1. Course Statement

Share, Explore, Engage, Discover (SEED) Mini-course --- During the week of New Student Orientation, varied social work topics will be presented as foundation-level mini-courses inviting students to share, explore, engage, and discover the vast world of social work. The course will emphasize experiential, active, and engaged learning components and operationalize the three SEED goals: 1) Strengthen connection and community at the School of Social Work; 2) Explore PODS (privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice); 3) Learn foundation-level social work skills. Each topics will begin by attending a shared welcome experience.

a. Course description

Rates of suicide have increased significant in the last decades, making it among the leading causes of death worldwide. Yet suicide is among the most preventable threats to life and well-being, with knowledge and assessment/intervention skills increasingly regarded as necessary tools in the social worker toolbox. This mini-course aims to equip participants with relevant knowledge about suicide, its symptoms and contributing factors, as well as to cover basic assessment, intervention and referral skills. Course content will draw from well-established and effective materials, including the Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) and Mental Health First Aid curricula to learn about suicidality symptoms and early intervention, as well as featuring the Columbia Suicide Assessment suite of instruments for use in developing and practicing suicidality assessment skills.
b. Course content

- Prevalence data on suicidality, at the local Michigan level, nationally in the United States, and worldwide.
- Exposure to the Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) gatekeeper training experience and supporting materials.
- Addressing the element of ambivalence among suicidal populations, utilizing the framework of the transtheoretical model of change to inform understanding and intervention approaches, including a Decisional Balance role-play exercise.
- Addressing various clinical profiles that frequently feature suicidal presentation, including malingering, personality disorder (antisocial & borderline), posttraumatic stress disorder, substance use disorders, and depressive disorders, with discussions of intervention strategies for each, and a particular emphasis on cognitive-behavioral approaches.
- Addressing some of the unique factors involved with suicide and youth.
- Reviewing the mental health code, and the process for involuntary hospitalization, including a Petition-completion exercise.
- Reviewing the Columbia screening and assessment tools, including a role-play practice exercise to increase familiarity with utilizing in vivo.

c. Course objectives and competencies

1. To learn the QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) approach to signs of potential suicidality.
2. To develop an increased understanding the various clinical profiles within which suicidality may be part of the presentation.
3. To become familiar with some basic tools/skills for intervention with clients who may be presenting with symptoms or reports of suicidality.
4. To develop a basic understanding of the process for involuntary psychiatric hospitalization in cases of suicidal crisis.

d. Course design

Instructional methodology includes Lecture, Handouts, Videos, Role plays, Case scenario presentations, and Class discussion.

e. Curricular themes

Improved clinical knowledge and beginning practice skill for recognizing and responding to signs, symptoms, and reports of suicidality among service populations.
f. Relationship to social work ethics and values

Suicidality is a challenge faced by individuals of every ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Becoming equipped with effective methods and skills for assisting individuals in improving their health and well-being is consistent with many of the values of the Social Work profession, especially as services are provided with cultural humility and respect. Effective approaches to suicidality are rooted in respect and empowerment, seeking as they do to partner with clients to preserve their lives in the case of crisis suicidality, and endeavoring to bolster the strengths already resident within them to improve symptoms and maladaptive coping in the case of non-crisis suicidal ideation or gesturing. Today’s increasingly complex and integrated world of behavioral and primary healthcare provides many opportunities to utilize effective interventions and approaches to suicidality in order to assist individuals in promoting better behavioral health outcomes, and to support individuals in moving toward a life worth living.

g. Intensive focus on PODS

As this course is a 1-credit, skill-building practice course, there is not the available time to provide an intensive focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity, and Social Justice. That said, effective approaches to suicidality are rooted in respect and empowerment, seeking as they do to understand and fully partner with clients, regarding them as the best expert on their own lives, and endeavoring to bolster the strengths already resident within them. Understanding and addressing suicidality effectively mitigates against the negative influences of intentional or unintentional Privilege, is philosophically opposed to Oppression, seeks to value the Diversity of deeply personal values and life goals without presuming upon or inserting such in working with clients, and is a potent tool for practitioners to have in their toolbox for supporting the advancement of Social Justice in the form of improving the behavioral and physical health outcomes of those facing stressors posed by discrimination, disenfranchisement or other social injustices that may be contributing factors to depression, despair and the potential of suicidality that may be a risk factor.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials – available in class

- Counseling Suicidal People: A Therapy of Hope, or Suicide: The Forever Decision by Paul G. Quinnett
- Decisional Matrix & Chain Analysis worksheets
- Competing paradigms handout
- Columbia suicide screening & assessment instruments
- Petition for involuntary psychiatric hospitalization & guidelines
b. Class schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Required Readings &amp; Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1: Tuesday, 8/27; 1:00-5:00 pm</td>
<td>Suicide prevalence The QPR approach</td>
<td>QPR handouts, P.G. Quinnett book(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 2: Wednesday, 8/28; 8:30 am-12:00 Noon</td>
<td>Clinical profiles featuring suicidality, with effective intervention strategies</td>
<td>Decisional Matrix &amp; Chain Analysis worksheets, and Competing paradigms handout</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 3: Thursday, 8/29; 8:30 am-2:00 pm</td>
<td>Evaluation tools and intervention responses to crisis suicidality</td>
<td>Columbia suicide screening &amp; assessment instruments, and Petition for involuntary psychiatric hospitalization &amp; guidelines</td>
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Additional references:
c. Assignments

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Percent of overall grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance &amp; discussion participation</td>
<td>8/27-29</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active participation in role-play exercises</td>
<td>8/27-29</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion and submission of Decisional Matrix, Columbia Assessment instrument, &amp; Petition for Involuntary Psychiatric Hospitalization</td>
<td>8/28-29</td>
<td>40%</td>
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d. Attendance and class participation

Students are expected to attend each class session, and to actively participate in class discussions and role-play exercises.

e. Grading

- 93 – 100 = A
- 90 – 92 = A-
- 87 – 89 = B+
- 83 – 86 = B
- 80 – 82 = B-
- 77 – 79 = C+
- 73 – 76 = C
- 70 – 72 = C-
- 67 – 69 = D+
- 63 – 66 = D
- 60 – 62 = D-

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: [https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources](https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources). They include:

- Safety and emergency preparedness
- Mental health and well-being
- Teaching evaluations
● Proper use of names and pronouns
● Accommodations for students with disabilities
● Religious/spiritual observances
● Military deployment
● Writing skills and expectations
● Academic integrity and plagiarism