Spring 2010

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Master Syllabus

Advanced Direct Practice Using Brief Solution Focused Therapy (19:910:911)

Instructor:

Office:
Mailing Address:
Office Telephone:
FAX:

I. Catalogue Course Description

In this course, students will learn to apply this strength-based, brief model of treatment to assist adults, children, couples and families to discover their own resilience and problem solving abilities. Although the focus of this course will be on clinical practice, implications for case management as well as intervening with larger systems, such as agencies and communities will also be addressed.

II. Place Of Course In Program

This course is an advanced direct practice elective. Advanced Direct Practice I is a pre or co-requisite for this course.

III. Course Objectives

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

1. Identify strengths in client and client systems that can assist in resolving problems.
2. Help clients identify and capitalize on their own strengths through various interventions including the miracle question, exception questions, pre-session change questions, etc.
3. Successfully apply this model of practice to various client groups including child welfare clients, mental health clients, clients struggling with substance abuse, clients in crisis and involuntary clients.
4. Select, apply and critically evaluate interventions in solution focused practice with various client systems including individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations and communities using client feedback, theory, and empirical literature.
5. Apply the model in a flexible manner that incorporates the clients’ diversity, cultural backgrounds and environmental constraints
6. Apply the model in a manner which is in compliance with social work values and ethics.
7. Apply solution-focused principles to strengthen environmental interventions such as advocacy, brokerage, and community practice.

**Texts**

**Required**


**Supplemental Texts**

(Copies of required chapters will be available on course website)


**IV. Course Requirements**

**Major Assignments**: There will be an examination held during the 12th class. Furthermore, each student will be required to present case material in class. Because students are asked to discuss their most difficult cases, this presentation will not be graded and all students who satisfactorily complete this exercise will receive full credit. In addition, there will also be a final paper due on the fifteenth (final) class. The final assignment is an expository paper in which the student is asked to present a case study that incorporates solution focused therapy. **All assignments for this class must reflect social work values and ethics including awareness of issues of diversity and economic and social injustice.** More specific information about assignments will be forthcoming.

Papers are due at the beginning of Class 15. Late papers will be penalized ½ a letter grade for each day they are overdue. Papers not received in the first 60
minutes of class on their due date but submitted before the end of class will be considered a full day late and will be penalized accordingly. Papers overdue by five days or more will not be accepted and will result in a “0” grade. Students are urged not to wait until the night before the due date to write the paper as personal emergencies occurring three days or less before the due date will not be considered grounds for an extension.

Professional social workers keep case records, write treatment reports for referral sources and managed care companies, correspond with judges and other professionals, develop policy, and advocate for their clients. All of these tasks require excellent writing skills. Therefore proper grammar, syntax, spelling, and appropriate referencing are expected for all assignments. You must adhere to the style guidelines of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition). Failure to do so will result in substantial deductions from your paper’s grade.

Furthermore, as graduating professional social workers, you are expected to practice in compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics. Papers that reflect egregious violations of social work values and ethics will result in course failure and will impede graduation.

Attendance is required. One point will be deducted from a student’s class participation score for each unexcused absence. Absence, early departure, or lateness to class is acceptable only for compelling reasons, such as illness. Absences related to field or work responsibilities or vacations will not be excused. Five or more absences (excused or otherwise) will result in course failure. Multiple unexcused departures or late arrivals will also result in course failure.

Absence on the day of the exam or your scheduled presentation will result in a “0” grade. No opportunities for make-ups will be given unless the student provides documentation of extenuating circumstances.

V. Grading: Grades for the class will be calculated based on the following breakdown

- Exam: 40 points
- Paper: 50 points
- Class Presentation: 5 points
- Attendance and Class Participation: 5 points
- Total: 100 points.

VI. Course Outline

Week 1: Introduction to the course

Week 2: Introduction continued


- Chapter 1: From problem solving to solution building. pp. 1-12.
- Chapter 3: Skills for not knowing. pp. 20-51
- Chapter 4: Getting started: How to pay attention to what the client wants. pp. 52-75.

**Week 3: Beyond the First Session**


- Chapter 5: How to amplify what clients want: The miracle question: pp. 76-102
- Chapter 6: Exploring for exceptions; Building on client strengths and successes. pp. 103-115.
- Chapter 7: Formulating feedback for clients. pp. 116-140.

**Week 4: Emotions in Solution-Focused Therapy: A Kindler, Gentler Approach?**


**Crisis Intervention**

Chapter 12: The solution focused approach to crisis. pp. 198-212.


