1. Course Description

The focus of this course is on the methods of prevention, intervention and social change used to combat the major forms of family violence. “Family” is defined broadly to include any intimate relationship. The course will provide overviews of the risk factors and traumatic effects of family violence. There will be an emphasis placed on the special needs of oppressed groups who are disproportionately affected by family violence. Most family violence organizations work on both macro and micro levels and they interact frequently with a variety of fields of service, primarily our criminal justice, mental health, and medical systems. Therefore, models of inter-system and inter-disciplinary coordination will be presented. Illustrations of the integration of micro and macro practice will be given. The critical evaluation of theories, policies, organizations, and interventions using scientific principles will be stressed.

2. Course Content

Over the past 15 to 20 years, various forms of family violence have come to be recognized as serious and widespread social problems. Strategies for intervention and prevention are being developed and the first steps have been taken to evaluate these strategies. Social workers continue to require training in: service delivery to survivors
and offenders, program development, policy-making, and other roles. In this course, the social movements that helped uncover various forms of abuse and the definitions and scope of family violence will be presented. The forms of abuse covered will be child physical abuse, sibling abuse, dating violence, and spousal, cohabiting, and elder abuse. “Abuse” is defined to include physical, psychological, and sexual maltreatment.

The course will compare and contrast the risk and trauma factors across different forms of family violence. Students will have the opportunity to explore their own attitudes about family violence and public and professional attitudes that block effective interventions will be covered. Students will learn some basic skills for detecting the problem and motivating clients to receive help. They will analyze the social, political, and organizational factors affecting service delivery, including some cross-national comparisons of service delivery systems. The theories and methods of the most common models of intervention and prevention will be described. Models of prevention will include education aimed at school children and the general public, the promotion of competency (e.g., conflict resolution skills for children and young couples), and natural care giving networks.

3. Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1) Understand the scope of family violence and the risk factors and traumas associated with it, including common myths about these factors held by those in various fields of service.

2) Understand risk factors and maintaining factors for family violence within a social ecological framework that includes the links between family violence and sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression.

3) Understand their own attitudes and those of professionals and the public about various types of family violence and about survivors and offenders of this violence.

4) Demonstrate basic skills for detecting family violence and increasing the motivation of the abuser and survivor to seek help.

5) Demonstrate knowledge of and basic skills in assessment of risk factors and trauma effects and the use of such assessments for developing intervention and prevention plans.

6) Understand the most common models of intervention and prevention for the various types of family violence at the individual, family, community and social levels. Included will be an understanding of the impact of social norms, public policies, and organizational structure on service delivery systems.

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1 child sexual abuse will not be covered because it is covered in other elective courses
7) Understand applicable laws and codes of ethics governing the practice of family violence prevention and intervention.

4. Course Design

The course content will be delivered through didactic and experiential methods. An emphasis will be placed on the development of skills through demonstrations, videos, and role-playing. Guest speakers may be invited from the field to describe the latest intervention and prevention programs and students will be given the opportunity to interview workers in the field about agency functioning. Special attention will be given to students’ attitudes and emotional reactions to the material covered.

5. Relationship to the Curricular Themes

Multiculturalism and Diversity Issues. The definitions and theories of family violence will be analyzed in their cultural contexts. Models of culturally competent interventions and prevention programs will be presented. In particular, students will be taught to be sensitive to client/worker differences and to appreciate the coping strengths of survivors of violence, especially those who are the most socially and economically oppressed.

Social Justice and Social Change Issues will be a major focus of the course since the family violence field often integrates interventions with social movements aimed at social justice and social change. Social forces such as poverty and patriarchal structure will be analyzed for their role in producing family violence and this analysis will provide the direction for social change efforts. An analysis of the historical and current impact of racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia on social services will be provided.

Promotion and Prevention will be addressed through descriptions of the latest models for promoting family well-being, achieving egalitarian relationships, and resolving conflicts. Prevention programs directed at various levels of the social ecology will be presented: from helping individuals and families detect the early warning signs of violence to media campaigns aimed at changing public attitudes about violence.

Social Science and Behavioral Research. The latest social science theories and research will be applied to understanding the causes of family violence and the effectiveness of various interventions and prevention programs. There is a rapidly growing body of social work and social science research that can be applied to understanding the theoretical bases of intervention and prevention programs. The principles of evaluation research will be used to assess the quality of studies of intervention and prevention.


Many of the complex and challenging ethical issues encountered by workers in the field of family violence will be addressed. Common legal and ethical issues include
duty to warn, mandated reporting, and special concerns for protecting client confidentiality. The ethical guidelines of social work and other professions will be applied to the analysis of intervention and prevention programs and distinctions will be made between legal and ethical requirements for workers.


