

However, we believe that for most students, this book, in combination with a skilled instructor, supportive peers, and some of your time and energy, can add to your learning.

We first conceived of this book for a human service internship audience, but there is an incredible variety of programs and placements that fall under that umbrella. Add to that the audiences in other professions such as counseling, social work, nursing and business, and service-learning, community service, and other field-based experiences, and the variety becomes even wider. So, too, is the amount of preparation that students bring to these experiences. This book is meant as a guide to the phenomenological experience of the internship, to help you anticipate and make sense of the emotional aspect of your work. But because of the variety we just mentioned, it is very important that you consult your guiding faculty member early and often, even if there is no formal class that accompanies your experience. Decisions about what theories to explore and what parts of this book to emphasize should be made by the intern and faculty member together. Decisions also need to be made about your skill sets and places where they may need some attention. We are speaking here of specific skills that are relevant to specific placements and fields, but also of more generic skills, such as communication and group process skills. We urge you to be proactive in identifying these areas for growth and planning to attend to them.

### *Some Basic Terms*

Although internships, co-op education, community service, and service-learning experiences exist at many colleges and universities, different language is often used to describe the various aspects of the experience and the people associated with it. For example, the term *supervisor* sometimes refers to a person employed by the placement site and sometimes to a faculty or staff member at the college. So, at the risk of boring those of you who feel very clear about these terms, we take a moment now to be clear about what we mean.

- **Placement or Site** This term refers to the place where the student is working, and sites can vary quite a bit. It could be a social service agency, a corporate setting, a college or university office, a hospital, or a school. Through the process of finding a placement, you probably are aware of the incredible variety of opportunities that exist in the community. If not, and if you are curious, there are books mentioned at the end of this chapter that you can consult.
- **Intern** This is the term that refers to you, the student who is working at the site, even though you may not be called an intern at your college or university. If you are in a community service or service-learning activity, you will probably be referred to as a volunteer or a student.
- **Supervisor** Your supervisor is the person assigned by the placement site to meet regularly with you, answer your questions, and give you feedback on your progress. Most placements assign one site supervisor to one student, although in some cases, there may be more than one person fulfilling these functions. Some academic programs use the term *field instructor* to describe this person in order to emphasize the educational (as opposed to managerial) nature of the role.

