

University of Pennsylvania
School of Social Policy and Practice
Fall, 2018 Semester
SWRK 742 Practice with At-Risk Youth

Introduction:

Social Work 742, Practice with At-Risk Youth qualifies as both a Macro and Clinical course. The goal of this course is to highlight practice issues related to work with at-risk youth. The objectives will enable students to identify the factors that create “at-risk” conditions; critically assess “best practice” interventions; and develop strengths-based perspectives with clients at the direct and macro levels. The class has three objectives; developing social workers’ clinical skills, expanding knowledge of the literature on at-risk youth, and widening the understanding of policies for youth in the US.

Self-awareness is essential in social work and allows us to recognize how our perceptions influence the delivery of services whether at the individual, family, group, organization, or community levels. When an adolescent becomes our “client, the tendency is to see the client as his/her behavior. This can generate assumptions about race, gender, social class, sexual identity, and culture. Understanding the meaning of our initial impressions requires vigilance which facilitates the “development of a professional self.” Not only must we understand what is going on with the clients we serve, but we must also be aware what is going on inside of us.

Awareness of the literature that serves as the body of knowledge for use by practitioners is also vital in social work practice. Social and behavioral sciences create knowledge through research which may reflect socially embedded perspectives that support, rather than challenge dominant cultural values. As social workers, we need to be cognizant of this possibility and develop the ability to distinguish and be sensitive to the paradigms represented. Studies on at-risk behaviors like substance abuse, school failure, violence, and delinquency must be subject to critical inquiry so that clients are not seen as confirmations of research findings but as individuals with the capacity to choose and the potential to grow.

This course is also one of the courses which can be used towards credits for the Home-School Visitor Program. To see more about this program:

<http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/programs/certificate/hsv.html>

Educational Objectives

1. Demonstrate awareness of a professional self.
2. Identify factors of at-risk behaviors.
3. Display a firm understanding of the literature on at-risk behaviors and how to find needed literature.

4. Describe multiple theoretical explanations for at-risk behaviors.
5. Articulate how race, gender, social class, culture, sexual orientation, and other factors shape direct and macro policies and programs aimed at youth-at-risk.
6. Understand underlying assumptions of interventions and their impact on macro and direct practice.
7. Articulate advocacy strategies for the social work profession within children and youth-serving settings based on strengths-based perspectives.
8. Understand clinical presentations of youth and appropriate clinical interventions based on strength based multicultural models.

Course Requirements and Expectations:

- Be prepared for class, having read and thought about the assigned readings prior to each class.
- Offer your voice to class discussions, oral assignments, and other class activities.
- Listen to and be respectful of the voices of others especially when talking about issues of race, power, privilege, and sexual identification.

Basis for evaluation of your performance:

- Quality of written assignments: all papers are to be of graduate school level, well documented, using APA format, and submitted on time. Criteria for assessing the quality of papers include: clarity, organization, content, thoroughness of literature searched, and critical analysis.
- Class participation: attendance, quality and quantity of oral participation, including discussion of readings, participation in class exercises, and oral presentations of papers.
- Demonstration of having read assigned work and having understood course concepts. This is evident in class participation and in the incorporation of concepts and references from the readings in written assignments.

Assignment Percentages

Initial writing assignment, (Due Wednesday, October 3, 2018) Critical Article Review	30%
Final writing assignment, (Due Wednesday, December 5, 2018) Critical Argument Development	30%
Class attendance, group and individual participation	25%
PowerPoint presentations of at-risk youth interventions, social advocacy/clinical practice	15%

Assignments

Assignment #1 First Writing Assignment

Due October 10th 2018

Choose a specific risk category for youth, such as substance abuse, adolescent pregnancy, school failure, delinquency, violence, mental health, and learning differences, etc. You will be expected to discuss in this paper your development as a social worker as well as the research in the risk domain you choose, within the paradigm of awareness of self and others. Take note that most journal articles on youth at-risk will feature the incidence and prevalence of the problem, the most effective interventions available, and the population researched using the interventions.

Your assignment will be completed using the following steps.

1. Find a research article discussing youth and an at-risk behavior. (The article can be policy related, educational, describe an intervention, or document the incidence of that risk domain in youth.)
2. Write a summary of the article, discussing the nature of the study, the population and the findings, in as much detail as possible. This should show your understanding of the research article in your own words. (2-3 pages)
3. Write a reflexivity statement indicating why you chose this risk domain. Indicate what strengths, skills, understanding, experience, and bias you feel you bring to your work with this population. (1 page)
4. Drawing from risk and developmental assets we discussed in class, (<http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets/lists>), choose three. Discuss either how these concepts are, or should have been addressed in the article you chose; or how they are important factors to understand in the work with the youth in your risk population. (3-4 pages)

The paper should be no longer than 8 pages double spaced, not including the title page and any references you use. The paper should be in APA format. The paper should be submitted as a hard copy. There may be a grade point deduction if papers are received after that date and time. The total paper is worth 30% of your total grade.

Included with the paper should be the article you have chosen, as an attachment, along with the paper. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me by text or by call at 215-629-6873, or by email at vegal@email.chop.edu and we will be discussing the assignment further in class.

Assignment #2 Media/ PowerPoint Presentation Assignment:

Due in classes September 19th, 2018- December 5th, 2018 (date assigned as per sign-up sheet which will also be posted on Canvas)

The purpose of this assignment is for you to think critically, identify, and present an argument for an intervention for an at-risk youth population. This will be done as an in class presentation using a PowerPoint presentation to propose an intervention, program, or policy you want to use with your population. You are also free to use any other medium to make your point but the whole presentation will be limited to 30 minutes.

The steps of the presentation are below:

- Chose an at-risk population you want to work with (this can be the same population identified in the initial writing assignment).
- Create a PowerPoint/ or other type of visual presentation to present your intervention/program/policy
- Allow time for a brief question answer session from the class.

You can also use any other media, hand outs, etc., to make your case.

The presentation should utilize any articles or reference materials to support your position. All citations should be listed in a reference section at the end of your PowerPoint slides in proper APA format. At all times please refer to University of Pennsylvania's Code of Academic Integrity in the completion of your assignments.

The PowerPoint presentation should be emailed to me along with any supporting documents (handout's, brochures etc.) on the date your presentation is scheduled.

Assignment #3 Final Writing Assignment

Due December 5th, 2018

In the second writing assignment you are to write a **Case Study** * paper describing a client (preferably an adolescent) and the presenting issues. The paper should include the macro systems that are currently involved with the client, if any. If the client is not involved with a macro system, discuss whether you think it would be beneficial. Discuss interventions currently being employed to work with the client's presenting issues. Finally, research other interventions not currently in use and analyze whether another intervention may be a better fit for the client. Eight citations are required in total, with at least three representing the recommended intervention. The paper should be 10 pages (double spaced), not including the cover page and reference page. APA format should be observed. We will discuss this assignment in class. The paper should be submitted as a hard copy on November 18, 2015. The paper is worth 30% of your total grade. At all times please refer to University of Pennsylvania's Code of Academic Integrity in the completion of your assignments.

***For examples of case studies, see :** Laser, J. A., Nicotera, N., & Jenson, J. M. (2010). Working with Adolescents: A Guide for Practitioners (Social Work Practice with Children and Families).

Grading policy:

Students will be assigned letter grades. Please refer to the MSW handbook for the School's grading policy.

Statement on Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to conduct themselves consistent with The University of Pennsylvania's Code of Academic Integrity, which presents standards regarding plagiarism, multiple submissions, and other actions. Students are expected to be familiar with the Code, which can be found at: <http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/>.

Absenteeism:

Students are expected to attend ALL class sessions. In the event of a serious health problem or emergency that precludes attendance, you should contact the instructor by text or email. In the case of observance of religious holidays, please email me of your absence.

Required Texts:

All texts are available from Amazon and some of them can either be bought or rented on that site. The texts are also available at the Penn Bookstore.

Ford, J.D. & Courtois, C. A., (2013). Treating complex traumatic stress disorders in children and adolescents: Scientific foundations and therapeutic models. New York, NY. Guilford Press.

Jenson, J.M., & Frasier, M. W. (2016). Social policy for children and families: A risk and resilience perspective, Third edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc.

Laser, J. A. & Nicotera, N., (2011). Working with adolescents: A guide for practitioners. New York, NY. Guildford Press.

And either ONE of the following:

Stevenson, J., & Stevenson, H. C. (2013). Promoting racial literacy in schools: Differences that make a difference. Teachers College Press.

Or-

Venkatesh, S. (2008). Gang leader for a day: A rogue sociologist takes to the streets. New York, NY. Penguin Group.

All Additional readings are in the syllabus and posted on Canvas.

Class Schedule, Outline, and Readings

I. Introduction of the Course/ Overview.

(1) August 29th 2018

- Welcome, introductions, course orientation
- Setting ground rules
- Discussion of class assignments

- Discussion- What does it mean to be at-risk?

II. Risk, Resilience, and Macro Practice.

- (2) September 5th** **Risk Factors and Resiliency**
 Risk factors and developmental assets.
<http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets/lists>
 Also on Canvas
- Laser & Nicotera (2011), p.3-70.

NO CLASS SEPTEMBER 12TH

- (3) September 19th** **Poverty and Child Welfare**
 Jenson & Fraser (2011), p. 22-50.
 p. 51-96.
- Dixon, John and Frolova, Yuliya (2011) “Existential
 Poverty: Welfare Dependency, Learned
 Helplessness and Psychological Capital,” Poverty &
 Public Policy: Vol. 3: Iss. 2, Article 6. *On Canvas*
- <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/youth-promise-act-summary.html>

- (4) September 26th** **Federal Policies for Children and Youth**
 Jenson & Fraser (2011), p. 97-166
 p. 201-226

III. Addressing Racial Literacy- Macro/Micro.

- (5) October 3rd** Stevenson, J., & Stevenson, H. C. (2013). Promoting racial literacy in schools: Differences that make a difference. Teachers College Press.
- OR**
 Venkatesh, S. (2008). Gang leader for a day: A rogue sociologist takes to the streets. New York, NY. Penguin Group

IV. Clinical Practice with At -Risk Youth

- (6) October 10th** **A Multisystemic Ecological Approach to Adolescents**
 Ford & Courtois (2013), p. 143-161

Laser & Nicotera (2011), p. 71-145.

Raible, J., & Irizarry, J. G. (2010). Redirecting the teacher's gaze: Teacher education, youth surveillance and the school-to-prison pipeline. *Teaching and teacher education*, 26(5), 1196-1203.

1st Writing Assignment Due

(7) October 17th

Intake and Information Gathering/ ACES

Ford & Courtois (2013), p. 79-99; p. 116-139

Laser & Nicotera, (2011). p. 146-159.

(8) October 24th

Treatment

Ford & Courtois (2013), p. 39-61

Dishion, T. J., Nelson, S. E., & Kavanagh, K. (2003). The family check-up with high-risk young adolescents: Preventing early-onset substance use by parent monitoring. *Behavior Therapy*, 34(4), 553-571.

Salloum, A., Sulkowski, M. L., Serrine, E., & Storch, E. A. (2009). Overcoming barriers to using empirically supported therapies to treat childhood anxiety disorders in social work practice. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 26(3), 259-273.

Thompson, S. J., Bender, K., Lantry, J., & Flynn, P. M. (2007). Treatment engagement: Building therapeutic alliance in home-based treatment with adolescents and their families. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 29(1-2), 39-55.

III. Youth at-Risk: Special Topics

(9) October 31st

Delinquency and Juvenile Justice

Laser & Nicotera (2011). p. 236-249.

Jenson & Fraser (2011). p. 306-352.

Steinberg, L. (2009). Adolescent development and juvenile justice. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 5, 459-485.

Ford, J. D., Chapman, J., Connor, D. F., & Cruise, K. R. (2012). Complex trauma and aggression in secure juvenile justice settings. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 39(6), 694-724.

Hatt, B. (2011). Still I rise: Youth caught between the worlds of schools and prisons. *The Urban Review*, 43(4), 476-490.

(10) November 7th

Guest Speaker on Child-Serving Systems

Debrief after presentation from guest speaker

Cont. discussion of delinquency and juvenile justice

(11) November 14th

Addiction

Jenson & Fraser (2011). p. 227-255.

Ko, C. H., Wang, P. W., Liu, T. L., Yen, C. F., Chen, C. S., & Yen, J. Y. (2014). The bidirectional associations between the family factors and internet addiction among adolescents in a prospective investigation. *Psychiatry and clinical neurosciences*.

Hawkins, J. D., Catalano, R. F., & Miller, J. Y. (1992). Risk and protective factors for alcohol and other drug problems in adolescence and early adulthood: implications for substance abuse prevention. *Psychological bulletin*, 112(1), 64.

(12) November 28th

Mental Health

Laser & Nicotera (2011). p. 200-218.

Chandra, A., & Minkovitz, C. S. (2007). Factors that

influence mental health stigma among 8th grade adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 36(6), 763-774.

Moses, T. (2010). Being treated differently: Stigma experiences with family, peers, and school staff among adolescents with mental health disorders. *Social science & medicine*, 70(7), 985-993.

Chandra, A., & Minkovitz, C. S. (2006). Stigma starts early: Gender differences in teen willingness to use mental health services. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 38(6), 754-e1.

O'Driscoll, C., Heary, C., Hennessy, E., & McKeague, L. (2012). Explicit and implicit stigma towards peers with mental health problems in childhood and adolescence. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry*, 53(10), 1054-1062.

Cropsey, K. L., Weaver, M. F., & Dupre, M. A. (2008). Predictors of involvement in the juvenile justice system among psychiatric hospitalized adolescents. *Addictive behaviors*, 33(7), 942-948.

(13) December 5th

Sexual Orientation and LGBTQ Issues

Laser & Nicotera (2011). p. 180-199.

Berlan, E. D., Corliss, H. L., Field, A. E., Goodman, E., & Bryn Austin, S. (2010). Sexual orientation and bullying among adolescents in the growing up today study. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 46(4), 366-371.

Corliss, H. L., Rosario, M., Wypij, D., Wylie, S. A., Frazier, A. L., & Austin, S. B. (2010). Sexual orientation and drug use in a longitudinal cohort study of US adolescents. *Addictive behaviors*, 35(5), 517-521.

Russell, S. T., & Toomey, R. B. (2012). Men's sexual orientation and suicide: evidence for US adolescent-specific risk. *Social Science & Medicine*, 74(4),

523-529.

Final writing assignment due: Wednesday, December 5th

(14) December 12th

Course conclusion and wrap-up