Models of Couple and Family Therapy and Skills Development

Instructor:
Gail Palmer
E-mail: gailpalmer53@hotmail.com

Course Class Room: TBA
Voice mail: 722-5122 ex. 224
Voice mail: 722-5122 ex. 301
Office Hours: Instructor will be available after each class. Students are encouraged to make an appointment to insure availability.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Models of social work practice with couple and family relationships as the focus of intervention and their practical application in social work settings will be presented. Students will have an opportunity to begin to explore the role of the couple and family therapist and practice interviewing techniques and intervention skills through exercises and group work. Students will become familiar with attachment theory as a current framework for understanding relationships and Emotionally Focused Therapy interventions directed toward nurturance and creating secure bonds. Students will be able to compare and contrast EFT with other approaches that focus on separateness, self-sufficiency, autonomy and power. Course material will be presented in lecture form with demonstrations of therapy models through the use of videotapes, role-play, and transcripts of sessions.

Learning Objectives:

1. Gain an overview of family therapy models from the past and the development of the field over the last several decades
2. Obtain an understanding of distressed and nondistressed relationships from an attachment perspective
3. Become skilled in conducting an assessment and building a therapeutic alliance and beginning therapy with a couple or a family.
4. Secure a knowledge base of Emotionally Focused Therapy.

COURSE TEXT
There are two REQUIRED texts for the course available for purchase at Mother Tongue Books at 1067 Bank Street (phone: 730-2346). Mother Tongue is just off Sunnyside on Bank.


Recommended Course Readings
BOOKS

COURSE OUTLINE MODELS OF FAMILY THERAPY AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Week #1 Sept. 6

Introduction to Models of Family Therapy Course: Format and overview. Review of course requirements
Recommended Readings

Week #2 Sept 13

The Evolution of Working with Families: Family Therapy Pioneers
Systems Theory Review
Specific Focus: Structural Approach: Salvador Minuchin
Required Readings
Recommended Readings

Week # 3 Sept. 20
Communication Theory: Experiential Approach: Virginia Satir


Week #4 September 27
Fundamental Concepts of Family Therapy and Introduction to Attachment Theory
Nichols explains that family therapy involves thinking about human behaviour in a way that is fundamentally organized by interpersonal context. It is important that family therapists have a means to understand relationships. Attachment theory is a means to understand couple and family relationships that is increasingly influencing the family therapy world. This class will provide an overview of John Bowlby’s work including the development of working models of self and other, the definition of a secure attachment, and secure and insecure attachment styles and their influence on family relationships.

Required Readings

Recommended Readings

Week #5 Oct. 4
Understanding Distressed & Non-distressed Relationships

What is couple distress and the impact of distress on individual functioning. Negative & positive interactional patterns: John Gottman’s research

Required Readings

Week#6 Oct 11- Guest Speaker- Philip Dominque, Phd
Emotion Theory

Recommended Readings
Gottman, John M. (1999) The Marriage Clinic. A Scientifically Based Marital Therapy. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Chapter 2 Repair and the Core Triad of Balance (pp.31-86) Chapter 3 The Sound Marital House, A Theory of Marriage (pp.87-110)

Week #7 Oct. 18 Guest Speaker- Sexuality in Couple Relationships Nancy Smith, RSW

Week 8 Oct. 25
Emotionally Focused Couple and Family Therapy
  ○ Overview & Theory of Change   Alliance Building ○Assessment: Defining the Dance ○ When not to proceed ○ Setting the course for therapy

Required Readings

Recommended
Week 9  Nov. 1
Stage One in EFT: Cycle De-escalation
Therapeutic tasks and Interventions (Role-play)
Required Reading
Recommended Readings

Week 10 Nov. 8
Stage 2 in EFT: Change Events in Family Therapy: Withdrawer re-engagement, Blamer softening Sharing attachment needs (Role Play)
Required Reading

Week 11 Nov. 15 Class Group Presentations

Week 12 Nov. 22 Emotionally Focused Family Therapy
Application of EFT to the family context with emphasis on the developmental and transitional challenges (e.g. blended families) facing families today.
Required Reading
Recommended Reading
Week 13 Nov 29

Trauma and Relationship Therapy
- The impact of childhood trauma (physical, sexual, emotional abuse and extreme neglect) on relationships
- Working with trauma survivors and their families through strengthening the attachment bonds.

