SW 698: Social Work Practice in Mental Health
Fall 2012 (Thursday 2 - 5) * Please note class starts at 2:00 *
Classroom: 2752 SSWB

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Office Hours: Immediately before class or by appointment

1. Course Description

This course teaches practice models and methods of intervention for effective social work practice in mental health care, including the promotion of mental health, the prevention of mental illnesses (with special emphasis on relapse prevention), and the delivery of psychosocial treatments and rehabilitation services. A major focus is on enabling individuals with mental health problems to increase their functioning in the least restrictive environments, with the least amount of ongoing professional intervention, so these individuals maximize their success and satisfaction. This course has a specific emphasis on services to individuals who suffer from severe and persistent mental illness, substance abuse in conjunction with mental illness (dual-diagnosis population) and/or who are recovering from the effects of severe traumatic events. Interventions relevant to these conditions help individuals develop/restore their skills and empower them to modify their environments so as to improve their interactions with their environments.

A second major focus is on culturally competent and gender-specific interventions and special issues for groups who have been subject to oppression. Privilege and social justice concerns will be a major emphasis of the course. Mental health disparities will be considered in relation to diagnoses, treatment options and case disposition within the mental health system.

2. Course Content

The course will present practice methods for carrying out functional assessments, resource assessments, establishment of client preferences, development of plans to meet service needs, services to enhance client skill development, and the development and modification of relevant community and agency environments. The emphasis of the course is on approaches that enhance problem-solving and coping strategies and are empowering and supportive to consumers, both individually and in groups and families.

This course will provide students with models and methods for the promotion of mental health, the prevention of mental illness, the provision of effective treatment of psychiatric disabilities, with an emphasis on promotion of optimal adaptation when psychiatric disabilities are long lasting. Assessment and intervention strategies will be
included for use at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, and societal levels. A special issue is the integration of services for individuals with multiple problems. The course, therefore, will emphasize the integration of micro and macro methods through which students learn to make social, behavioral, environmental, organizational, administrative, and policy assessments, with an emphasis on risks/strengths assessment and capacity-building.

Students will develop knowledge of empirically-based interventions and will be able to select and implement appropriate methods based on assessments and service plans. A major focus of this course will be gender specific and culturally competent interventions with and for groups who have been subject to oppression, such as people of color, women, lesbian/gay/bi/transgendered people, the aged, and people with disabilities.

3. Course Objectives

Students who complete this course will be able to:

1. Assess the risks and strengths of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and/or communities for the purposes of promoting mental health, early intervention, treatment, and continuing service, with an emphasis on problems faced by people who suffer from severe and persistent mental illness, substance abuse, and/or who are recovering from the effects of severe traumatic events.

2. Plan or plan and conduct culturally competent, gender-specific individual, family, group, organizational, and preventive interventions.

3. Identify and demonstrate understanding of the many components of the mental health system as team member, advocate, broker, community organizer, and program planner, in order to interact productively with the many components of the mental health system.

4. Build partnerships with key neighborhood and self-help organizations and institutions for the purpose of mental health promotion and disease prevention.

5. Incorporate social work values and ethical standards in practice in mental health.

6. Plan or plan and engage in advocacy at both micro and macro levels to help individuals overcome oppression, discrimination, and other barriers to access and quality of mental health services.

4. Course Design

The course will include lectures, discussion, simulations, small group exercises, individual and group projects, guest speakers, and written assignments.

5. Relationship to Four Curricular Themes

Social Science and Behavioral Research is presented throughout the course and includes findings from evaluation studies and intervention research in social work, psychiatry, psychology, anthropology, and sociology.
Multiculturalism and Diversity are integrated throughout the course especially in view of the fact that mental health problems are experienced very differently in various cultures, each of which has its own indigenous responses to healing. In addition, the stresses associated with mental health problems and access to appropriate services are differentially affected by gender, poverty, race/ethnicity and sexual orientation. The students must be aware of these issues and helped to develop culturally competent and gender-specific interventions and interventions to overcome oppression and discrimination as barriers to access to and quality of care.