**Week 5: Involuntary Clients**


**Week 6: Agency and Community Solution-Focused Practice**


**Week 7: Use of the Model with Children**


Chapter 4: Assessing your clients, Agreeing on goals: pp. 31-47.

Chapter 5: Let’s get to it! : pp. 48-67.

Chapter 6: Communicating with children on their own terms: 68-116.
Week 8: **Use of the Model with Children (cont.)**


Chapter 7: Treating children with uncommon needs: pp. 117-182

Chapter 8: Making a difference with teenagers: pp. 183-229.


**No Class—Spring Break**

Week 9: **Applying the Model to Persons with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness.**


Chapter 1: A hopeful approach to chronic and severe mental illness: pp. 3-18.


Chapter 4: Reevaluating people’s experiences: pp. 55-64.

Chapter 5: Collaborating with clients, their families and others in their environments: pp. 67-84.

Week 10: **Applying the Model to Persons with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness (cont.)**


Chapter 6: Creating a new vision of the future: pp. 87-94.

Chapter 7: Handling dangerous and violent situations: pp. 97-110.

Chapter 8: Effective and respectful treatment of “Borderline” clients: pp. 113-124.
Chapter 9: Relapse recovery and relapse prevention: pp. 127-137.

Chapter 10: General principals for working with chronic and severe mental illness: pp. 141-145.

Week 11: Applying the Model to Persons with Addictions


Chapter 7: Strategies for maintaining and enhancing progress: pp. 128-148.

Chapter 8: Mr. Meeks miracle day: pp. 149-187.

Week 12: Examination

Week 13: Applying the Model to Couples


Introduction: pp. 11-21

Chapter 1: Divorce is not the answer: pp. 25-36

Chapter 2: Illusions leading to dis-solutions: pp. 37-54


Week 14: Applying the Model to Couples (cont.)

Chapter 4: It takes one to tango: Change your marriage by changing yourself: pp. 99-116.

Chapter 5: Making a habit of it: Identifying patterns that work: pp. 117-140.


Week 15: Applying the Model to Couples (cont.) FINAL PAPER DUE


Chapter 7: Make yourself happy for a change: pp.185-201.

Chapter 8: Keeping the changes going: pp. 205-217

Chapter 9: Is working on my marriage working?: pp. 218-220

Chapter 10: Parting words: pp. 231-235

Course Wrap Up.

VII. Statement on Plagiarism and Disability

Academic Integrity.
All work submitted in a graduate course must be your own.
It is unethical and a violation of the University’s Academic Integrity Policy to present the ideas or words of another without clearly and fully identifying the source. Inadequate citations will be construed as an attempt to misrepresent the cited material as your own. Use the citation style preferred by the discipline.

Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgement is required when material from another source is stored in print, electronic, or other medium and is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one’s own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: “to paraphrase Plato’s comment…” and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one’s general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any question about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.

Plagiarism along with any and all other violations of academic integrity by graduate and professional students will normally be penalized more severely than violations by first-year undergraduate students. Since all violations of academic integrity by a graduate or professional student are potentially separable under the Academic Integrity Policy, faculty members should not adjudicate alleged academic integrity violations by graduate and professional students, but should refer such allegations to the appropriate Academic Integrity Facilitator (AIF) or to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The AIF that you should contact is Antoinette Y. Farmer, 732.932.2621. The student shall be notified in writing, by email or hand delivery, of the alleged violation and of the fact that the matter has been referred to the AIF for adjudication. This notification shall be done within 10 days of identifying the alleged violation. Once the student has been notified of the allegation, the student may not drop the course or withdraw from the school until the adjudication process is complete. A TZ or incomplete grade shall be assigned until the case is resolved. For more information regarding the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures, see: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml

Disability Accommodation.
Please Note: Any student who believes that s/he may need an accommodation in this class due to a disability should contact the designated Coordinator for the Concerns of Students with Disabilities at the School of Social Work, Assistant Dean Arlene Hunter (tel.: 732/932-7126; email: amhunter@rci.rutgers.edu), for a letter of accommodation. Students must have a letter of accommodation from the Coordinator in order to receive accommodations. Any student who has already received a letter of accommodation should contact the instructor privately to discuss implementation of his/her accommodations immediately. Failure to discuss implementation of accommodations with the instructor promptly may result in denial of your accommodations.
VIII. Bibliography


