If there are issues you cannot resolve, please contact me, without delay, email preferred.

Sincerely,

Ann Bersani

Ann Bersani, Simmons OHC Instructor and Parent Coordinator [bersani@arcmass.org](mailto:bersani@arcmass.org) cell: 303-968-4874

**Operation House Call Learning Objectives:**

1. Model person first behavior, and understand person first thinking and language.

2. Review supportive ways to deliver unexpected or difficult news to parents.

3. Practice building rapport in a home visit to a family who has a child with intellectual/developmental disability.

4. Monitor personal or subjective bias that might affect an evaluation or treatment of a child with IDD.

5. Demonstrate sensitivity to sibling and family issues during the family visit or in class discussion.

6. Increase awareness of resources available to families, including a broad overview of public education support.

**Log in to Simmons Operation House Call (OHC) website:**

1. Go to: [www.operationhousecall.com](http://www.operationhousecall.com) Select Simmons.

* Log in to the Simmons OHC teaching website: **User name:** your full simmons.edu email **(**all lower case.) **Password:** ohcstudent (all lower case). You will then have an opportunity to change the password.

1. Review resources on the Operation House Call website prior to your home visit. Note course learning objectives.
2. Use the Forum (in center of website) for posting about your home visit. It is password protected to ensure student privacy when in use (host families do not access this resource). Post your home visit date with comments by clicking your Block Forum and using the Forum password: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (case sensitive).

Note: **Please check your OHC website access this week**. Contact Ann Bersani [bersani@arcmass.org](mailto:bersani@arcmass.org) if you are having any difficulty accessing your account. Your OHC Department supervisors, Annette Coscia and the OHC team from The Arc of Mass. will have access to the OHC website and forums. The volunteer OHC families do not access this resource to preserve privacy for our students.

**OHC Home Visit: Sample Questions to ask parents**

*(Use this resource to inspire your own questions)*

How did you learn of your (son/daughter)’s diagnosis?

What help or advice did you receive at the time?

How did your physician respond to your thoughts and feelings at the time?

Can you tell me something about your family’s response to the news?

How did your medical team help you learn about what to prepare for?

Who has helped you understand important issues?

How has your health care practitioner addressed the needs of others in your family?

Who do you turn to most often for help or advice regarding the needs of your (son/daughter)?

What supports in your community do you rely on the most?

What has your (son/daughter) had for educational supports?

Who in the family is the primary care giver? (Are siblings, or others, expected to give care in any way?)

Do you feel comfortable talking with your health care team about your concerns for any of your family?

What helps you establish a good working relationship with your health practitioner?

What helps a “visit to the doctor” go smoothly?

Do you have a favorite helping professional, and why? (can be more than one)

What does your family do for fun?

What does your (son/daughter) enjoy doing most?

Can you tell me about how members of your family get along with each other (siblings especially)?

Can you tell me about friendships? (school, special therapies, hobbies, sports, exercise)

Do you have the amount of support that you need?

How has your experience affected your marriage? Other adult relationships?

Are there positive or negative aspects that stand out?

How has the experience of your family changed you?

What is a good day in your household?

What makes a day difficult in your household?

If I were a new family, a family similar to yours, moving into this area, what would be your favorite suggestions for support and resources?

**Note to students**:

Remember to practice asking questions and to listen to every member of the household. This includes the person who has intellectual/developmental special needs. Ask your host family to teach you about how to learn this if you feel you need help learning, most especially if communication is challenging, or their loved one is nonverbal. That is fine.

Finally: these are only questions to inspire your own. Thinking about them beforehand will help you have a better learning experience, as will going over the Operation House Call learning objectives, and reviewing the articles and videos on the Operation House Call website. On your home visit playing and talking with everyone in the family is encouraged. Work at connecting and learning from families. They have a lot to share!

Simmons OHC IP Assignment (also provided on the OHC website under the course requirements link). Your answers to these questions will be reviewed by your Simmons Department faculty member for this course:

1.  What three new things did you learn about your Operation House Call partner and his or her discipline?

2.  Reflect upon how an inter-professional (IP) team might more effectively care for a family with a son or daughter with intellectual/developmental disability than what an individual professional might be able to accomplish.  Give an example from your visit.  
  
3.  How has your vision for your practice as a nurse, dietician, or PT changed as a result of this learning opportunity?  
  
4.  Based on this IP experience, how do you think IP Education will change how health care is delivered in the future?  
  
5.  Go to [www.aacn.nche.edu/education-resources/ipecreport.PDF](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/education-resources/ipecreport.PDF)   
Select one of the core Competencies\* and discuss how this experience will enhance your delivery of health care.

6. What challenges do you see working as a member of an interdisciplinary team?

\*The American Association of Colleges of Nursing Core Competencies for

Inter-professional Collaborative Practice.