Psychopharmacology for Social Workers
SW 790, Section 013 Winter 2018

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Classroom: Room B770 SSWB
Saturday's Jan 13 & 20 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m

Prerequisite: None

This course presents advanced topics in interpersonal practice.

Course Description:
This course has a clinical focus and practical orientation; therefore, we will examine basic neuropsychopharmacology, neurotransmitter systems, drug metabolism (i.e., absorption, distribution, metabolism, excretion), and the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of psychotropic medications to only a limited degree. Our emphasis will be primarily on understanding the physiological actions, therapeutic effects, and potential toxicities associated with prescribed pharmacotherapies for major classes of mental disorders affecting youth, adults, and older adults.

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

1. Understand the physiological actions of medications and differentiate among the types of currently available psychotropic medications.
2. Identify which medications are clinically indicated for which Mental Health Disorder or Substance Use Disorder
3. Discuss risks vs. benefits of different medications (Therapeutic effects, side effects, adverse reactions, medication management)
4. Be able to identify the rewards and challenges regarding interdisciplinary collaboration between social worker and prescribing physicians
5. Understand psychopharmacology with different populations
6. Address legal and other considerations in psychopharmacology for social workers

Grading, Class Attendance, and Participation

Grading: Grade will be satisfactory or unsatisfactory for the course.

Attendance: In order to receive credit for this 1-credit mini course students must: 1. Attend all class sessions from start to finish; and 2. Actively participate in all activities and in-class assignments.

Purposeful participation in class discussion and activities are paramount for the successful completion of this course. Participation does not mean you need to talk a lot in class. It is more about bringing a positive learning attitude to the class and being present for each session.

Readings-Available on Canvas

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Class Schedule

Day One (January 13, 2018)

Morning-
- Class Introductions, course parameters
- Overview of Pharmacology: What it is, neurotransmitters and principles of drug action
- Therapeutic effects, risks and benefits & medication management of psychotropic medication

Afternoon-
- Medications and drug functions (Antipsychotics, Antidepressants, Mood Stabilizers, Anti-anxiety, stimulants) includes case scenarios
- Substance Use Disorders & Medication
- Psychopharmacology with different populations/sex and psychopharmacology

Day Two (January 20, 2018)

Morning-
- Psychopharmacology and current debates- presentations- 5-6 groups: 15 minutes each
- Ethical and Legal Issues in Psychopharmacology

Afternoon-
- Medication and Social Worker Roles in Psychopharmacology
- Interdisciplinary Collaboration
- Future Directions for social workers and psychopharmacology

Required Assignment: Below are some of the current debates specific to psychopharmacology. You will get into groups of 3-4 (for a total of 5-6 groups) and choose one of the current debates below. You will be given time during day 1 to meet with your group and decide how you want to approach the debate and assign responsibilities for the week. On day 2 you will be given time to organize what each of you has worked on during the week and you will present to the class the main issues for social workers and link to what you have learned in this class, PODS and recommendations. You will have 15 minutes for the presentation. Feel free to be creative, use PowerPoint, prezi, you-tube video, poster, panel, role play, etc.

- The economic & political forces promoting the damaging & abusive use of psychotropic medication.
- Assess the argument against extensive and excessive use of psychotropic medications.
- The debate of prescription privileges by APRN's and psychologists.
- Social and psychological effects (pro & con) of taking psychotropic medication.
- The link between antidepressants and suicide, violence, and mania.
- Genetic tests that are currently available which may help to identify for each individual the best medication to treat mental health issues.
- Are we abandoning social work values by focusing on the medical model, rather than looking more broadly at needed environmental and psychosocial interventions?
- Debate on Cosmetic Psychopharmacology- use of drugs to move persons from a normal psychological state to one that is more desired or better social rewarded. use for self-actualization.
- Medication Assisted Treatment for persons with substance use disorders
- Computerized-assisted decision-making in psychotropic prescriptions- Computerized clinical decision support systems (CDDSS"S)