

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL POLICY and PRACTICE

M.S.W. PROGRAM

SWRK 798: CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN and FAMILIES

SPRING 2017

Caster Building

3701 Locust Walk

Office Hours:

COURSE DESCRIPTION. This course has been designed to give the students an opportunity to observe an actual interview conducted as a part of each class. In observing the interviews with a range of children and families the student will be exposed to similarities and differences in therapeutic technique depending on the nature of the presenting problem, the request of the client, and the request of the referring therapist.

Each class will begin with an interview. A clinician from the agency will invite a client to the consultation. All the clients will be currently in treatment at Hall Mercer Community Mental Health Center (CMHC). The clinician will accompany the client to the interview and will sit in the interview room during the consultation. The clinician will meet with the instructor and the class 30 minutes prior to the interview to review the nature of the problem, the work already done, and the anticipated goal of the consultation. The clinician will also meet with the instructor and class after the conclusion of the interview.

The second half of each class will be devoted to a discussion and explication of the readings. The readings will highlight specific aspects of interviewing children and families as developed and practiced

by several different authors from different schools of child and family therapy. A range of theoretical and practice methods will be explored in the readings as each interview will illustrate a range of theoretical and practice methods hopefully integrated into a coherent whole. The readings will assume a certain level of development on the part of the student. Further readings may be recommended if the student requests a more detailed explication of a particular method.

This course will be conducted at Hall Mercer Community Mental Health Center. This is a well-established and highly respected public clinic located at 8th and Spruce in Philadelphia. The out-patient department was the first Community Mental Health Center to be opened in Philadelphia dating to the 1960's. Hall Mercer has a solid program of services to children and families. The administration has welcomed the presence of this class into its out-patient program. The children and families to be interviewed will be selected from the current practice of the clinical staff. The children and families will be informed of the unique nature of this consultation service and will be invited to meet the members of the class at the beginning and end of

each session. It is frequent that families elect to meet and greet the observers in this type of setting. Students will be expected to greet the client if the client elects to meet the observers.

This course will be a very thorough grounding in meeting with children and families, developing a workable connection, establishing frameworks for understanding, setting priority and pacing, and fashioning interventions. The interviews, readings, films, and lecture/discussion are well crafted to illustrate the processes involved in crafting an interview.

AUDIOVISUALS

A select group of films have been transferred to CD/DVD in order to be viewed on occasion during the class hours. These films include "The Hillcrest Series"; this is a series of four interviews in which a family was interviewed on four separate occasions over the space of a few months in Philadelphia. The family was struggling with "blending" challenges, i.e., each parent bringing children into a newly formed family. The interviewers were Nathan Ackerman, Carl Whitaker, Don Jackson and Murray Bowen. Each session contains a 30 minute interview with the family and the interviewer followed by a 10 minute discussion between the interviewer and the referring psychiatrist.

A similar series was developed when Salvador Minuchin and Carl Whitaker each interviewed the same family on the same day. The family in this series had an adolescent son who was manifesting oppositional behavior.

READINGS

The readings are selected from a range of author practitioners. Some of the authors practice in a psychodynamic model which focuses on the intrapsychic and interpersonal life of the child or young

person. Other authors have a decidedly systemic orientation highlighting the interactive process in the family and the search for patterns in the family. Each article in the readings has maintained its significance in the field of child and family therapy. Each author has maintained recognizable stature in the field. The student will notice that the dates of publications of the readings span the timeframe from the 1937 to 2004. All readings are primary sources.

JANUARY 18: Greenspan, Stanley, et al. (1980). The Course of Life, Vol. II. "A Developmental Approach to Systematic Personality Assessment: Illustrated with the case of a six year old boy." National Institute of Mental Health.

JANUARY 25: Stierlin, Helm, et al. (1980). The First Interview with the Family. "Why the Whole Family?". pp. 5-34 + pp. 66-85. Bruner Mazel.

FEBRUARY 1: Minuchin, Salvador. (1974). Families and Family Therapy. "Structural Family Therapy". pp. 1-15 + pp. 46-66. Harvard University Press.

Hillcrest Series #1.

FEBRUARY 8: Andolfi, Maurizio. (1979) Family Therapy. "Foundations of The Therapeutic System." pp. 1-70. Plenum Press.

Hillcrest Series #2

FEBRUARY 15: Klein, Melanie. (1937). The Psychoanalysis of Children. "The Significance of Anxiety Situations in the Development of the Ego." pp. 245-257. Hogarth Press.

Freud, Anna (1965) Normality and Pathology in Childhood. "The Psychoanalytic View of Childhood: Long Distance and Close-Up. pp. 3-25. International Universities Press.

Hillcrest Series #3

February 22: Boscolo, Luigi and Bertrando, Paolo. (1996). Systemic Therapy with Individuals. "Working Systemically." pp.41-91. Karnac Books.

Hillcrest Series #4

March 1: Minuchin, Salvador and Fishman, Charles. (1981). Family Therapy Techniques. "Boundaries." pp. 146-190. Harvard University Press.

March 15: Haley, Jay and Hoffman, Lynn. (1970). Techniques of Family Therapy. "A Family of Angels; an Interview with Virginia Satir." pp. 97-173. Basic Books.

March 22: Boscolo, Luigi and Bertrando, Paolo. (1993). The Times of Time: A new Perspective on Systemic Therapy and Consultation. "Times in Consultation and Therapy" pp.105-136. W.W. Norton.

March 29: GUEST; JORGE COLAPINTO, Lic. With more than 40 years of experience working in family therapy, Jorge will join our class for one afternoon and share his ideas about the evolving state of family consultation and the training of clinicians. He has an international reputation as a trainer and theorist. He has authored several books on family therapy including two volumes coauthored with Salvador Minuchin. An engaging, brilliant and humorous person who manifests clear passion for working with children and families, Jorge will provide a memorable learning experience. No interview will be scheduled for this class meeting.

APRIL 5: "A Family with Whitaker and Minuchin, PART I"

APRIL 12: "A Family with Whitaker and Minuchin, PART II"

APRIL 19: Bird, Johnella. (2004). Talk That Sings. "Working with Children, Young People and Families." pp. 289-347. Edge Press.

APRIL26: SUMMARY/DISCUSSION

EXPECTATIONS:

Three written assignments will be completed during the semester. In each of these the student will be invited to write a reflection on the readings and the recent clinical scenarios. It is anticipated that the student will think about the ideas presented in the readings and develop a synthesis of them. Each paper will be approximately 3-4 pages in length.

In addition to the three reflection papers a final paper 8-10 pages in length will be required. This paper will invite the student to summarize their reactions to the readings, class discussions, and the observed interviews. It is anticipated that the student will be able to formulate and articulate ideas about conducting an interview with a child and family.

This course is more a laboratory/seminar than a didactic/lecture style gathering. Therefore participation in the discussions about the clients, interviews, and readings will be valued.