Attachment Theory in Clinical Practice
Through the Lifespan
Spring-Summer 2014

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Course Description
Understanding the implications of early relationships on adult functioning can assist in providing adult psychotherapy in ways that can assist to repair individuals’ capacity to form and maintain healthy adult relationships. Using attachment theory and emotional regulation theory as the foundation, this course will address relationship-based interventions in interpersonal practice with adults.

Course Objectives
Students will understand:
- The theoretical construct of attachment patterns
- The clinical correlates of adolescent and adult attachment organization
- How to use an understanding of the dynamics of attachment to inform clinical thinking and intervention

Course Text

Available on e-links through UM:

Links to CSWE Practice Behaviors

Practice Behavior 3
- Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments
  o 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

**Course Requirements**

**Prep for Class One:** (88 pages, including citations pages)
Obegi and Berant  (Ctools Resources)
  - Chapter 2 – An Overview of Adult Attachment Theory (pp. 17 – 45)
  - Chapter 3 – The Therapist as Secure Base (pp. 46 – 93)

**Optional**
Wallin - Chapter 2 – Foundations of Attachment Theory (pp. 11 – 24)

**Prep for Class Two:** (94 pages, including citations pages)
Wallin –
  - Chapter 11 – Constructing the Developmental Crucible (pp. 193 – 210)
  - Chapter 12 – The Dismissing Patient (pp. 211 – 223)
  - Chapter 13 - The Preoccupied Patient (pp. 224 – 241)
  - Chapter 14 – The Unresolved Patient (pp. 242 – 255)
Final Paper

Assignment (applicable for students taking course for MSW degree, not CEUs)

Using a compilation of the readings, provide a detailed example of how you can apply what you read to your clinical work. Be specific. For example, how will you listen for attachment themes? Have you thought about any of your clients differently and if so, how? How will Attachment Theory inform your interventions? What do you expect might be easy for you to employ? What might be more difficult? Use the chapters to help elaborate your points and use specific examples from your work. You should be able to write at least two pages about application of attachment theory to your work.

Finally, end with at least a paragraph or two connecting what you learned about yourself in relation to attachment theory and the way in which you think your own relational style may impact your clinical work. Again, be specific. For example, if you assume you have a relatively autonomous state of mind regarding attachment, how do you think that will play out in your work? What benefits, specifically, may it afford you? What might be something of a limitation, if any, of having an autonomous state of mind? Due 7/24 at 11:00 p.m. through Ctools. PLEASE UPLOAD AS A WORD DOCUMENT - not a PDF. Thank you.

I grade papers based on evidence of understanding of markers of attachment-related behavior, and ability to construct a strong therapeutic hypothesis and frame for intervention, as well as evidence of beginning level of understanding of transference and countertransference, including how your own attachment history may impact your work with clients.

Excellent papers (A papers) will show strong writing, strong clinical thinking and marked evidence of having read and integrated course materials. ‘B’ papers will show understanding of same concepts and at least some level of clinical thinking. Students’ whose papers that do not show such evidence will be asked to meet with me and to re-write their paper. ONLY Papers under a B- will be accepted for revision and the revised grade can only be as high as the lowest passing grade in the class.