Risk Assessment and Interviewing Skills (SW 5484)

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Course Instructors

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January 2002 - May 2002 on Wednesdays, 5:10 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Course objectives

Social Work 5484 is the fourth and final course in the Child Abuse Prevention Graduate Level II Certificate Program. It is expected that a student in this upper division class will have completed the Level I CAPS courses or be well grounded in child maltreatment knowledge through experience and or knowledge. This is an interdisciplinary course for all professionals interested in preventing child maltreatment. The focus of the course will be on building skills in child maltreatment risk/resilience assessment and best practice forensic and clinical interviewing methods. The philosophy of the course is based on ecological theory and the notion that we will miss important opportunities for change if we only focus our attention on assessing risk of child maltreatment without similarly assessing capacity or protective factors and processes. The course requires an evidence based approach to child maltreatment and thus requires students to link macro/micro practices to relevant theory, research or practice wisdom by developing innovative assessment tools and interviewing skills. It is likely that students successfully completing this course will be better able to structure child maltreatment interventions, and better able to implement effective program and policy decisions. This is a "hands on" learning course requiring active participation. In this course the student will:

• Examine contemporary child maltreatment risk assessment methods
• Compare risk assessment tools today
• Organize child maltreatment research by calibrating risk/resilience
• Construct a strength based, culturally sensitive risk assessment guide
• Understand ethnographic, strength based interviewing principles and methods in forensic and clinical settings

• Develop effective culturally competent interviewing practices relevant to child maltreatment and family violence

**Course format**

This 15 week course meets weekly on Wednesdays from 5pm - 8pm beginning January 23rd, 2002. The class format will use multi-modes of instruction including lectures, videos, overheads, role play, simulated demonstrations, videotaped interviewing, guest lectures as well as small and large group discussion.

Feedback: Students are asked to evaluate each class session. This assists the instructor in meeting student needs and problem solving classroom issues.

**Course expectations for students**

1. Attendance and participation are critical to this skill building intensive course. Attendance will be taken. Absence or tardiness will be reflected in the course participation grade.

2. Complete required readings prior to the assigned class.

3. Complete assignments on time. Late assignments will not be accepted without prior notice to the instructor.

4. Provide constructive feedback as part of an on-going assessment of the course.

**Course expectations for instructor**

1. Provide atmosphere within the classroom that is respectful and conducive to learning.

2. Organize course material in understandable manner.

3. Provide individualized assistance and consultation to students concerning course expectations, content, or assignments at their request.

4. Encourage and facilitate classroom discussion.

5. Share enthusiasm for the course subject and student learning.

6. See further expectations in this syllabus under "Creating a Supportive Learning Environment".

**Attendance**

The class meets weekly for one semester. Students are expected to attend each class. If there is an emergency, contact instructor or TA.
Readings

There is no text for this course. There is a reading packet, available at the St Paul Bookstore and on reserve at the St Paul campus library.

Course requirements

Grading is similar to most graduate courses: organization, clarity of ideas, creativity, and evidence of ability to distinguish research, method, and theory are all part of instructor consideration in assigning point value to student work. APA style is required of all written work.

About grades

The grade of "A" denotes superior performance that is both consistent and outstanding. This student demonstrates an ability to master the key course concepts and critically analyze the prevention implications. The grade "B" denotes good, steady, adequate performance with excellent understanding of key concepts and implications for prevention. The grade "C" denotes a performance that is acceptable but likely inadequate to complete CAPS certificate program. The grade "D" denotes unacceptable work and the student will not be able to complete the certificate program. The grade "F" denotes failure: an unacceptable performance and an inability to demonstrate understanding of the material. "P" (PASS) denotes a grade of A-C.

Incompletes

An Incomplete is discouraged. If an incomplete is necessary, students are required to make this request before the end of the course and a written contract with the instructor indicating completion date before end of next quarter, is mandatory. Failure to do so will result in a grade being submitted based on the work the student did for the course. Incompletes not completed by the end of the following semester automatically convert to an "F".

