Course Description

This course teaches practice models and methods of intervention for effective social work practice in mental health care, including the promotion of mental health, the prevention of mental illnesses, and the delivery of psychosocial treatments and rehabilitation services. A major focus is on enabling individuals with mental health problems to increase their functioning in the least restrictive environments, with the least amount of ongoing professional intervention, so these individuals maximize their success and satisfaction. This course has a specific emphasis on services to individuals who suffer from severe and persistent mental illness, substance abuse in conjunction with mental illness (dual-diagnosis population) and/or who are recovering from the effects of severe traumatic events. Interventions relevant to these conditions help individuals develop/restore their skills and empower them to modify their environments. A second major focus is on culturally competent and gender-specific interventions and special issues for groups who have been subject to oppression. Privilege and social justice concerns will be a major emphasis of the course. Mental health disparities will be considered in relation to diagnosis, treatment options and case disposition within the mental health system.

Course Content

The course will teach assessment of major, severe mental illnesses and substance abuse problems with a review of research literature looking at etiology, prevalence, efficacy of treatment interventions, outcomes of psychosocial interventions. Ethical issues and values central to social work will be stressed in all classes. Systemic interventions across the micro-messo-macro contextual nexus will be highlighted as well as rehabilitation techniques. Major concepts of empowerment, stigma, recovery will be addressed. The various models of intervention (i.e. self-help, twelve-step, cognitive-behavioral, biological, psychoeducational, family systems, etc.) will be taught with regards to their differential application. Policy implications of managed care and community mental health programs will be addressed as they relate to practice concerns. Knowledge of the relationship between micro-messo-macro system interventions in mental health including methods for resource acquisition and system change as well as effective advocacy skills will be stressed. Knowledge of the relationship between mental health and other social systems (e.g. health, educational, social services, etc.) and of methods to improve cooperation and coordination including interdisciplinary teamwork, case conferences,
interagency collaboration will be highlighted. Model programs will be introduced as examples of excellent care and practice. Poverty and homelessness will be stressed as important mental health concerns for social work practice. The course will emphasize a strengths-based perspective and how to integrate biological/medical concepts with social work practice. Gender, race, class and ethnicity will be integrated into all discussions of assessment and practice issues.

Course Objectives

Students who complete this course will be able to:

1. Assess the risks and strengths of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and/or communities for the purposes of promoting mental health, early intervention, treatment, and continuing service, with an emphasis on problems faced by people who suffer from severe and persistent mental illness, substance abuse, and/or who are recovering from the effects of severe traumatic events.

2. Plan or plan and conduct culturally competent, gender-specific individual, family, group, organizational, and community-based capacity building and preventive interventions.

3. Identify and demonstrate understanding of the many components of the mental health system as team member, advocate, broker, community organizer, and program planner, in order to interact productively with the many components of the mental health system.

4. Build partnerships with key neighborhood and self-help organizations and institutions for the purpose of mental health promotion and disease prevention.

5. Incorporate social work values and ethical standards in practice in mental health.

6. Plan or plan and engage in advocacy at both micro and macro levels to help individuals overcome oppression, discrimination, and other barriers to access and quality of mental health services.

Course Design

This course focuses on practice models, challenges and critical perspectives for practice in mental health care, including the culturally competent promotion of mental health care; the prevention/assessment/treatment of mental illness, and interdisciplinary approaches to psychosocial treatment and rehabilitation services. A major focus will be on the empowerment of individuals with mental health problems to increase their functioning in the least restrictive settings with the least amount of ongoing professional intervention. This course has a specific emphasis on acquiring an understanding of the dilemmas faced by people who suffer from severe and persistent mental illnesses and the consequences of mental illnesses diagnoses, psychiatric treatments and social stigma. We will focus on problems related to substance abuse, and the psychological aftermath of traumatic experience. Using culture, race, class, privilege and gender as critical lenses, we will review multiple perspectives (client/consumer, the family member, the professional) on the role of psychiatric perspectives in the conceptualizing and structuring of the foundations for mental health services and the role of social work in the provision of these services. Our readings will highlight first person accounts that describe experiences of the onset and development of mental disorders as well as the individuals’ complex experiences with the mental health system and mental health professional.
Relationship to Four Curricular Themes

- **Social Science and Behavioral Research** - is presented throughout the course and includes findings from evaluation studies and intervention research in social work, psychiatry, psychology, anthropology, and sociology.

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** - are integrated throughout the course especially in view of the fact that mental health problems are experienced very differently in various cultures, each of which has its own indigenous responses to healing. In addition, the stresses associated with mental health problems and access to appropriate services are differentially affected by gender, poverty, race/ethnicity and sexual orientation. The students must be aware of these issues and helped to develop culturally competent and gender-specific interventions and interventions to overcome oppression and discrimination as barriers to access to and quality of care.

