Course Description: Clinical Practice with Families - Family focused models of intervention applied to families in transition and to problems such as divorce, single parenting, and blended families. This course is designed to help students deepen and extend their assessment, and intervention skills in clinical social work practice with families. Building on the content of the foundation year courses, this course presents the theoretical basis of various family focused models of intervention. Students will examine the importance of the phases of family treatment, the shared responsibility in the client worker relationship and the application of social work values and ethics to family treatment in social work practice.

The functions of the family unit, elements which contribute to healthy patterns of functioning, different family structures (i.e. single parent, reconstituted, etc.) and cultural issues which emerge within the family system will be explored. Using an ecological perspective, the course will examine ways that various forms of social oppression and issues pertaining to gender, cultural diversity, life-cycle, social class, and other social and psychological variables which impact on families. The importance of promoting social and economic justice in clinical work with families will be addressed.

Students will have an opportunity to identify ways in which social work clinicians can develop and utilize partnership relationships with families to help families reduce stress, enhance social functioning increase social support and increase empowerment. The class will address treatment considerations and therapeutic techniques in clinical practice with families who demonstrate a range of biophysical problems (e.g. mental illness, substance abuse, AIDS, physical illness, domestic violence, and sexual abuse). The course will also address issues regarding the effective use of self in working with families.

Community based clinical social work with families involves:
1. An understanding that community can represent neighborhood, organizations, social groups, depending on the family.
2. Assessments must include the resources, potential stressors, and characteristics of the community as well as the individual family.
3. Interventions with families include family and community resources as appropriate.
4. Prevention efforts with families include community members and groups as appropriate.

Learning Objectives: By the end of the term, students should be able to:
1. Describe family treatment and its core elements in community based clinical social work practice.
2. Identify, critique and apply various family intervention theories.
3. Identify the components of the phases of clinical treatment with families.
4. Use generalist and clinical perspectives in family assessments and interventions.
5. Apply social work ethics to clinical practice with families.
6. Identify the impact of macro issues in clinical work with families.
7. Assess family functioning in classroom cases and field assignments.
8. Identify ways to integrate knowledge of the impact of diversity (ethnic, racial, class, religious, gender, age, sexual orientation and lifestyle) into family assessment and intervention.
9. Develop and implement treatment goals and treatment contracts.
10. Identify family strengths and build on these in the treatment process.
11. Apply therapeutic tools such as Genograms, therapeutic contracts, sculpting, role playing, etc. in clinical practice with families.
12. Demonstrate use of interventions from the Crisis Intervention, Socio-behavioral and Psychosocial frameworks to reduce stress, enhance social functioning and increase empowerment and coping skills of families.
14. Demonstrate termination skills with families.
15. Develop awareness needed for effective use of the self in clinical work with families.
16. Identify how social and economic justice issues impact on families and family functioning.
17. Identify ways to use prevention efforts with families.
18. Include the relevant community in the assessment and intervention with families.

Course Outline and Teaching Methods:

Outline:
The knowledge base of family therapy and review of relevant content from prior courses.
1. Social work role/values in family treatment.
3. Engaging and contracting with families.
4. The phases of family treatment.
5. Family assessments with an emphasis on family strengths and sources of resiliency.
6. The therapists' own "self awareness."
7. The family unit as a resource and target for change: Approaches and Techniques.
8. Treatment considerations for practice: selected problems and special populations:
   a. Families in poverty
   b. Families at different stages in the life cycle
   c. Violent/abusive families
   d. Minority/immigrant families
   e. Alcoholic/substance abusing families.
   f. Families with different structures: Blended/families/Lesbian and gay families/Single parent families.
   g. Families coping with mental illness and other health problems

Teaching Methods: The objectives of this course will be achieved through a variety of methods:
1. Didactic content through lectures.
2. Class discussions and class exercises.
3. Role play.
4. Videotapes
5. Student group presentations

EXPECTATIONS:
Getting your work in on time: All papers are due on the scheduled date unless you have spoken with me directly and made prior arrangements based on special circumstances that will prevent you from meeting the deadline. Approval for late work must be obtained from me directly. Grades can be reduced if they are not submitted by the due date without previous arrangement.
Responsibility for readings: Inherent in advanced graduate study is the concept that the student is responsible for required readings and reserve. In addition, it is expected that students will also search out additional readings in efforts to expand their knowledge in specific areas.