Social Justice Issues have special relevance to the processes of psychosocial rehabilitation. Persons with psychiatric disabilities are often discriminated against with respect to access to education, employment, housing, and financial assistance. Health insurance plans often discriminate against persons with mental as opposed to physical disabilities. Social justice issues are often seen with respect to the processes of commitment, the rights of people in mental institutions, the rights to treatment (such as in the criminal justice system), access to attorneys, and the determination of competence to stand trial or when mental illness is offered as a defense in a criminal proceeding. The student will learn about these issues in the course as well as the role of social work in fighting for these and other rights.

Promotion/Prevention/Treatment/Rehabilitation are addressed throughout the course. Mental disabilities often occur or are exacerbated as a result of stressful environmental conditions and the ways of seeking changes in these conditions or preventing them will be stressed.

6. Relationship of This Course to Social Work Values and Ethics:

Virtually every topic of this course is related to issues of social work values and ethics, and these issues will be dealt with in this course. Examples of these issues are priorities assigned to various services and populations by mental health agencies and the role of social workers in molding these priorities, recognition of the right of self determination of consumers of mental health services, the principle of the utilization of the least restrictive environments for treatment of mental disorders, the values placed on preventive services, an understanding of the responsibility of workers to strive for less stressful environments in relationship to preventing mental problems, the creation of community respect for individuals in the community whose behavior, while lawful, departs from community norms, and promoting community awareness of the “not in my back yard” phenomenon.

7. Accommodation for Disability Statement

Any Student who has a disability or condition that may interfere with your participation and success in this course, please feel free to contact me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations for your specific needs. This information will be kept strictly confidential.
8. Writing Assistance
For further assistance with writing, you may go to the Writing Workshop 1139 Angell Hall 764-0429.

Course Overview

The course will be guided by four important themes:

A) Understanding people with mental illness from multiple perspectives (including gender, race, ethnicity, culture, privilege, oppression, social justice)

B) Understanding the mental health practitioner roles and necessary skills to be effective working in mental health settings.

C) Understanding the best evidence practice methods for our work with individuals with severe and persistent mental illness

D) Developing intolerance for poor practices or treatment of mentally ill persons and their families and to acquire the skills and muster the courage to “do things differently” if it will aid these courageous persons to have better lives (Mary Ann Test)

Required Texts


Will use but do not need to buy – will be on reserve in the library

Optional Texts

Helpful Websites
http://www.mentalhealthpractices.org/
   For article downloads
https://www.socialworkers.org/nasw/default.asp
   For access to practice related documents
http://www.nimh.nih.gov/
http://www.nami.org/
http://www.samhsa.gov/
Course Assignments, Requirements, and Grading

Role Plays

6 points; Ongoing during the semester

I believe we learn best by doing. My goal is to teach you clinical skills that you can practice in class and apply in your internships and future career. That being said, 6 points of your grade will be based on class participation in role plays. Four role plays will be made available during the semester for in class practice of techniques we are reading about and discussing during lectures. You will need to be prepared to participate in at least 3 out of the 4 small group role play scenarios / evaluations to earn all six points (each role play / peer evaluation is worth 2 points).

The fine print is for problems that hopefully won’t arise. But just in case, here are the rules: If more than two sessions are missed—whatever the reason—the grade will be lowered five points for each session

Papers are expected to be handed in on their due dates and papers must meet all academic standards for ethical documentation. Late papers are not accepted.

