

Placement: South House

For my placement I decided to work with South House Gender and Sexuality Resource Centre. I chose this place because I was interested working and gaining more experience in this type of environment. Having previously gained some experience in a women's resource centre before I was excited to see how a more diverse LGBTQ centre worked. South House is on campus so a lot of their focus is on programming for students, as well as other young people in the community. They put a lot of work in maintaining a variety of resources such as a library, workshops and hygiene products. There are two main managers for South House who plan the events and run the programs, my supervisor was Carmella Farahbakhsh.

Carmella was an excellent supervisor to have for this placement. They were very encouraging and enthusiastic about helping you to succeed. Even though my project was very independent, they always made sure I had all the knowledge, resources and funds I needed. If I needed to purchase supplies, or have access to printers, Carmella made sure that I had easy access to them. Carmella always replied to my emails promptly and was very easy going if I had change of plans for times and dates and needed to reschedule a meeting. Overall I felt very supported in my undertaking of my project and that gave me the confidence to carry it out.

When I first got in contact with Carmella they gave me a brief overview of what placement students had done in the past, and encouraged me to think of my own independent project to execute during this semester. After some brainstorming I decided it would be a good idea to incorporate something creative, because that is my strong suit, with some sort of event. I believe event planning is a core part of running a centre and so I felt like planning an event would give me a lot of good experience for future. I went and met with Carmella and described

my idea to them, unsure if it was possible. I proposed that I would plan a gender and sexuality themed art show on behalf of South House. Carmella loved this idea and they gave me some key ideas on how to start out.

My Initiative: The Art Show

In outlining my planning process I knew I would need to find a venue, have a promotion plan for the event, and also acquire submissions from individuals to show. To begin, I started planning an art night, where people could come and use supplies in the South House space. Carmella helped me facilitate this event and led me through the steps of running a small themed event. My duties for this event were to create a poster, collect supplies and snacks, promote the event, and then run the event. My goal for this art night was to get the word out to fellow artists that a showcase was going to take place and that they would be able to submit their work. Some problems I had with this event was knowing what day of the week would work best, and also finding the best way to reach out to students in residence. I found out a bit after that there was three other on campus art nights happening that week and so promotion was difficult.

Moving forward I began focusing on where I was going to hold the event. This was probably the most difficult part of my planning process. At first I was interested in putting art in a low key spot like a coffee shop, and Carmella had given me the idea to talk to *Just us! Coffee* or *Coburg Coffee*. I set up a meeting with *Coburg Coffee's* Manager/Owner to discuss these possibilities. There was a chance that the event could happen at this location but it would be necessary to have a closed event not open during regular hours, therefore the coffeehouse would be asking a fee. Moving on from here I decided I needed to look further. I began to look into

hosting the event at the wardroom, after a month of discussing how/where the art would hang in the space, and what night it would be possible, It was decided that the art show would take place in collaboration with an Art History trivia night the wardroom was holding. This worked out absolutely perfectly. I displayed the art on a designated wall for a *one night only* exhibit that people could enjoy. There was a great turnout and people spoke to me about how they had never seen the space being used like this before and really enjoyed it.

My Overall Experience

I had a very positive experience partaking in a placement at South House and I would definitely recommend it. It is important to note however that it is a very independent placement. A lot of the other independent style placements are focused on research projects, this would be a great alternative to that if you are looking for something flexible but also hands on. It is important that you are constantly thinking about and working on making your project idea come to life. You need to have a passion for what you wish you achieve in this placement or else you might find it difficult to follow through and stay motivated. I chose a project that centred around art because it is one of my passions and I had a strong vision for what my event would bring to the community. Whatever project you choose to complete with South House, you will have all the resources and support you will need to follow through at your fingertips. If you are in Gender and Women's Studies like myself, I would strongly suggest this placement because it gives you a good background for how resource centres work. Working in a resource centre whether it be as a support worker, or event coordinator, is incredible experience that will absolutely add to your degree.