Appointments with Instructor: Students are strongly advised to make appointments to meet with the instructor.

Grades:

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Course Requirements: The assignments for this course are intended to provide you with a variety of skills related to assessment, goal setting and termination in clinical practice with families. The assignments also reinforce the importance of oral and writing/documentation skills in clinical practice.

Class Participation: The class will include review and discussion of assigned readings, as well as the students' presentations of their own clinical interventions and experiences. Since this will require your presence, attendance is mandatory and excess absences will result in a lowering of the final grade.

Required Texts:


Additional readings will be available in the library on reserve or can be accessed electronically.

SESSION 1 COURSE ORIENTATION

Overview of Course
1. introductions/expectations
2. review of syllabus/readings/assignments
3. teaching methods

Understanding the role of the family
1. basic functions of the family system
2. developmental stages of the family
3. developmental tasks
4. life cycle stage diversity
5. impact of culture on the family /family diversity-ethnic, racial, class, religion gender, age, sexual orientation
6. reciprocal interaction between families and communities

Session 2 Engaging families
Joining with family members and the family as a system
Establishing a therapeutic alliance
Required Reading:
Worden Chapter 1. The movement to systems and social construction
Chapter 2. The first interview: Initiating Assessment and Engagement
Chapter 3. Engagement: Establishing therapeutic boundaries

SESSION 3 Understanding families: Assessment issues
1. individual versus systems dynamic
2. family structure and boundaries
3. family process issues
4. family crisis
5. lineal versus circular causality
6. macro issues in family treatment. (impact of policies and social welfare on families)
7. levels of family functioning
8. strengths perspective
9. family resiliency
10. ecological systems social constructionism approach to family treatment.
11. social and economic justice issues impact on families.
Required Reading:
1. Kilpatrick & Holland Text-Chapter 1 Levels of family need
5. Worden, Chapter 4 Assessment: Diagnosis and systems models 73-100.
   Ethnicity and Family Therapy. 2nd edition. Guilford Press.

Recommended

SESSION 4 INTERVENING WITH FAMILIES
1. Process of facilitating change with families
2. First and second order changes
Readings:
SESSION 5  MODELS OF SOCIAL WORK TREATMENT WITH FAMILIES

Level I Families.
Family preservation, Crisis intervention, Case management

Readings:
1. Kilpatrick and Holland. Chapter 5. (Grigsby). Interventions to meet basic needs of high-risk families. 69-84.
2. Chapter. 6. (Greene & Kropf). A family case management approach for level 1 functioning. 85-103.

SESSION 6
B. SECOND LEVEL OF FAMILY FUNCTIONING: STRUCTURE, LIMITS AND SAFETY ISSUES

Structural family interventions

Reading:

Assessment paper due

SESSION 7 - SOCIAL LEARNING FAMILY INTERVENTIONS

Social learning assessments and interventions.

Readings:

SESSION 8
THIRD LEVEL OF FAMILY FUNCTIONING: PROBLEM/SOLUTION FOCUSED APPROACHES

Solution-Focused
1. Key Concepts
2. Intervention techniques

Readings:
SESSION 9 FAMILY SYSTEMS
1. Key Concepts
2. Intervention techniques

SESSION 10
FOURTH LEVEL FAMILY FUNCTIONING: FAMILY AND PERSONAL GROWTH ISSUES.
Narrative Family Interventions

SESSION 11 OBJECT RELATIONS FAMILY THERAPY
Concepts and strategies of object relations family therapy.
Evaluating change in family therapy: Identifying goals, objectives, and measuring progress.

SESSION 12
ROLES OF THE PERSON AND OF THE THERAPIST AND THEORY IN FAMILY THERAPY.
Complexity of family work/Role of the person of the therapist.
Reading:
Termination:
Reading: Worden. Chapter 8. Termination.