Required Readings

Assignments and Grading:

Attachment Assessment Assignment: 20% Due October 6, 2011

Group Presentation OR Theory/ Practice Paper: 40% Due November 15 ,2012

Reflection Paper: 30% Due November 29/2012

Class Participation: 10%

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIONS:
Late papers will be deducted 5% for every day late unless instructor has given prior approval. Assignments will be submitted in class unless the instructor advises otherwise. If a student is unable to submit in class, they may deposit assignments in the “drop-box” located on the side door of room 509 Dunton Tower.

1. Assessment Instrument Assignment 20% Due Oct. 6, 2012

A 1-2 page paper outlining your response to completing a personal attachment questionnaire, including how useful these instruments might be
in clinical practice. The focus for the paper is on the process of gathering an attachment history and completing the assessment as opposed to the content of the history. Students are to reflect on their own experience and consider the value of this exercise for clients and how the instrument would operationalize in clinical practice.

2. Group Presentation or Research Paper 40%

Students can decide between a group presentation OR a major paper as their major piece of work for the class. Both assignments will be due November 15, 2012.

Group Presentation:

Groups will consist of maximum 3 students for a presentation on a couple or maximum 4 students for a presentation on a family. Groups need to inform instructor of their group topic by September 16, 2010.

Each group will prepare a presentation that includes:

A description of a couple/family experiencing a particular problem or life stage issue. For example it may be a blended family, single parent family, adolescent issues, chronic illness, birth of a first child, death of a family member, sexual or physical abuse or addiction. This description is to include family composition, socio-economic factors, presenting problem and any pertinent history. Provide handouts with family background and pertinent information. Following the description, the group will do a role-play of 15 minutes illustrating the first session and defining the problem. The role-play may live or video-taped. One student will act as therapist, others will role-play family members. Your goal will be to role-play Stage One EFT interventions with the couple/family. Following the role-play the group will identify why their role-play was a Stage One example and highlight the EFT interventions used. The group will then present their plan for future intervention, including how Stage 2 might progress and possible obstacles to therapy. Finally, the group will facilitate a class discussion and include a debriefing of the role-play regarding how they felt in their respective roles and what they have learned from this experience. Encourage questions and discussion from the class.

OR

Theory/Practice Paper 40% Due November 15, 2012
Written paper, 10-12 pages (Double Spaced, 12 Font):

Part 1:
A description of a couple/family experiencing a particular problem or life stage issue. For example it may be a blended family, single parent family, adolescent issues, chronic illness, birth of a first child, death of a family member, sexual or physical abuse or addiction. This description is to include family composition, socio-economic factors, presenting problem and any pertinent history including diversity factors, strengths and vulnerabilities.

The task for the paper is to provide a case study of this couple/family using Emotionally Focused Therapy. As an alternative, students may choose a family therapy model of their choice, upon consultation with the professor.

Part 2:
Place yourself as the EFT family/couple therapist presenting your conceptualization of the family/couple, goals for therapy and your interventions including both Stage 1 and Stage 2 work. You need to describe the therapy process from beginning with the assessment, through the work phase of therapy and ending with consolidation and termination.

Describe the couple’s presentation of why they are coming for therapy including, “Why now?” Describe your appreciation of the family/couple distress including how they interact in the session.

Describe how you as the couple/family therapist are working and to illustrate your interventions, a piece of transcript should be included, with the EFT interventions identified and labelled.

Briefly outline the model of EFT. Support your interventions with reference to the model. Include one question or inquiry you would like to discuss with your supervisor, as a possible stuck place for the family/couple and/or for you as a beginning EFT therapist. Include a description of your learning in completing this case study.

Include at least 5 references.
All questions regarding the paper need to be directed to Gail Palmer

Due: Nov. 10, 2011

Final reflection paper: 30 % Due November 29, 2012

Submit a two-page summary of what you have learnt in this class, including new insights, information or personal reflections.

Class and group participation: 10%
Participation means active attendance at class including bringing questions, readings, stories. Your ideas, questions, stories and answers are important for everyone else. When it comes to relationship issues, we all have some experience. Points are given for quality, not quantity of participation.

Some Suggestions for Written Work
- Good organization. A good introduction provides an outline of the paper’s objectives and organization. For major papers a clear organization and identification of constituent parts can be achieved through use of headings and subheadings. Provide guideposts for the reader.
- A clear focus. Provide a clear organization and a logical progression from issue to issue. The ability to develop a clear focus demands thorough background research.
- Clear expression and composition. Good grammar and composition are essential for clear thinking.
- Originality and creative expression. Take risks, and communicate commitment to the topic.
- Relevant to practice. Demonstrate the ways that the theory you address aids direct intervention.
- Appropriate and accurate use of course materials.

- Supplemental research. Demonstrate use of resources from outside the course. This is a graduate course. The hallmark of scholarly work is demonstrated familiarity with the literature comprising a field. This can only be communicated through use of references.
- Paper is expected to follow the style set out in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (3rd or later edition).

Style
Proper spelling is essential. If you use a computerized word processor use the spelling check, if not use the dictionary.
Clear communication of your ideas requires proper sentence structure. If your sentences are not clear your ideas will not be clear.
1. Use active sentences with clear subject/predicate structures. Keep sentences short.
2. Do not use passive verb forms, run on sentences, or convoluted grammar. 3. It is acceptable to use first person sentence structure, e.g., I apprehended the
child... 4. Proper paragraph structure is essential. One sentence is rarely a paragraph. A paragraph is a group of sentences related to an argument or a topic. 5. Make an appointment with the instructor during office hours if you need help with any assigned work.

Criteria for Specific Letter Grades

An “A+” is assigned only for work of the highest quality that is work, which is publishable. Original research, conceptual originality, and scrupulous editing mark such work. The work competently addresses complex conceptual materials significantly beyond those addressed in the course materials. In its overall design it is creative and expressive. It demonstrates a sophisticated analysis and an ability to integrate and synthesize others' ideas and your own. It is written in the active voice attributing ideas to the appropriate source, making clear which are your own ideas, and which are ideas developed by others. It is properly footnoted. Where appropriate it demonstrates links between theory and practice and incorporates your own experience, feelings, ideas and opinions.

An “A” is assigned for high quality work that with minor corrections in both format and content could be published. The overall design of the work is solid, demonstrating an excellent comprehension and presentation of complex conceptual materials. The work is characterized by solid research and analysis beyond course materials. It demonstrates creativity and originality in its approach to the material covered in the assignment.

An “A-” is assigned for high quality work that demonstrates an engagement with complex conceptual materials and original thinking that goes beyond course materials. It may present minor editing errors.

An “B+” is assigned for good work that demonstrates a competent comprehension of materials. It shows an ability to analyse and well as describe the subject matter. It includes original ideas of your own and is well written although it may present minor editing and content errors.

A “B” grade is assigned for good work that in the main competently represents concepts encountered in the course. It does a good job of meeting all the criteria of the assignment. In general it is well written though with minor editing and content errors.

A “B-” grade is assigned for good work that in the main represents concepts encountered in the course, while containing only minor omissions, misunderstandings, or confusions. It does a good job of meeting all criteria of the assignment. In general it is acceptably written with minor editing and content errors. It will often be marked by a less rigorous engagement with scholarly materials.
A “C+” is assigned for work that is flawed in both content and style. Although the work may be “average at an undergraduate level it is not adequate as graduate work. It is usually marred by a failure to engage other scholarly material with sufficient rigour. A course grade below B- cannot be counted for credit towards the M.S.W. in the School of Social Work.

Grades below “C+” will be assigned for particularly problematic work. All assignments must be completed and submitted to the instructor to pass the course. All assignments for both sections of the course must receive a minimum C+ grade to pass the course.

Class Participation
Although no grade is given out for participation, it is expected that students will attend all classes. It is also recognised that from time to time family responsibilities, illness, and major commitments may interfere with a student’s ability to attend class. It is expected that students will e-mail or voice mail the instructor to indicate that they will unable to attend class.

Please see the attached document from the Paul Menton Centre

References and Plagiarism
A judicious use of quoted material is encouraged. The paper is to demonstrate your thinking, not the thinking of other authors. Quotes are used either as examples of an argument with which you disagree or to support arguments you make in your own words. An excessive use of quoted materials may at best result in the assignment of a low grade and at worst it may be considered to be a form of plagiarism. All quoted material must be referenced in the list of references at the end of the paper. Please see the attached document on Instructional Offences.

Deadlines
Deadlines will not be extended without prior negotiation with the instructor, usually requiring medical or other documentation. In the event that an extension has not been negotiated prior to the deadline, the instructor reserves the right to reduce the grade for work submitted after the deadline. Such work will be reduced by the equivalent of one grade point during the first week and by an additional grade point for each additional week.

Grade Appeals
Considerable time and care is given to marking assignments. If you are concerned about a mark please contact the instructor, who will then arrange an appointment to discuss the concerns. You are required to submit in writing prior to the meeting an explanation of why you believe the grade should be changed. Should the instructor not change the grade you have access to the appeals procedure which provides an opportunity for a neutral third party to make an
independent evaluation of your work. The appeals procedure can result in a lower mark than that assigned by the course instructor as the reviewer’s mark prevails.