Grade criteria

As indicated above, the criteria for doing assignments in this course are generally those of any graduate level course. Organization, clarity of ideas, ideas supported by data, creativity, and evidence of an ability to apply course learning are some of the criteria for grading. Submission of work which is not one's own will result automatically in no credit for the course.

Grading scale:

- 93-100% . . . A
- 90-92% . . . A-
- 87-89% . . . B+
- 83-86% . . . B
Students will be graded on the following: (Points listed are possible points only.)

**Participation: 20 points**

Students are expected to attend every session and to be prepared to discuss the reading assignments or present assignments due for class. This course requires extraordinary student involvement during class and outside class. The 20 points reflects that commitment.

Three main projects:

**Risk assessment project: 40 points**

Due March 6, 2002 This is a group project hopefully for those interested in the same domain of child maltreatment or family violence. Guidelines for the project: Evidence based approach.

- Analyze of disciplinary connection to child maltreatment and/or family violence: 5 points
- Support risk and protective factor research/theory: 10 points
- Develop a 3-5 factor Risk/Resilience Assessment Tool: 15 points Present tool in a 8-10 page paper Defend your assessment tool in class presentation
- Practice applicability of the tool itself: 10 points

**Analyze an existing interviewing tool: 20 points**

Due April 10, 2002 Acquire a copy of the interviewing tool currently being used by a Twin Cities Agency that matches your area of interest.

Guidelines for the project:

- Present your tool to the class on April 10th. Bring copies of the tool for each class member (unless there are copy rights in place).
- Using the research presented in class, defend the strengths and weakness of this interviewing tool. For instance: Is this an empirically valid tool? Does is assess both risk and resilience? etc...
Written analysis of your in-class interview: 20 points

Due May 8, 2002 The majority of class time on May 1st will be spent practicing the interviewing skills we have been discussing. This assignment requires a 2-3 page paper critiquing of one of the interviews you conduct.

Creating a supportive learning environment philosophy

This class operates with the following values:

• Clear work responsibilities of students and instructor as listed in syllabus
• Instructor will prepare materials congruent with class objectives
• Students will complete class readings and assignments prior to class
• Respect for others
• Recognition and sensitivity toward diversity is required
• Creation of a safe atmosphere for open discussion and learning
• Special needs of students and faculty will be embraced and accommodated
• Instructor commitment to share enthusiasm for the subject

Perfume and scent policy

Please refrain from wearing scented personal care products. This request is made in order to accommodate those disabled by Environmental Illness. Persons who wear scented products in classrooms and other relatively small enclosures will be asked to refrain from doing so.

Disability

Students with special needs such as hearing impairment, sight impairment, need for interpreter, audiotape, alternative syllabus and course material format, physical needs, or other need which might enhance student learning, please let your instructor or TA know so that we may accommodate you. the University of Minnesota has a Disabilities Service Office at (612)625-8281 which has been helpful to others.

Course Schedule

Class one - Wednesday January 23, 2002 Introduction to risk assessment

Class one objectives:

• Introduction to the course
Syllabus and course expectations

Introduction to instructor and fellow classmates

Explore students interest in child maltreatment

Establish importance of course content

Overview of:

History of child maltreatment and family violence

Theories of child maltreatment

Review major research and theory regarding risk and protective factor contributing to the likelihood of child maltreatment and family violence

How Resiliency Theory is applied to risk assessment

Using an ecological framework for understanding child maltreatment

IPC model of assessment

Readings for class one: No readings for this session

Class two - Wednesday January 30, 2002 Risk assessment

Class two objectives:

Define Risk Assessment

Review the history of Risk Assessment in child maltreatment and family violence

Identifying the purpose of Risk Assessment tools today

Look at the ethics involved in using Risk Assessments

Understand Micro vs Macro risk assessments

Know the difference between face validity and empirically based risk assessment

Begin to look at some of the types of Risk Assessments: Child Abuse Potential

Inventory, Child Well-Being Scales and Parent Stress Inventory


**Class three - Wednesday February 6, 2002 Strengths based assessments**

Guest speaker: Jane Gilgun, University of Minnesota

Class three objectives:

- Understanding the significance of assets in models of risk assessment
- Develop guidelines for developing strength based assessment tools
- Enhancing positive outcomes by developing evidence based intervention from risk assessments


**Class four - Wednesday February 13, 2002 Cross cultural considerations when using risk assessments CPS and mandatory reporting laws**

Class four objectives:

- Cultural Competence in Assessment Tools
- Assessing suspected child maltreatment in practice
- Mandated Child Abuse reporting
- Practice assessing for child maltreatment using case examples and role plays


Class five - Wednesday February 20, 2002 CPS: What happens after you make a 'report'?

Guest speaker: Deborah Ladson from Hennepin County CPS

Class five objectives:

• Understand the role of the child protection system in child maltreatment and family violence

• Assessing risk for domestic violence

• Assessing chemical use and its impact on child maltreatment and family violence


Class six - Wednesday February 27, 2002 Community assessments

Guest speaker: Cari Michaels, Director of CAPS, University of Minnesota

Class six objectives:

• Understanding the importance of macro level assessment

• How to assess the risks and needs of a community

• Understand why community assessments are important to the child and family

• Look at the advantages of pre and post assessment

Class seven - Wednesday March 6, 2002 Class presentations

Class seven objectives:

• Present group project

• Defend thinking in class presentation

• Produce paper explaining the tool and rationale

Readings for class seven: No readings for this class

Class eight - Wednesday March 13, 2002 Linking risk assessment and interviewing

Class eight objectives:

• Review the history of interviewing in child maltreatment and family violence

• Understanding the importance of interviewing - What are the various reasons for doing interviews

• Ethical issues involved in risk assessment and interviewing children

• Understand the different uses of interviewing

• Understanding the link between assessment and interview. How interviews can enhance assessment and why they are often crucial

• Strength based interviewing


Class nine - Wednesday March 27, 2002 Interdisciplinary interviewing

Guest speaker: Barb Hiltz, Corner House
Class nine objectives:

• Understanding the role of professional practice: Interdisciplinary interviewing skills in law enforcement, social work, mental health, schools, hospitals, etc.

• Investigative vs therapeutic interviewing

• Forensic interviewing of children and adults

• Professional testimony in court


Class ten - Wednesday April 3, 2002 Interviewing children

Class ten objectives:

• Building rapport with children

• Understanding interviewing from a developmental perspective

• Qualities of effective interviewing

• Effective questioning skills

• Dealing with difficult interviews: the non-verbal child, the aggressive child, the scared child or the resistant child

• Children's memory: how they remember and suggestibility

Additional assignment for this class: Bring in 3 topics of interest to children today. Find out what's "hot" for 4-6 year olds, 7-10 year olds and 10-12 year olds.


Class eleven - Wednesday April 10, 2002 Interviewing Children

Assignment number two due: Present your interviewing tool

Class eleven objectives:

• Understand Cognitive Interviewing

• The use of drawing in child interviewing

• Cognitive Graphic Interviewing

• Expose the class to a wide variety of interviewing tools


Class twelve - Wednesday April 17, 2002 Interviewing adults and families

Mystery guest speaker: working with resistant and/or non-voluntary clients

Class twelve objectives:

• How is interviewing adults different than children or is it?

• Tips for working with specific types of families: resistant families, scared families, or voluntary vs. non-voluntary

• Deciding who to include in the interview

• Understanding some of the cautions of interviewing families

Readings for class twelve: Additional readings may be added at a later time.

Class thirteen - Wednesday, April 24, 2002 Interviewing across culture

Panel presentation?

Class thirteen objectives:

• Understanding the role race and culture play in interviewing

• Understanding the role of gender in interviewing

• Dealing with other challenges such as interviewing with the use of an interpreter

• Ethnography


Class fourteen - Wednesday, May 1, 2002 Interviewing labs

Class fourteen objectives:
• To be able to put class learning into practice
• To begin to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the interview
• To begin to look critically at your performance

Readings for class fourteen: No Readings for this session

**Class fifteen - Wednesday May 8th, 2002 Last class! Final assignment due**

Class fifteen objectives:

• Continue to practice evaluating the effectiveness of an interview
• Continue to look critically at your own interviewing skills

Readings for class fifteen: No readings for this session