

PSYM17-CS-209 Family Counselling

Aim of the course

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This course aims to introduce the fundamental ideas and theories of family therapy and discuss the practical application of the concept of family systems. The course will explore the main therapeutic models of family therapy and specific areas of family life such as divorce, adoption, abuse, cultural differences etc.

Learning outcome, competences

Knowledge:

- Discusses the basic concepts and methods of family therapy
- Understands how therapeutic change happens
- Explores family systems and life-cycle transitions
- Understands the impact of addiction, physical and mental health, wellness, and illness on marriage, couple, and family functioning.

Attitude:

- Applies the knowledge gained during the course using empathy, tolerance and flexibility
- Develops the ability to apply and adhere to ethical and legal standards in marriage, couple and family counseling

Skills:

- Develops skills of engaging with families
- Uses systems assessment models and procedures to evaluate family functioning
- Begins developing an integrative individual style as family counsellor

Content of the course

Topics of the course:

Topics
1. Introduction Exploration of the concept of family <i>Art assignment</i>
2. Foundations and concepts of Family Systems, common themes <i>Tracking sequences, circular questioning</i>
3. First generation of fam. Theories (Structural, Bowen, Strategic, Psychodynamic) <i>Genogram practice</i> <i>Boundaries exercise</i>
4. Second and third generation of fam. Theories (Experiential, Narrative, Solution focused, Functional, MST) <i>Narrative session video</i> <i>Miracle question exercise</i>
5. Couples counseling (Emotionally focused, Cognitive Behavioral) <i>EFT video, CBCT video, Solution focused video</i>
6. Intake, assessment, case conceptualization <i>Strength based intake video</i> <i>Experiential session video</i> <i>Play in family therapy exercise</i>
7. Divorce, blended families, parent consultation <i>Session practice lab 1</i>
8. Adoption, grief, loss <i>Session practice lab 2</i>

Spring break
9. Trauma, abuse <i>Session practice lab 3</i>
10. Addiction, low income, Just therapy <i>Session practice lab 4 and 5</i>
11. Alternative families, cross cultural issues <i>Social GRACES exercise</i>
12. On being a therapist Case documentation
13. Legal and ethical issues Course evaluation

Learning activities, learning methods:

Throughout the course the use of role-play, video analysis and group discussion will support the learning process. Participants will also be asked to complete weekly reading assignments, reflect on their place in their own family system and create a family genogram.

Structure of classes:

Lecture and discussion 40%

Experientials, videos, practice labs 60%

Evaluation of outcomes

Learning requirements, mode of evaluation, criteria of evaluation

Requirements:

Weekly readings

Complete the required readings as a preparation for the class. See readings list in the course schedule

Lab participation

Sign up for one of the four practice session labs to co-lead a 30 minute family session with another counselor. The practice family's issue will reflect the theme of that actual class (divorce, adoption, addiction etc).

Family of origin paper 3-4 pages

You will be asked to reflect on your family of origin using the common themes worksheet and create a family genogram. What patterns do you recognize? What does the genogram tell you about your family? How does your family experience affects your future work as a therapist?

Cross-cultural paper 2 pages

What would you like a therapist to know about your own culture? What is a typical family looks like in your native country? What are the roles, communication patterns, cultural values? Which family therapy approach would be the best fit? Why?

Case conceptualization final paper 7-8 pages

You will choose a movie to watch from the list provided. Based on the family dynamics in that movie you will create an assessment and case conceptualization for the family.

mode of evaluation: 1-5 grades

Criteria of evaluation:

Regular attendance – missing more than 2 classes might result in failing the course

Completion of written assignments

Participation in practice labs

Reading list

Compulsory reading list:

Hanna, S. M., Brown, J. H (2004) *The practice of family therapy*, 3rd edition, Thomson, Belmont, California, USA

Gil, Eliana (2016) *Play in family therapy*. 2nd edition, Guilford Publication

The list of additional articles for weekly assignments will be available at the first class.

Recommended reading list:

Capuzzi, D., Stauffer, M.D. (2015) *Foundations of Couples, Marriage, and Family Counseling* John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Gehart, Diane R. (2017): *Mastering competencies in family therapy*. Cengage Learning

Nichols, M. P., Schwartz, R. C. (2002) *Family therapy: concepts and methods*, 5th edition, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, USA