Deep meaning lies often in childish play.
~Johann Friedrich von Schiller

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Office hours –    Monday 12:15 – 12:45
                  Tuesday 12:00 – 1:00
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Course Description:

This course will examine practice theories and techniques for working directly with children ages eighteen months to nine years, and their caregivers, via play therapy. This course will emphasize evidence-based play therapies that address diverse groups of young children. Special attention will be given to the meaning of play across cultures, as well as the role of play in the healthy development of children. The interaction between environmental risk factors, protective factors, promotive and developmental factors as they contribute to coping, resiliency, and disorder will also be covered. Primary emphasis will be given to Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) and Child Centered Play Therapy (CCPT).

Texts:


Course Content:

We will address both the objective aspects of observing and interacting with young children and their caregivers, as well as the subjective experience of interacting with children, some of whom face significant environmental challenges, including poverty. Specific strategies for helping children who are distressed or dysregulated will be addressed. Finally, students will have the opportunity to observe and reflect upon multiple domains of child development, including state regulation, attachment behaviors, play themes and emotional, language, cognitive and motor development.

Course Objectives:

Students will:
- Develop core skills of MSW students in observation, engagement, assessment and engagement;
- Through use of class instruction, observation notes and individual feedback, specifically develop expertise to understand and respond to the unique communications of play;
- Consider the behaviors and interactions observed through a multicultural lens, making accurate meaning of what is observed through understanding the child in the context of their caregiving environments, which are influenced by broader societal influences;

Course Design:

This course will take place in a combination of classroom experiences and working with children in a play environment in the community. To the best of my ability, I will help structure opportunities for students to interact for several weeks with children, but there may be times students will have to arrange their own “play partner.”

Links to CSWE Practice Behaviors:

Practice Behavior 3
- Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments
  - Distinguish, appraise and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom
  - Demonstrate effective oral and written communication
  - Analyze models of assessment, prevention, and intervention

Practice Behavior 4
- Engage diversity and difference in practice
  - Recognize and communicate understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences
Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups

**Practice Behavior 7**
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment
  - Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention and evaluation
  - Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment

**Practice Behavior 10**
- Engage, assess, intervene and evaluate...
  - Use empathy and other interpersonal skills
  - Collect, organize and interpret client data
  - Select appropriate intervention strategies

**Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:**
- *Multicultural and Diversity* themes will be addressed by careful attention to the impact of social class, ethnicity, family structure, community support, and ability on infant and parent interactions. Different patterns of development which may result from different biological and/or social environments will be identified and differentiated from those patterns of development which may result from deprivation or impairment.
- *Social Justice and Social Change* will be addressed through discussion of the impact of economic and social oppression on infant and child family relationships.
- *Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation* is particularly important in social work with infants and young children because of the potential lifelong impact of facilitating or harmful conditions at this stage of life. This course will emphasize factors that may contribute to resiliency and vulnerability and identify the kinds of environmental conditions, programs, and interventions that promote optimal development.
- *Behavioral and Social Science Research* will be emphasized throughout the course which will draw on empirically based knowledge regarding observation and assessment from a number of other disciplines, particularly developmental psychology and psychiatry.

**Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:**

As child development throughout the life course is so profoundly impacted by the parent(s)/child relationship, this course will emphasize understanding the development and indices of attachment. We will also consider potential ethical dilemmas may arise for social workers working with vulnerable children and families. The impact of social
conditions and social policy and the need for macro and micro intervention to improve the lives of children will also be addressed.

**Intensive Focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (PODS):**

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of 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 intersectional and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self knowledge and self awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

**Accommodations:**

If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, please let me know soon. The earlier that you make me aware of your needs the more effectively we will be able to use the resources available to us, such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site and the like. If you do decide to disclose your disability, I will treat that information as private and confidential. Also, please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements.

**Course requirements:**

- Completion of weekly readings
- Completion of Three Process Recording notes (75% of final grade)
  - Students will write a note of three of six of your interaction weeks.
  - Each note will have two components
    - A session summary in Process Recording Format (class handout)
    - In addition to the actual observation note, you will add a reflection/processing section. That section should include your thoughts and feelings, interpretations, etc. about the “play” session.
  - Please use only first names and specific age of the child (if known, otherwise, approximate the age) in the notes.
  - Upload in Assignments through Ctools in WORD format only (not PDF)
- Completion of a final summary write up (15% of final grade)
- Attend and participate in all sessions (10% of final grade)
GRADING of notes and final summary will be based on:
Thoroughness and relevance (i.e., about the child or interactions) of observation descriptions
Ability to suspend judgment in description of observations
Ability and accuracy re: relating observation with developmental domains,
understanding the potential meanings of behaviors
Reflective Capacity
Writing, grammar, clarity

Agenda

5/13 Class Meeting
Topics
Course Introduction
Course Requirements
Managing Child Behavior

Reading:

Lillas - Stress Response Regulation
Sample Process Note

5/20 Class Meeting
Reading:
Ray Text – Chapters 1 – 3 (pgs. 1 – 62)

5/27 Class Meeting
Reading:
Ray Text – Chapters 4 – 6 (pgs. 63 – 104)

6/3 Class Meeting
Reading:
Ray Text – Chapters 7 – 9 (pgs. 105 – 166)
Ctools - Lieberman and Van Horn - Giving voice to the unsayable:
Repairing the effects of trauma in infancy and early childhood (Read for ideas of how to “contain” themes and feelings of children, as well as to understand how fear can be masked by aggression).

6/10 Class 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Work with Children
Reading:
Ray Text – Chapters 10 – 12 (pgs. 167 – 226)

6/17 TBD
Work with Children

Reading:
Ctools - Hart and Risley (Ctools) - Language development and poverty
Drewes – Play in selected cultures

6/24 Class 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Work with Children

Reading:
Ray Text – Chapters 13 – 15 (pgs. 227 – 288)

7/1 Class 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Work with Children

Reading:
Dibs in Search of Self (pgs vii – 110)

7/8 Class 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Reading:
Dibs In Search of Self (pgs. 110 – 220)

7/16 Class 1 – 3 p.m.
Work with children

Reading:
Ctools - Mitigating intergenerational trauma within an attachment framework
Ctools - Anderson and Gedo – Relational trauma – Using play therapy to treat a disrupted attachment

7/23 Class

Reading:
Ctools - Discovering the inner life of a child