Interpersonal Practice for Issues of Concern for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered People

Social Work Course # 707: Fall, 2002, 2816 SWB. Thursdays 2-5

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I use e-mail frequently and find it a quick way to get back to students about specific questions. I check e-mail every day that I am on campus. I will also be available for occasional scheduled 1:1 consultation either in person or on the WWW. Please do not call me at home, rather leave a message on my office machine.

Course Description
This course addresses issues of concern in interpersonal practice clients that identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered or Non Straight (LGBTNS). This course builds on basic IP skills and knowledge of, primarily, individual therapy. Issues which are of greater concern, or for which services and in some cases, knowledge are lacking, for these groups, include the development of sexual identity, coming out, social stigma, substance abuse, HIV and AIDS, the interaction of discrimination due to gender and/or ethnicity with the discrimination due to sexual orientation, violence within relationships and violence against these groups, discrimination on the basis of orientation, suicide, family development and parenting, passing and community interaction, and policy. The course tightly focuses on skills needed for working with these specific issues.

Course Design
Methods of learning will include: lecture, discussion, debate, guest speakers, exercises and journalizing.

Course Content
Content of this course will include basis statistics and current up to date knowledge about how each of the issues above, as well as others, is of special concern to LGBTNS clients. Issues of the processes of treatment will be reviewed in light of the information covered. For example, assessment looks different when we change the personal pronouns in our questions.
and use the information presented in the course. Knowledge of the coming out process would lead a clinician assessing a suicidal adolescent to understand that the issue of sexual identity must be discussed as a possible exacerbating factor. The processes of advertising, altering accessibility and working within religious and other communities with LGBTNS clients will be discussed. Even treatment evaluation is altered due to special concerns about outing a client within a given agency.

Ethical considerations of practice with LGBTNS clients will also be thoroughly reviewed throughout the course (e.g., caution about outing clients in a group supervision session or seeing clients in different context in a small community). Students will also have many opportunities to review their own biases and prejudices about sexual orientation in assignments and discussions.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

I. Comprehend and critically analyze theories regarding the development of sexual identity.

II. Articulate the basic areas of concerns covered by the course and the points of special relevancy for LGBTNS clients (e.g., suicide, substance abuse).

III. Demonstrate sound and sensitive therapy skills for some of the issues in the course.

IV. Articulate social work ethical values regarding practice with LGBTNS clients.

V. Describe the impact of characteristics of economic class, culture, ethnicity, gender, disability status, religion, and age on LGBTNS clients.

VI. Write about and summarily describe the latest research and detailed therapy methods for some of the issues described in the course.

VII. Address questions, concerns and biases regarding sexual orientation’s intersection with the issues in the course when working with clients (e.g., being able to discriminate between issues that are related to sexual orientation and those that are not).

Curricular Themes
A. Multiculturalism and Diversity: Students will learn and be able to discuss and exemplify sensitivity to, in role play, the impact that gender, race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, education, geography (rural vs. urban) and other variables may have on LGBTNS clients and intersect with the primary issues discussed in the course.
B. **Social Change and Social Justice:** Social Workers must be able to empower, interpret actions, take and be aware of intersections of therapy issues and actions towards social justice. In working with LGBTNS clients, students will learn that they may be working toward social change and improvement of social justice in an agency or community. The impact of such work will be discussed in class. Students will also learn about the fight for social justice that this client population has made and is making. Finally students will discuss how to empower themselves and others as well as victims of social injustice to work against oppression.

C. **Promotion and Prevention:** Students will learn skills for health and mental health promotion and prevention of problems, particularly in dealing with the issues of substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, sexual identity development and discrimination.

D. **Social Science:** The readings for this course are extensive and evaluation of the current state of science is an integral part of understanding the research and methodology constraints and limits for LGBTNS issues and treatment concerns. Students will learn about and analyze the strength of science in the areas the course covers. In addition, evaluation of treatment will be reviewed and special issues of evaluating therapy with LGBTNS clients will be emphasized.

**Relationship of this course to Social Work Ethics and Values**
This course is an example of the value social work places on diversity and work with oppressed populations. NASW ethics will be reviewed in relationship to working with LGBT clients and evaluation of practice. These ethics will be analyzed for potential weaknesses and misuse as well as for use as guides to practice. The struggle of LGBTNS clients to be recognized as a client population and the struggles of practitioners and researchers working with these issues will also be discussed.

**Instructor Responsibilities**
The instructor will facilitate the course objectives by completing the following tasks.

1. Collaboration with the students as responsible adult learners regarding the course process, structure and content.

2. Provision of USEFUL and constructive feedback for student's work, especially for any skill building effort.

3. Struggle with students towards the goal of becoming a group of critical thinkers regarding practice with LGBT individuals.

4. Provision and maintenance of a safe forum for discussion and learning.
5. Availability for and responsiveness to student questions and regular student evaluation and feedback.