The following criteria will be taken into account when papers are graded:

- Systematic and logical presentation of arguments;
- Appropriate use of evidence;
- Familiarity with and appropriate use of relevant literature and concepts;
- Clarity and coherence of presentation;
- Originality and creativity;
- Conformity with the requirements of the assignment;
- APA style for final paper

Stress Gym

5 points Due: September 13th

Visit Stress Gym to help “work out” the counterproductive intrusions into your daily life and help yourself stay motivated, productive and happy. Originally designed by Reg Williams, Ph.D. and Bonnie Hagerty, Ph.D., professors in the School of Nursing, it was for the military to address the special needs of its active – duty personal. It has now been adapted for the general public to use www.depressioncenter.org/stressgyms

After you complete the “work out” answer the following questions and submit to CTools assignment.
• How did the web tool help you identify sources of stress in your life?
• Explain how the web tool can be useful in teaching practical strategies for coping with stress.
• What exercise did you find most useful and why?
• What resources were beneficial for solving problems, finding balance or strengthening relationships?
• Do you feel web based tools such as this can be useful for clients who would benefit from learning potential strategies for reducing stress? Explain.

**Memoir Response Paper**

30 points of grade. Length 7-9 pages.
Due: October 4th

This memoir has been chosen for the assignment. The author, Linda Haywood will speak with the class on October 4th about her experiences living with mental illness. Address your reactions to the memoir(s) and answer the following questions:

a. What are your personal responses to this story and the author’s construction of his/her illness/disability/disease and the methods of treatment he/she received? (3 points)

b. Using approaches to understanding the intersections of culture and mental illness in class, discuss how the author’s experience, idioms of distress, and efforts to accept or resist labeling and treatment reflect cultural values, folkways, and attitudes about psychological suffering. Also discuss how this author’s experience may differ from cultural values, folkways, etc. (8 points)

c. How do gender, race, class, historical context etc. influence the experience of illness by the author and others in connections with the author? (4 points)

d. Describe the impacts of the significant relationships on the author’s experience of the illness/disability, particularly emphasizing therapeutic relationship(s) discussed in the book. What stands out to you as especially significant, helpful, not helpful? Quote at least two specific pages / comments. What is missing in her/his relational world? What are the challenges for the people in relationship to the author and how well were these challenges managed? (10 points)

The final 5 points are related to grammatically correct, referenced properly, and thoughtful reflections and references to the book

Be prepared to share in small groups your personal responses to the reading. What are the central ideas that seems most salient or significant to you? Why? Which are appealing, problematic, troubling?
Case Review; Diagnosis, assessment, treatment strategies and cultural implications for treatment

30 points Length 7-10 pages Due: December 6th

Choose an individual case which will involve thought about assessment, diagnosis, understanding cultural implications and identifying intervention strategies and resources. If you are not seeing individuals, you can use the person in the memoir. Examples of challenges related to treatment and service delivery in the case might include:

- Problem of violence and mental illness
- Problems related to dual disorders
- Challenges of working on an interdisciplinary team
- Incorporating alternative and complementary treatments
- Services for families and care-givers
- Innovative community-based treatments and restrictions to executing those evidence-based treatments

The paper will have 5 parts:

1. Define the severe and persistent mental health disorder represented in your case (Discuss disorder features and use the DSM multi-axial assessment in the first section of the paper to describe your case) – 1 page 3 points
2. Choose an empirically focused treatment for that disorder – use something from class presentations or something we have not covered that you feel is a good fit. You may talk about complementary or alternative treatments for this case. You should justify your choices in terms of the disorder as you defined it. (2-3 pages) Use references here. 10 points
3. Adjust and alter the delivery of the treatment for a particular ethnic group, gender, developmental life-stage, location, socio-economic group that is presented in your case (1 page) e.g. a Latino male in prison with severe depression and substance abuse 10 points
4. Discuss who you are as a practitioner – your characteristics and what you bring as the ‘treater’ in this therapeutic relationship (1 page) 5 points
5. Grammatically correct, professionally written 2 points

Essay Exam(s)
29 points total

- Bi-Polar Disorder (8 points) Be able to explain DSM Diagnostic Criteria, signs and symptoms and effective treatment strategies.
- Suicide Prevention and Treatment Planning (10 points) Define specific screening questions to assess level of risk; identify treatment plan key areas of focus
- PTSD Diagnosis and Treatment Planning (11 points) Diagnosis to treatment
Class Schedule and Readings

The chapters and articles are to be read by the date under which they are listed in the schedule.

Class 1 September 6th
Mental Health in the College Community

Readings:


Order and begin reading memoir

Class 2 September 13th
A Cultural/Strengths-based Framework for Assessing and Treating Mental Illness

Readings:


Podcast on CTools:

Cultural Differences: How Culture can Affect Mental Health. Interview with Dr. Stephen McLeod-Bryant. (9 minutes; MUSC Health Audio Podcast)

Racial Disparities in Mental Health. Interview with Dr. Stephen McLeod-Bryant. (11 minutes; MUSC Health Audio Podcast)
Class 3 September 20th
Assessing and Treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Readings: Review articles in CTools folder on PTSD

Be prepared to role play assessment of PTSD based on CTools readings (2 points)

Class 4 September 27th
Stress, Mental Health and Resiliency

Guest speaker; Linda Seyfarth

PTSD Diagnosis and Treatment Planning Quiz due on CTools by 2pm (11 points)
Diagnosis to treatment


Class 5 October 4th
Mental Health Illness and Stigmas

Complete memoir

Assignment due on Ctools - Memoir Response Paper

Guest Speaker and memoir author Linda Haywood

Class 6 October 11th
Treatment of Bipolar Disorder

Readings:


Class 7 October 18th
Mental Health and Aging in the Gay Community

Reading: CTools Folder

Guest Speaker, Shair Lynn Robinson –Lynk, MSW

Bi-Polar Disorder Quiz due on CTools by 2:00 pm (8 points) Be able to explain DSM Diagnostic Criteria, signs and symptoms and effective treatment strategies.

Class 8 October 25th
General Anxiety Disorder; Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Be prepared to role play techniques based on CTools readings (2 points)

Readings:

CTools folder and

Substance Abuse and Dual Disorders

Class 9 November 1st
Exercise; An adjunct intervention for Depression

Readings: CTools folder

Guest Speaker(s) Panel invited to discuss recent research on the effects of exercise on depression and review assessment tools and discuss motivational interviewing related to exercise and mood management.

Class 10 November 8th
Topic to be determined based on text
Class 11 November 15th
Assessing and screening for suicide risk

Readings: Ctools folder

Be prepared to role play techniques based on CTools readings (2 points)

Class 12 November 29th
Substance Abuse and Dual Disorders

Guest Speaker: Bruce Thomson

In class quiz Suicide Prevention and Treatment Planning (10 points) Define specific screening questions to assess level of risk; identify treatment plan key areas of focus

Readings:


Class 12 December 6th
Affirmative Therapeutic Practices for Working with LGBT Clients

Readings: CTools Folder and recommended movie clips to be announced

Class 13 December 13th
Play Therapy; Working Effectively With Children who Suffer from Anxiety

Be prepared to role play techniques based on CTools readings (2 points)
Class 9 (July 9)

Dual Disorders Treatment/Motivational Interviewing

*On-Going Cases* - Task of service coordination

*Presentation* -

Castillo Chap. 9, “Substance-Related Disorders

Class 10 (July 16)

Homelessness/Housing/Legal Issues/Mental Illness & Jail
Psychosocial Rehabilitation/Assertive Community Treatment and others

*On-Going Case:* Task of Self Education
*Presentation:* Dr. Tim Florence on Homelessness and mental illness
Readings:

Weinstein and Hughes, Chap 2, What is PSR? (2 separate documents)

Weinstein and Hughes, Chap 4, Psycho Social Rehabilitation - Person Centered Planning & Practice

Weinstein and Hugest, Chap 11, Housing

History of ACT: Presentation by Mary Ann Test, Ph.D. (30 minutes) LINK: video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-3636883055558008415

*SAMHSA ACT Workbook/*

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\text{Class 11 (July 23)}
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Readings:


