SOCIAL WORK WITH THE ELDERLY

Social Work 694      Berit Ingersoll-Dayton
Fall 2009      3846 SSWB/(734) 763-6577
Office Hours: Thursday 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.      bid@umich.edu

Course Description:
This methods course focuses on intervention with older people at micro and macro levels. The course will build upon foundation coursework theory about human development, personality, and social environment. This content will be integrated with intervention strategies directed toward aging adults, including evidence based interventions and practices. Major areas to be discussed are: coping with age-related changes, caregiving demands, advance directives, guardianship, managed care, elder abuse, case management and advocacy. An emphasis will be placed on addressing participation within the diverse dimensions: including ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation.

Course Content:
Working with older adults requires an integration of knowledge about who they are, the environment and society in which they live and the intervention strategies, whether on the micro or macro level, that are successfully utilized in working with people in this age group. While much of the information on psychology, environment and society will be presented in the HBSE sequence, it will be integrated and applied in this course. Major arenas for social work practice to be explored are caregiving, physical and mental impairment, advanced directives, managed care, guardianship and coping with attention to intervention on the individual, group, organizational, community and societal levels.

The IP intervention section will focus on intake, screening, initial evaluation, treatment and termination issues involved in working with older clients and their families. Such skills as reaching out, engaging either reluctant or impaired elders, and successful termination of intervention will be covered. Various psychiatric disorders more typically diagnosed among the elderly will be discussed and intervention strategies identified and demonstrated such as journaling, reminiscence and social activities will be presented.

The administrative and community organizing intervention strategies will examine engaging older people in community settings, the context in which older people more successfully work together, and programmatic qualities (i.e., content and format) that are
more likely to be of interest to older people. In the community organizing arena such skills as developing and applying techniques to increase the scope and quality of participation in boards, committees, meetings, volunteer programs, and group decisions will be of particular use. The program development and implementation strategies that have focused on older people will be reviewed. Students will learn to critique agency policies that ignore elderly or their needs, and learn to advocate on their behalf.

From each intervention perspective, whether it is interpersonal practice, community organizing or interviewing at the administrative level, diversity dimensions will be considered.

**Course Objectives:**
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the common barriers in serving the needs of older people from an interpersonal, environmental and social perspective, and recognize that these problems can be addressed using all levels of social work intervention.
2. Plan intervention strategies in micro and macro practice that are of particular importance for aging adults of various diversity dimensions.
3. Plan various intervention strategies that promote prevention of health and functional problems and rehabilitation among older people.
4. Plan and conduct an intervention strategy with aging adults in micro and macro practice.
5. Incorporate social work values and ethical principles related to social work with older people.

**Course Design:**
The instructor will select readings and design assignments for the course. Approaches such as lecture, discussion, case review and simulations will be employed. Students will be expected to contribute case/programmatic examples from their field experiences.

**Assignments:**

1. Lead a class discussion using a case example, role play, or class exercise that integrates an application and discussion of the assigned articles and/or book chapters (10% of grade).

2. Write an assessment paper (10-12 pages) based upon one or more interviews with an older person. This paper is due in class on October 22, 2009 (40% of grade).

3. Write a research paper (12-15 pages) on a specific area relevant to older people. Describe relevant prevention and intervention strategies at multiple levels of practice (i.e., interpersonal, community organizing, administrative and/or policy) based on literature from empirically-based practice. Describe how these approaches relate to the
strengths perspective (50% of grade). This paper is due on the first day of the exam period, December 15, 2009.

Relationship to Curricular Themes:

  Multiculturalism and Diversity: will be addressed by considering the ways in which the diversity dimensions affect how older people function within various contexts.

  Social Change and Social Justice: will be addressed by recognizing and addressing the influence of social inequities in individual, group, policy and social interaction. That is by learning to empower clients to articulate their needs, as individuals and in groups, and to acquire the knowledge and skills to get their needs met.

  Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation: will be addressed by identifying individual and group strategies for promoting wellness, as well as understanding a spectrum of coping skills to deal with change, loss and disability and preparedness for end-of-life issues.

  Social Science Theory and Research: will be addressed by considering theory and research findings regarding the efficacy of various intervention strategies from a micro and macro perspective that are successfully utilized with older people and their caregivers.

  Ethics and Values: This course will emphasize the relationship of the NASW'S Code of Ethics, specifically those sections pertaining to the core values and ethical principles of social work as well as the standards of practice that under gird ethical behavior in the conduct of working with elderly population.

  Intensive Focus on PODS: This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self knowledge and self awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

Approved by Faculty: 11/8/2006

Readings:

  Both required and recommended readings will be available on CTools.
Course Outline:

Session 1 (September 10): Overview of Course

Session 2 (September 17) - The Client/Worker Relationship

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


Session 3 (September 24) - A Strengths-Based Framework for Assessment and Intervention

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


Session 4 (October 1)- Cognitive Assessment and Intervention

Required Reading

Recommended Reading

Session 5 (October 8)- Mental Health Assessment and Intervention

Required Reading

Recommended Reading

**Session 6 (October 15)- Community Assessment and Intervention**

**Required Reading**


A Blueprint for Action: Developing a livable community for all ages

**Recommended Reading**


**Session 7 (October 22)- Working with Older Adult’s Sexuality**

(Engagement and Assessment Paper: Due in Class)

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


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**Session 8 (October 29)- Working with Older Adult’s Sexual Orientation**

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


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**Session 9 (November 5)- Working with Elder Abuse Issues**

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


**Session 10 (November 12) Working with Substance Abuse Issues**

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


Session 11 (November 19)- Advance Directives, Guardianship, and Advocacy

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


******** Thanksgiving, November 26th **********

Session 12 (December 3)- Caring for Caregivers

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


Session 13 (December 10)  Working at the End of Life/After-Death Care

**Required Reading**


Life Care Center of Sarasota (2005) Butterflies are free: One nursing home’s end-of-life program. *Nursing Homes*. 54(9), 20-29.


Imhof, S. & Kaskie, B. How can we make the pain go away? Public policies to manage pain at the end of life. *Gerontologist*, 48(4), 423-431

**Recommended Reading**


***** Prevention/Intervention Paper: Due December 15, 2009*******(Please put it on or under my office door by noon)