**Student Responsibilities**
1. Be on time and prepared with an integrative concept from readings and assignments aimed at responding to the week's focus questions.

2. Function as a team member in the following areas:
   ♦ preparation
   ♦ appropriate treatment of others and safe behavior in the classroom

3. Complete class assignments, as outlined below, in a timely, heuristic and high quality fashion.

* I see each student as responsible for his/her learning experience. We, as a team and the group as a whole must contribute to the experience, but the student is ultimately responsible for the depth, challenge and enjoyment of learning. **If you are interested in discussing alternate or additional assignments, readings, requirements and the like, I welcome you to speak with me about possibilities or ideas that you may have.** This is unlikely to lessen one's work load, but may fit your needs and interests best.

**Student Assignments Overview**
20% Contribute to class. Attendance and preparation are critical

45% Individualized final assignment.
   (5%) One page description of the final assignment: OCTOBER 7
   (5%) First draft of the final assignment: NOVEMBER 4
   (35%) Final Assignment: DECEMBER 9

35% Class journals

details
20% Contribute to the class seminar
This part of your grade will be evaluated by the instructor. Attend and be active in lectures and discussion. Read the assigned readings and be prepared to discuss them and to role play skills.

Be prepared to answer questions by the instructor. Be prepared to ask **intelligent and sensitive** questions of the speakers! **Also included in this part of your grade is bringing in 2 newspaper articles covering GLBT political issues for class on November 16th.**

5% **One page description of your individualized assignment: OCTOBER 5**
This assignment must be meaningful to you and reflect your new knowledge in this area. The project must stretch the knowledge you have about LGBT clients and their
issues in therapy. In the overview of your assignment, I will be looking for the following in 1-3 pages. Please be as clear as possible.

1. Title
2. Medium or media (paper, photo, electronic, video, multimedia, etc.) and proposed length
3. Rationale behind the assignment: what are you trying to accomplish, what are you trying to learn and how will it be useful to your understanding of LGBT clients and their issues in therapy.
4. How your project will reflect course materials and use the course experiences to accomplish your objectives for this assignment

5% First draft of your individualized assignment: NOVEMBER 9
This assignment will allow you to “run things” by the instructor for feedback. Feedback will be offered on how well you are meeting your goals, suggestions will be offered to assist in clarity, completion, find resources, etc.

35% Final Individualized Assignment: DECEMBER 7

35% Journals. Journals must be written every week of class. Even us you miss class they must then focus upon the reading and notes from class members. Journals should reflect the following, please note that 1-3 build up and are essentially included in number 4.

1. Thoughts that reflect that you read the material and have carefully and critically considered it- problems, questions and what the authors could have said- should have said - might have said - about the written materials. What was good about it, what was bad? What might others say about the topic and the materials based on your knowledge. What have you read that makes you see this differently and how so?

2. Thoughts about class materials, similar to the questions above- I would hope that you would raise problems, questions, etc. IN THE CLASS- but some may be afterthoughts.

3. Feelings about the class experience, about what you are learning and experiencing in the classroom and in relationship to the materials. How does the learning feel?? Where is it going?

4. Conclusions about a given week that INTEGRATE material, STRETCH your thinking through feelings and passions, GROW new seeds and thoughts in your mind that go beyond the material rather than just reflecting it.
NOTE : If this is well done, the first three will also be accomplished.

5. Finally, you should ask 3-5 questions that you are led to from the class readings, your class experience, the class lectures and speakers and your own reading and experience.

DO NOT FORGET THE QUESTIONS!!
The journals can be hand written, if you write legibly. I will comment on this after you hand in the first journal. Drawings, collages, doodles, pictures, whatever are also more than welcome. They need to be neat and readable. 2 plus pages per week is about right, more is ok, less may be a problem depending on how well you write and express yourself.

The journals will be handed in every 2-3 weeks. See below for more details.

A partial pseudo sample:

Dr B.- this week when I saw the speakers I remembered the reading on the horrible experiences that Transgendered clients can have in their childhood. Going back to out discussions about countertransference with Dr. Albucher, I wondered, would I have the ability to hear the trauma of the halted, smashed, disrupted and culturally stifled need to be a different physical sex? I shudder as I think about it.

But, then seeing Melissa and her friends be so gleeful and happy and playful made me feel differently in retrospect. I found the book, Transgendered warriors, as you suggested. In that book, the author shares - I think.. this made me feel...perhaps the next questions I have based on all this are....

Texts & Readings:

There are three required texts. The texts are available at The Common Language Book Store located at 215 S 4rth Avenue, 734-663-0036. They do ship books. They typically do not open until 10am. Please spend some time in the bookstore, if you are unfamiliar with it, and say hello to the proprietors Kate & Kelly for me. There is also ONE set of the texts in the library on reserve. They are my personal copies, please take care of them!

Required:


Coursepack:

The recommend articles are on reserve at the UM SSW library. There is no purchasable coursepak (it would be very expensive). The reader may be out of order, but most of the articles are there!

Week by Week Description and Focus Questions

September 7, 2000: Fears, phobias and foibles.
This week will be a class introduction; to each other, to the seminar and to the content and reading strategies of the course. We will spend some time building a group in order to enhance learning as an adventure! Introduction to symbols and terms.

*The pink triangle exercise.*

*Start reading!!*

Wormer, chapter 1, 2

**September 14, 2000: The sex in sexual orientation.**

What is it we, as a culture and profession, are so concerned about in working with LGBT clients? We will also discuss the Pink Triangle exercise.

Silverstein, Chapter 1,14, 5 & 15
Greene & Herek, 4
Wormer, chapter 6

Recommended:
September 21, 2000: Lumberjacks and tea. The intersection of definitions, popular culture and our own beliefs as social workers. What has the history of this culture seen in the past 30 years?

Confirmed Speakers: Jim & Jenny

Greene & Herek, 1
Wormer, 6

Recommended:
- NASW Social Work Ethics

September 28, 2000: Identity development and coming out of the closet.
The therapy challenges of coming out. What is sexual identity? How is sexual identity developed? How is it considered by science and by society?

Green & Herek, 3 & 7
Wormer chapter 4

Recommended:
Garnets and Kimmel, 53-286, 348-388, 287-330. (A text I can provide to the library for those interested)


October 5, 2000: Substance abuse and suicide.
Substance abuse and suicide may be serious problems for LGBT clients due to the oppression they suffer. What can we do to understand and help with these life threatening problems? 
One page outline of formal project due today.
Silverstein, Chapter 8

Recommended:
• Garnets and Kimmel, 486-499, 567-578

October 12, 2000: Issues of Skills and Privilege: The skills of therapy and how they may need to be adapted for working with LGBT clients will be discussed. This week reactions of therapists and agencies to people to LGBT people, issues of internalized homophobia and therapist anxiety will be discussed.
Possible Guest speaker: Ron Albucher, M.D.

Silverstein, 3, 5 & 18
Greene & Herek, 2, 6, 10 & 11
Wormer, 8

Recommended:
October 19, 2000: Issues and concerns specific to Transgendered and Bisexual clients

Transgendered clients are rarely seen, but knowledge of them is critical. How does a Transgendered person feel? Where and how can they get help? When is surgery warranted? What pre-surgical treatment is useful?

Bi-sexuality is a fascinating political discussion: is it a category of someone that doesn’t fit in with others or is it a category in which we all belong? What special needs and concerns do they have?

Confirmed guest speakers: Melissa and other Crossroads members

Recommended:

October 26, 2000: What is a family? Family issues and development.

Family therapy with non heterosexual families. Is there a change in power, in the understanding of family based about orientation? Children & parenting therapy issues of LGBT parents. Concerns about having a child become or learn to be LGB or T.

Silverstein, Chapter 2 & 15
Wormer, 11
Green & Herek, 8 & 9

Recommended:
- Patterson, C. 1994. Families of the lesbian baby boom: Behavioral adjustment, self-concepts, and sex role identity. In Lesbian and gay psychology: Theory, research, and
November 2, 2000: At work: “Don’t ask don’t tell”
As has been frequently discussed in the mass media, the military policies against LGBT people are horrific. What is the inside story about this and other vocational settings? What are the legal realities and rights?
Confirmed guest instructor and speaker: Military issues with Beth Harrison
Wormer, chapter 6

Recommended:

November 9, 2000: Serious illness: HIV & Breast Cancer
These two health problems have decimated and destroyed many individuals and families. There is much special knowledge needed to understand, assess, treat and grieve appropriately.
Confirmed guest speaker: HIV/AIDS with Larry Gant, Ph.D.
First draft of assignment due today; DON”T BE LATE!!!

Silverstein, Chapter 17 & 13
Wormer, 9 & 10
Plus materials to be handed out

Recommended:
Politics of LGBT issues are massively fascinating to the American public. Why is this? What are the issues? What should we as Social Workers do about these issues? What is the DOMA?
CONFIRMED: Guest Speaker: Stephen Rassi

In addition to these readings, every class member will be asked to find 1-2 articles from anywhere regarding these issues, read, and share them with the class.

Silverstein, Chapter 4

Recommended:
- Garnets and Kimmel, 392-394

November 30, 2000: Therapy practice
Therapy practice day.
Reading TBA.
Possible guest speaker(s).

December 7, 2000: Aging and conclusions.
It is quite clear that if there are so many LGBT people that there must be more aging LGBT people as the population over 60 increases in general. What are their special needs, concerns and issues?
Possible Guest Speaker
Final assignment due today!!!

Silverstein, chapter 18
Wormer, 7

Recommended:
- Garnets and Kimmel, 500-534, 599-604