Social Work 790-005, Fall 2013: Family Psychoeducation; an evidence based psycho-social intervention for schizophrenia and other severe and persistent mental illnesses.

Credit Hours: 1  
Instructor: James Svensson, LMSW  
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Course Description:
This course will cover the theory and some of the research on the psycho-biology of schizophrenia, and how this led to the development of this family of treatments. After discussing the theory behind the approach, students will be trained in Multi-family Psycho-education as developed by Dr. William McFarlane using in class exercises and a mock group. We will also explore what is known about bipolar disorder, how it impacts the individuals with the illness and their families. We will also discuss, compare and contrast McFarlane’s approach with Family Focused Treatment, a family intervention for individuals with bipolar disorder that has been created and researched by David Miklowitz.

Course Content:
This course will first cover the psycho-biology of schizophrenia, family factors that either protect or worsen the illness, and the ramifications of the illness for both the individual and his/her family. Next we will explore what and how Family Psychoeducation (FPE) attempts to change and improve the situation for the family and the client. The use of these groups for different illnesses, age groups, or ethnic groups will be discussed, as well as multi-family vs. single family treatment strategies. Research supporting the efficacy of this approach will also be covered. During the latter part of the course the students will learn how to form and run an FPE group. A similar, but shorter, review of bipolar disorder and Family Focused Treatment will be presented.

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

1. Discuss the psycho-biology of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, the effects of the illnesses on the individual and their families.
2. Educate families and people with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder about how to cope with their illness.
3. Use the problem solving method and other FPE techniques to help run or start a group.
4. Discuss the efficacy of these approaches and how they are different from standard treatment for schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.
5. Understand what other illnesses/disabilities this approach has been used with, and conceive of other problems it could be used with.

Relationship to the Four Curricular Themes:

Multiculturalism and Diversity will be addressed through the readings, and class discussion. Since people with schizophrenia, or other severe mental illnesses, are discriminated against and struggle with stigma, stigma reversal is a core value of the FPE approach. FPE has been used in this country with different minorities, and the method has been used in Asia and Europe with equal success.

Social Justice and Social Change, again, this is one of the themes of FPE, because virtually all families and individuals with schizophrenia and other SPMIs struggle against stigma, and it is one of the recurring themes or undercurrents of all FPE work.

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation: FPE, and variants, such as the Schizophrenia Prodromal Prevention model, are cutting edge psycho-social treatments for people with schizophrenia and their families, and research has shown better outcomes in repeated studies.

Behavioral and Social Science Research will be incorporated throughout the course in discussions of the treatment model.

Relationship of the course to Social Work Ethics and Values: These issues will be discussed during clinical exercises and mock groups.

Assignments:

- Participation in all course activities, assigned readings and group exercises.
- A short test at the end of the class on the FPE technique.
- Readings

Grading: 50% of the grade will be based on class participation and 50% on the test at the end of class.

Primary Texts or Articles:

McFarlane, W.R., Multifamily Groups in the Treatment of Severe Psychiatric Disorders, New York, NY, Guilford, 2002


Selected Reference List:


Bebbington P., Kuipers E., The predictive utility of expressed emotion in schizophrenia: an aggregate analysis. Psychological Medicine, 1994, 24, 707-718


McFarlane, W.R. et al.: From Research to Clinical Practice: Dissemination of New York State’s Family Psychoeducation Project, Hospital and Community Psychiatry, Vol. 44, No.3


David Miklovitz, Bipolar Disorder: A Family-Focused Treatment Approach, Guilford Press, 2008

10-18
Overview of Family Psychoeducation
Overview of the Psychobiology of Schizophrenia
Reading Assignment: Multifamily Groups in the Treatment of Severe Psychiatric Disorders, Chapters 1-5 (p. 3-103)

10-25
Selecting and Joining with Families for the Group
Family Psychoeducation Workshop
Family Guidelines and Recommendations for Families
Role Play Joining with Families in Class

Reading Assignment: Multifamily Groups in the Treatment of Severe Psychiatric Disorders, Chapters 6 & 7 (p. 104-126)

Anderson, C. M., et al, Educating Families, Concepts and Recommendations for Clinicians Who Teach Families How to Manage Schizophrenia (will be sent via e-mail to all students)

11-1
Overview of First and Second Groups
Role Play First and Second Groups

Reading Assignment: Multifamily Groups in the Treatment of Severe Psychiatric Disorders, Chapter 8

11-8
Overview of the “Problem Solving Method” and Group Format for the Groups
Demonstrate and Role Play Problem Solving Session

Reading Assignment: Multifamily Groups in the Treatment of Severe Psychiatric Disorders, Chapter 9

11-15
Overview of other FPE variations and Family Focused Treatment with specific focus on mood disorders.
Discussion of PODS issues

Reading Assignment: Multifamily Groups in the Treatment of Severe Psychiatric Disorders, Chapters 12 & 13


Test