Note- While the syllabus has these topics assigned to these weeks, we will be addressing issues related to the following issues throughout the course. Readings will be assigned to these earlier sessions as appropriate.

Sessions 13 & 14
FAMILY THERAPY WITH SPECIFIC PROBLEMS AND POPULATION GROUPS
A. Treatment considerations in working with violent and/or abusive families.
Reserved Reading:

B. Treatment considerations in working with alcoholic/substance abusing families: Focus will be on helping families identify and change dysfunctional patterns related to the use of alcohol or drugs. The impact that Aids has on the family unit will also be examined.
Reserved Reading:

C. Treatment consideration in working with families of the chronically mentally ill. Focus will be helping families identify family strengths and resources needed to chronic mental illness.


SESSION 14

D. Treatment considerations in working with minority/immigrant families: focus will be on helping families with difficult transitions related to cultural, social and environmental adjustments.

Readings:

SESSION 14

E. Treatment considerations in working with different family structures: blended/remarried/reconstituted families; gay and lesbian headed families; single parent families. The focus will be on helping families develop and adjust to new structures, expectations and roles.Readings:

Session 15 FINAL PAPER DUE

ASSIGNMENTS: The following assignments are designed to help students incorporate family theory, family intervention models, and information about community and cultural context into the assessment and treatment process.

PLEASE NOTE: Any information included in your paper that is attained from a source must have the source clearly referenced. Failure to do so will result in a lower grade and a possible failing grade on your paper. Copying another student’s work (from this or any other current or past
class) or presenting any published or unpublished work, or portion of work, as your own will result in a failing grade for the course. Submitting a paper already turned in for another class is also not permitted. All work, research and wording is expected to be fully and completely original work presented for this class with clear references to any sources utilized.

Assignments 1: Family Assessments paper: In order to work effectively with families, it is important to be able to understand families, the structure and relationships among members, the cultural and social settings that influences families. An assessment of the families represented in a list of videos generated by the faculty and members of the class that represent diversity issues. The stories of these families represent ways in which community, history, and culture converge to influence how families cope. Use the family assessment form for the assignment. This assignment is due: Session 6. (30 points)

Assignment 2: Family Treatment paper: It is important to identify treatment approaches and strategies to adapt these to help individual families. The purpose of this paper is to identify appropriate models and strategies for responding to a specific family based on an assessment including structure, family relationships, community issues and resources, cultural, socio-economic circumstances, and other pertinent information. This paper is to be based on the literature and should include a minimum of 8 references (in addition to those assigned for class reading). Based on this literature and the assessment of the family, this paper should include an evaluation of the likely effectiveness of the intervention. This paper is due on the Class 15 (but can be handed in earlier). Students who do not have a family in their field placement should see instructor for another arrangement. Students can submit the paper 3 weeks prior to the due date to receive a preliminary review by the instructor. These papers will be then returned for possible revisions. (40 points)

Outline for paper:
- Description/Assessment of family
- Nature of the model that you have selected, including some of the specific techniques that you have selected.
- Rationale for your selection based on:
  - Assessment current and long term picture of the family, type of situation facing them
  - Literature in the field (references required) that suggest the use of and adaptation of the model for such families, such problems, and other characteristics of the family.
  - Any ways that you would adapt your interventions in view of the unique nature of the family---this would include your assessment, the racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, religious, sexual orientation, and other elements that make this family unique.
  - Your assessment of the intervention (or likely so if you have not been able to use it).

Role playing: All students will participate as members of fictitious families for the purpose of practicing a variety of intervention strategies with these fictitious families. In order to provide the freedom to learn, these activities will not be graded but active participation will play an important role in the general participation aspect of the course grade. (15 points)

Group project: Students will divide into small groups to present information about and demonstrate intervention strategies based on specific models. Dates: Per arrangement for each group. (15 points)
Bibliographies


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Video possibilities: (list can be expanded)
Life as a House
Soul Food
Parenthood
Step-Mom
Secrets and Lies
On Golden Pond
Fiddler on the Roof
The Color of Purple (one of the families)
My Big Fat Greek Wedding
Mississippi Masala