Advanced Direct Practice Using Brief Solution Focused Therapy (19:910:530)

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 Clinical Concentration elective. Clinical Social Work I is a pre or co-requisite for this course.

SCHOOL-WIDE LEARNING GOAL

To prepare students for practice and leadership roles in the fields of social work and social welfare. This goal is operationalized using three of the nine Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) prescribed competencies. These competencies are as follows:

1. Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
3. Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
4. Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
5. Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
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 on Canvas)


IV. **Course Goals**

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1) **Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior (Competency 1) by:**
   - making ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
   - demonstrating professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;

2) **Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice (Competency 2) by**
   - applying and communicating an understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the clinical practice levels
   - employing solution-focused techniques and perspectives (such as the not knowing position) to present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences

3) **Engage with Individuals and Families (Competency 6) using a Solution-Focused Approach, by**
   - applying knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, integrated with constructivist, post-modern solution-focused theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies;
   - use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

4) **Assess Individuals, and Families (Competency 7) from a Solution-Focused perspective.** More specifically, as a result of this course, students will:
   - assess client motivation goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, solutions, and exceptions within clients and constituencies
   - select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, values and motivations of clients and constituencies.

5) **Intervene with Individuals, Families from a Solution Focused Perspective, (Competency 8)**
   More specifically, students will:
   - critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance strengths and capacities of clients and constituencies;
-use inter-professional collaboration informed by a solution-focused perspective to achieve beneficial practice outcomes; negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

6) **Evaluate Practice (Competency 9)** More specifically, students will and apply evaluation, including client self-report findings to improve practice effectiveness at the clinical levels.

Each of these goals will be evaluated using the brief papers and the final paper.

V. **Course Requirements**

Classes will consist of a combination of lecture, discussion, videotapes, and skill-building exercises. **All assignments for this class must reflect social work values and ethics including awareness of issues of diversity and economic and social injustice.**

**Brief Discussion Papers.** Students will do 3 reaction/discussion papers 2-3 pages in length (not including bibliography and title page) double spaced and answering specific questions related to the readings. You will use these papers to prepare for class discussions so bring a hard copy to class for your own use. Brief papers should refer to all of the readings assigned for the topic. **Written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Papers must be cited and referenced properly (APA style). Papers not submitted by the due date and time will receive a 0. Please submit them under “Assignments” on the Canvas Website.**

**Final Paper.** The final assignment is an expository paper in which the student is asked to present a case study that incorporates solution focused therapy. More specific information about assignments will be forthcoming.

Final papers are due at the beginning of Class 15. Late final 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 two days or less before the due date will not be considered grounds for an extension.
Penalties

Class Discussion

As this class will be seminar style, each of you will be called upon to give your impressions of the readings and to engage in class discussions. Please note that if you are called upon and it becomes clear that you have not done the reading assignment, you will lose points for class participation. If this happens three times, your final grade will be reduced one letter grade.

Use of PDA’s

All cell phones, iPads, iPhones, and laptops must be silenced and stored out-of-sight before class begins. Use of cell phones is prohibited in the classroom. Texting during class will NOT be allowed. Failure to comply with these rules (along with any rude behavior) will result in point deductions in grade for class participation and you may be asked to leave class at the instructor’s discretion.

Students are urged not to wait until the night before the due dates to write their assignments as personal emergencies occurring two days or less before they are due 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. Each of these tasks requires 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.

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 but not for vacations, outside employment or field work obligations as field work is not to interfere with class. Five or more absences (excused or otherwise) will result in course failure. Multiple unexcused departures or late arrivals will also result in course failure.

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

- Brief Papers: 30 points (10 points each)
- Final Paper: 65 points
- Attendance and Class Participation: 5 points
- Total: 100 points.

VII. **Course Outline**

**Week 1:** *Introduction to the course*  
*January 23rd*

**Week 2:** *Introduction continued*  
*(Date)*


- Chapter 1: From problem solving to solution building. pp. 1-12.
- Chapter 3: Skills for not knowing. pp. 20-58
- Chapter 4: Getting started: How to pay attention to what the client wants. pp. 59-81

**Week 3:** *Interventions*  
*(Date)*


- Chapter 5: How to amplify what clients want: The miracle question. pp. 84-108
- Chapter 6: Exploring for exceptions; Building on client strengths and successes. pp. 109-121.
- Chapter 7: Formulating feedback for clients. pp. 122-146.

**Week 4:** *Beyond the First Session*  
*(Date)*

Chapter 8: Later sessions: Finding, amplifying, and measuring client progress. pp. 147-177

Chapter 11: Evidence Base. pp. 242-254

**Week 5: Emotions in Solution-Focused Therapy: A Kinder, Gentler Approach?**


**Crisis Intervention**


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


**Week 6: Involuntary Clients**

***Brief Discussion Paper 1 Due***

1) **How does one use solution-focused therapy to work with involuntary (mandated) clients?**


Week 7: Agency and Community Solution-Focused Practice


Week 8: Use of the Model with Children

**Brief Discussion Paper 2 Due**

How can solution-focused therapy be applied to working 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.

(Date) No Class—Spring Break

Week 9: Use of the Model with Children (cont.)


- 8 -
Chapter 7: Treating children with uncommon needs. pp. 117-182

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


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

***Brief Paper Discussion Paper 3 Due

How can solution focused therapy be applied to working with persons with severe mental illnesses?


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


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

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

Week 11: (Date) 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 9: Relapse recovery and relapse prevention. pp. 127-137.

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

Week 12: Applying the Model to Persons with Addictions

(Date)


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


Reading 5: It’s a Matter of Choice (de Shazer, S. & Isebaert, L.) 328-333.

Week 13: Applying the Model to Couples

(Date)


Step 1: Establishing a Destination. pp. 15-23

Step 2: Connecting with the Couple. pp. 25-32

Step 3: Honeymoon Talk: Reviewing a Couple’s Successful Past. pp. 33-47

Step 4: The Preferred Future: Envisioning the Best Tomorrow. pp. 49-64

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

(Date)

Step 5: Scaling Toward the Preferred Future. 75-82
Follow-Up Sessions: What to Do After the First Meeting. 83-94
The Questions: Building Questions That Lead to Meaningful Responses

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

VIII. 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 Dr. Laura Curran at 732-932-8003; lacurran@ssw.rutgers.edu. 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.: 848/932-7126; 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.
IX. Bibliography


