

COURSE TITLE:	Mini-course in Forensic Interviewing
DIVISION NUMBER:	778
COURSE NUMBER:	772
CREDIT HOURS:	1
PREREQUISITES:	None
LOCATION:	Elective Methods

W772 Special Topics: Forensic interviewing of children who may have been sexually abused

1. Course Description:

This is an advanced method mini course focused on forensic interviewing of children. The mini course is particularly relevant to interviewing children alleged to have been sexually abused, but also be relevant to gathering information from children about a spectrum of traumatic experiences. This mini course will provide a critical review of the evidence/research that is relied upon in forensic interviewing of children and will provide information about best practice. The course takes a child-centered/social justice approach, will admonish professionals to consider the child's needs, developmental stage, and functioning, as well as the specifics of the allegations, when conducting forensic interviews.

2. Course Content:

This course will cover the following areas: 1) forensic versus clinical practice, 2) brief history of forensic interviewing, 3) models of assessing for child sexual abuse, 4) cultural issues that may impact abuse characteristics, reactions to abuse, and interviews with the child, 5) forensic interview structures, protocols, and guidelines, 6) controversies about appropriate questioning techniques and sequencing in a forensic interview, 7) controversies, relevant research, and best practice related to the use of media in forensic interviews, , and 8) current practice regarding extended assessments in forensic work.

3. Competencies:

Upon completion of the mini-course, students will be able to:

1. Understand and be able to critically evaluate research related to forensic interviewing.

2. Be knowledgeable about the spectrum of interview protocols, structures, and guidelines.
3. Be able to identify and employ appropriate questioning strategies in conducting a forensic interview,
4. Be knowledgeable about when to employ media in forensic interviews and the controversies related to media.
5. Be able to decide when to conduct an extended forensic assessment.

4. Course Design:

This course will make use of lectures, demonstrations, discussion, role plays, and media such as videotaped interviews with children. There will be reading beforehand that everyone will be expected to do¹, there will be a pre- and post-test, and there will be a short paper for those doing the mini course for course credit. The course will be graded Satisfactory, Marginal, Unsatisfactory.

5. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

- *Multiculturalism and Diversity* will be addressed by teaching students sensitivity, respect, and competence when working with children where there are racial, cultural, ethnic, class, religious, gender, or nationality differences. Course material will include a discussion about how culture can impact upon the characteristics of abuse and reactions to it.
- *Social Justice and Social Change* will be addressed by teaching students that children are at a fundamental disadvantage in systems that are controlled by adults. The role of the social worker conducting forensic interviews is to give the child a voice.
- *Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation.* This mini course will not cover the full spectrum of social work intervention, but rather will focus on assessment, which can be related to tertiary prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.
- *Behavioral and Social Science Research* will be an integral part of this mini course. Participants will be exposed to the social science research that is used to guide interview practice and will be taught to critically evaluate it.

6. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:

Issues of values and ethics of a social work professional as they relate conducting forensic interviews and being responsive to the needs of children who may have been sexually abused or otherwise traumatized will be an integral part of this course.

Required reading:

¹ An optional text for the course is: Kathleen Coulborn Faller. (2007). INTERVIEWING CHILDREN ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE: CONTROVERSIES AND BEST PRACTICE, New York: Oxford University Press. The text is available at Amazon.com. Relevant manuscript chapters are in the folders for the half-days of the course and the entire manuscript is uploaded in the suggested reading folder.

1. *Child Forensic Interviewing: Best Practices* (on the CANVAS site); read before the mini course begins.
2. *Forty Years of Forensic Interviewing* (on the CANVAS site); read before the mini course begins.
3. *Disclosure Failures: Statistics, Characteristics, and Strategies to Address Them* (on the CANVAS site); read before the second day of the mini course.

First day--AM

Overview of course content, reading assignments, and caveats

- a) Personal issues with explicit abuse descriptions
- b) This is an advanced level course and mostly does not duplicate the content of either sw730 (from previous curriculum) or sw621 (new assessment course)
- c) Although it will cover strategies used in easy disclosure cases, much of the content and most case examples will be drawn from difficult cases.

Differences between forensic and clinical practice with children who may have been sexually abused—suggested reading Chapter 1—pp.3-9; Chapter 2— pp.10-34

Models for conducting a forensic assessment of cases involving allegations of sexual abuse—suggested reading Chapter 3— pp.35-43; Chapter 5— pp.50-57

Case example TBD

First day--PM

Interview structures—suggested reading Chapter 7— pp.66-89; Lamb et al., NICHD Protocol, NICHD revised protocol; Lyon, 10 Step Investigative Interview, Michigan Forensic Interview Protocol; RADAR (all are on the CANVAS site)

Case example TBD

Questioning children—research and practice—suggested reading Chapter 8— pp.90-109

Questioning exercise

Second day--AM

Use of media in forensic interviews—suggested reading Chapter 9— pp.110-141; Aldrich et al. (on the CANVAS site)

Case example TBD

Second day--PM

Is disclosure of sexual abuse an event or a process? — suggested reading Chapter 13— pp.175-190; Chapter 14— pp.191-206; Rosaleen McElvaney, PhD, Sheila Greene, PhD, and Diane Hogan, PhD (on the CANVAS site)

Case example TBD

Extended assessments—Malloy, Lyon, & Quas (on the CANVAS site), Faller & Nelson-Gardell, (on the CANVAS site).

Case example TBD

Course requirements

1. Attend all sessions for both days of the mini course (course credit will not be given without full attendance) (Enrollment will be taken at the beginning of each class day).
2. Download and/or print PowerPoints for each presentation during the course
3. Participate in class—case discussions, small group exercises
4. Do the required reading—This is in a separate CANVAS Resource folder entitled Required Reading
5. Refrain from using your laptops during class for anything other than the course.
6. Turn off your cellphones during class; you may turn them back on during breaks
7. Submit a final take-home short answer assignment on or before December 18 [Note: Please submit papers on CANVAS.] Students will receive a S/M/U grade as soon as the assignments are all graded.