- **Social Justice Issues** - have special relevance to the processes of psychosocial rehabilitation. Persons with psychiatric disabilities are often discriminated against with respect to access to education, employment, housing, and financial assistance. Health insurance plans often discriminate against persons with mental as opposed to physical disabilities. Social justice issues are often seen with respect to the processes of commitment, the rights of people in mental institutions, the rights to treatment (such as in the criminal justice system), access to attorneys, and the determination of competence to stand trial or when mental illness is offered as a defense in a criminal proceeding. The student will learn about these issues in the course as well as the role of social work in fighting for these and other rights.

- **Promotion/Prevention/Treatment/Rehabilitation** - are addressed throughout the course. Mental disabilities often occur or are exacerbated as a result of stressful environmental conditions and the ways of seeking changes in these conditions or preventing them will be stressed.

Relationship to Social Work Ethics and Values

Virtually every topic of this course is related to issues of social work values and ethics, and these issues will be dealt with in this course. Examples of these issues are priorities assigned to various services and populations by mental health agencies and the role of social workers in molding these priorities, recognition of the right of self determination of consumers of mental health services, the principle of the utilization of the least restrictive environments for treatment of mental disorders, the values placed on preventive services, an understanding of the responsibility of workers to strive for less stressful environments in relationship to preventing mental problems, the creation of community respect for individuals in the community whose behavior, while lawful, departs from community norms, and promoting community awareness of the “not in my back yard” phenomenon.
Class Format

The objectives of the course will be pursued through readings, lectures, class discussions, small group exercises, class activities, individual and group projects, guest speakers, and written assignments.

Course Materials

There are no required texts. Course materials will draw heavily from peer reviewed scientific journals and evidence-based treatment manuals that are freely available. Course materials will be provided via CTOOLS and the reserve shelf at the SSW Library. Information and instruction on how to use CTOOLS is provided by the university (http://ctools.umich.edu/portal). Therefore, no class time will be devoted to instruction on how to use this system.

Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

All academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and misrepresentation will be treated seriously. Plagiarism includes the following: copying and pasting texts from articles, books, the web, newspapers, etc., the use of another student’s work and claiming it as your own, using work or a paper that you wrote for another class or another purpose. Please consult your Student’s Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program (online) for further information.

Writing Assistance

For further assistance with writing, you may access Sweetland Writing Center at University of Michigan: 1139 Angell Hall, 435 South State Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48109. Phone: 734-764-0429.

Accommodation for Disability

If at any time during the semester you may need an accommodation for any type of disability (physical, mental or learning, temporary as well as chronic), please let me know so that we can discuss options that will assist you to complete the course responsibilities. Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) can be contacted by phone at 734-763-3000.
Class Schedule

- Class 1 (May 11, 2009): Introductions & Ethics
- Class 2 (May 18, 2009): Evidence-based Practice & Social Stressors
- Class 3 (May 25, 2009): MI & Dual/Differential Diagnosis/Assessment/Treatment Planning
- Class 4 (June 1, 2009): Cultural Diversity and Competency
- Class 5 (June 8, 2009): Film(s) and Small Group Work
- Class 6 (June 15, 2009): Substance use disorders
- Class 7 (June 22, 2009): Mood & Anxiety disorders (Depression/Bipolar/Anxiety) & CBT
- Class 8 (June 29, 2009): Personality Disorders & DBT
- Class 9 (July 6, 2009): Schizophrenia & Care-management
- Class 12 (July 27, 2009): Final Paper, Closure, Evaluations

Assignments & Evaluation (Details for assignments are available on CTOOLS)

- Peer Facilitated Class Discussion, with ctools postings each week on readings (15 points)
- Group Project/Presentation: Agency Change Initiative/Topical Focus (25 points) – Due Class 6-9
- Class Preparation and Participation, with ctools postings each week on readings (10 Points)
- Critical Summary: Choice of books (15 points) – Due by June 29, 2010
- Final Paper: Case Study Intervention/Treatment Plan (35 points)

Attendance Policy
Students are free to miss one class for any reason (e.g. personal, sick, religious holidays) without detriment to their grade. Students who miss more than one class will receive a full letter grade reduction. Two or more missed classes may result in a non-passing grade. Students who will miss more than one class due to religious holidays must make arrangements with the instructor at the beginning of the course to avoid a grade penalization.

Final Grade
The final grade for this course will be based on the following rating scheme:

- 98-100 A+
- 94-97 A
- 90-93 A-
- 87-89 B+
- 84-86 B
- 80-83 B-
- 77-79 C+
- 74-76 C
- 70-73 C-
- ≤ 69 D+ and lower