COURSEPACK: Required readings not in the required text are available in a coursepack at Ulrich’s Book Store or on websites.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND ARTICLES:


RECOMMENDED JOURNALS

Aggression and Violent Behavior
Child Abuse and Neglect
Journal of Emotional Abuse
Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma
Journal of Elder Abuse
Journal of Family Violence
Journal of Interpersonal Violence
Journal of Traumatic Stress
Response to the Victimization of Women & Children
Violence Against Women
Violence and Victims

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

1) Exercises: Several brief exercises and reports will be assigned. These will be 1-3 page reports on such things as: personal reactions to working in the field, analysis of a policy, recognition of pro-violence norms in the media, critique of a reading for its racist and sexist content, summary of required readings, etc. Assignments will be constructed with the background and experience level of the students in mind. These exercises will not be graded. (15% of grade)

2) Report: A major report is required with sections of it due throughout the semester.
a) Proposal: A description of the topic area, questions you hope to answer, and potential impact of your report on the field. The proposal will not be graded. It will be graded after it is rewritten as the Introduction to the paper (5% of grade)

b) Background: Brief review of nature and scope of the problem, risk factors, trauma effects, and influence of race and gender. (20% of grade)

c) Analysis of Field of Service: Choose one or more traditional fields of service and analyze how it helps and how it hinders the cessation of family violence. Fields of service could be medicine, mental health, criminal justice, or child welfare, or another one. (25% of grade)

d) Analysis of a Service Delivery System in the Family Violence Field: Analysis of the influence of multiple factors on the system, e.g. social norms, public policy, organizational structure, and race, gender and other demographics of the staff. Some of these findings will be derived from interviewing a social worker in the field. (25% of grade)

e) Recommendations for Change: From your findings, what recommendations do you have for change on a social, community, and agency level? (10% of grade)

Study groups may be formed around particular topics in order for information to be investigated and shared more productively. Each student will write a separate report on a sub-topic of the study group as outlined about. More information will be provided in class on all of the above assignments. Please consult the Student Guide to make sure you are not committing plagiarism in your written reports. Participation in class discussions is strongly encouraged but will not be graded. Attendance is expected at each class. More than two absences will lower one's grade by one half.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Unit 1: OVERVIEW

Class 1: 9/6/2002

Dreams and realities of family life; general theories of violence and aggression; definitions; extent of the problem.

Class 2: 9/13/2002

Unit 2: PROFESSIONALS' ATTITUDES ABOUT FAMILY VIOLENCE

Feelings about working with victims and offenders
Attitudes, especially racist and sexist ones, that block effective intervention.

Required reading:
Chapt. 1 of Ammerman & Hersen: "Family Violence"
Physical violence in American Families.

Suggested reading:

Unit 3: PHYSICAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN

Class 3: 9/20/2002

Risk factors, trauma effects, detecting abuse, and reasons for non-reporting.
Legal and medical issues

Required reading:
Chapts. 4 and 6 from Ammerman and Hersen text: "Legal Issues in Violence Toward Children" and "Medical Issues in Violence Toward Children"

Suggested reading:

Class 4: 9/27/2002

Individual, family, and group interventions

Required reading:
Chapts. 8, 9 and 12 in the Ammerman & Hersen text, "Child Physical
Abuse", "Child Neglect", and "Maltreatment of Children with Disabilities"

Suggested reading:

Class 5: 10/4/2002

Emotional abuse of children
Intersystem coordination
Research on policies and interventions.

Required reading:
Chapts. 13 & 14 in the Ammerman & Hersen text, "The Child Witness of Family Violence" and Psychological and Emotional Abuse of Children

Suggested reading:

Class 6: 10/11/2002

Unit 3: SIBLING ABUSE

Sibling physical and emotional abuse

Unit 4: WOMAN ABUSE (including dating violence, date rape, marital rape, marital homicide, and lesbian battering)

Risk markers for woman abuse
Required reading:

Causes and consequences of violence against women, Chapt. 3 in Crowell, N.A.

&


Suggested reading:


Class 7: 10/18/2002

Risk markers for woman abuse (cont.)

Required reading:

Chapts. 3 & 15 in Ammerman and Hersen text, "The ecology of domestic aggression toward adult victims" and "Wife battering".


Suggested reading:


Class 8: 10/25/2002

Traumatic effects of woman abuse
Required reading:


Suggested reading:


Class 9: 11/1/2002

Criminal justice response to woman abuse

Required reading:

Chapt. 5 in the Ammerman & Hersen text, "Legal issues in violence toward adults"


Suggested reading:


Class 10: 11/8/2002

Understanding woman abuse among racial minorities

Required reading:


Suggested reading:

Class 11: 11/15/2002

Psychological abuse of women
Husband abuse: What is the extent of the problem?

Required reading:
Chapt. 16 in the Ammerman & Hersen text, "Psychological Maltreatment of Partners"

Suggested reading:

Class 12: 11/22/2002
Marital and date rape
Domestic homicide

Required reading:
Chapt. 17 in the Ammerman & Hersen text, "Marital Rape"
Chapt. 18 in the Ammerman & Hersen text, "Intimate Partner Homicide"
Fleming, J.B. (1979). Counseling skills and techniques (pp. 124-149, including a section on women of color)
In J.Fleming, Stopping wife abuse, Garden City, NJ: Anchor.

Suggested reading:

11/29/2002: THANKSGIVING

Class 13: 12/6/2002

Intervention and prevention
Organizational structures

Unit 5: ELDER ABUSE

Elder abuse: Risk factors, policies and interventions

Unit 6: INTEGRATION: COMMON FEATURES OF AND RESPONSES TO VARIOUS TYPES OF FAMILY VIOLENCE
Common risk and trauma factors across all forms of family violence
Common interventions and methods of integration

Required reading:
Chapt. 19 in the Ammerman & Hersen text, "Elder Abuse"

Suggested reading: