Course Description

This course will present state of the art knowledge and research on mental disorders of children and youth, as well as factors that promote mental health and prevent mental disorders in children and youth. Bio-psychosocial theories of resiliency, coping, etiology, the impact of mental health disorders on children and family members, and the relationship of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and social class to mental disorders will be presented (e.g. the DSM IV-IV-TR). The impact of labeling and stigma will be explored in order to develop critical thinking about how mental disorders of children and youth are conceptualized.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

• Understand and recognize the clinical and associated features used in diagnosing childhood and adolescent disorders.

• Identify factors influencing mental health and mental disorders of children and youth at the individual, familial, cultural/ethnic, and social levels

• Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of the child or adolescent’s difficulties on parents and other family members.

• Describe the transactional processes among the above factors which influence the etiology and maintenance of mental disorders

• Describe and critique classification systems of mental disorders of children and adolescents, particularly the DSM-IV-TR

• Identify and differentiate a number of disorders of children and adolescents and apply them to the evaluation of clients.
• Demonstrate empathic appreciation of the client’s experience of disorders from the perspective of the children’s inner world.

• Discuss typical ethical concerns related to mental health and mental disorders of children and youth.

**Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes**

• Multiculturalism and Diversity will be addressed through discussion of incidence and prevalence of mental disorders, as related to gender and social class, and through discussion of culture, ethnicity, race, gender, and class as factors influencing mental health and disorder.

• Social Justice and Social Change will be addressed through discussion of the misapplication of mental health diagnoses based on race, class, and gender bias, and the potential impact of poverty, discrimination, and disenfranchisement on the development of mental disorders and disorders of parenting.

• Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation will be addressed through discussion of protective facts, which promote resilience and positive adaptation.

• Behavioral and Social Science Research will inform the entire content of this course, which will draw especially on current research in the following areas: developmental psychopathology, attachment, risk, resiliency and coping, trauma and maltreatment, and studies of particular disorders.

**Accommodation for Disability Statement**

Any student who feels that she/he may need an accommodation for any sort of disability (physical, mental or learning, temporary as well as chronic), please feel free to contact me so that we can discuss how to handle this.

**Course Format**

The objectives of this course will be pursued through lectures, discussions, demonstrations, case studies and presentations, videotapes and visits by outside experts. Students are expected to attend regularly and take part in classroom discussions and groups. Missing two classes will be viewed as excessive absence and will result in the lowering of the student’s final grade by one half grade (e.g. an A will become an A-).
Course Requirements

1) Book analysis  35%
2) Disability Paper  45%
3) 2 Exams  10% each

Text


Additional recommended readings and resources are listed at the end of this syllabus.

Assignments

All written assignments are to be typewritten, double-spaced using either a 10 or 12 point font. Correct English usage is expected including spelling and punctuation. When in doubt, refer to the APA Publication Manual. Assignments turned in late, with excessive writing errors, or with any aspect of the assignment not performed, will be down-graded.

Book Analysis

An analysis of a book describing the experience of a family with a child with a disability will be due Session 4 (Sept. 26). The focus of this assignment is the family and the impact on the family of a child with mental health issues. It is preferred that the book be selected from one of those listed below, but others are acceptable with professor’s agreement. The book is to be authored by the parent of the disabled child. The report should be 5-6 pages typewritten and cover the following issues. Any issue not addressed will cause the paper to be downgraded.

1. The structure of the family and the condition of the child with the disability as defined in the DSM-IV-TR.

2. The impact on the family — how did they first learn the child was disabled, what were their individual reactions, worries, concerns, fears, etc. Give examples.
3. What coping mechanisms were used by the family? What resources did they find useful or not useful. Do these change over time? What interventions were attempted by the family and the impact on the child and/or the family?

4. Your reaction to the book and the family’s experiences.

Recommended books are listed below. They are probably available in your local library or a bookstore. The social work library only has the 2 that are starred. Copies may also be borrowed from the professor. Failure to return a borrowed book will delay your grade.


Disability Paper

This assignment is designed to increase your knowledge, beyond class level, of a disability that you select to study different from the one you read about in the book assignment and that has particular interest to you. The paper is due Session 9 (Oct. 31). An effort should be made to interview a child and/or parent of a child with the disability. Be sure to comment on the following issues.

1. A description of the child and his family, looking at strengths and needs.
2. Definition of the disability by reference to the DSM-IV-TR. It would also be useful to look for a classification under the Michigan Special Education Rules.
3. Your research should address the probable cause of the disability, prevalence, possible treatments and prognosis.
4. What resources are there available to assist the child and his family?
5. A summary of what you learned from the assignment and how it might affect your future work with children.

Exams

There will be 2 brief in-class exams given at the start of the class session. Each exam will be worth 10% of your grade. The first exam will be given during Session 6 (Oct. 10) will cover material discussed in class to that date; the second exam will be given during Session 13 (Dec. 5) and will cover material discussed in classes following the first exam. The makeup of the exam will be mixed with multiple choice, true-false, very brief essay, etc.

Class Sessions

1. Sept. 5    Introduction
              What is “mental health?”
              What is the effect on parents and siblings?
              Waner: Ch 2

2. Sept. 12   ADHD/LD
              Waner: Ch. 6
              DSM: 49-69, 85-93
3. Sept. 19  Autism/Asperger Syndrome  
   Waner: Ch 4  
   DSM: 69-75-80-84

4. Sept. 26  Anxiety Disorders  
   Waner: Ch 8  
   DSM: 121-125  
   **Book Review**

5. Oct. 3  Conduct Disorders, ODD  
   Waner: Ch 9  
   DSM: 93-103

6. Oct. 10  Depressive Disorders  
   Waner: Ch 7  
   DSM: 385-  
   **Exam I**

7. Oct. 17  Emotional Impairment as the Schools View It  
   Guest speaker

8. Oct. 24  Schizophrenia/Psychosis  
   Waner: Ch 10

9. Oct. 31  Adolescent Disorders  
   Waner: Ch 11  
   DSM: 583-5 85

10. Nov. 7  Retardation  
   Waner: Ch 12  
   DSM: 41-49  
   **Disability Paper**

11. Nov. 14  Physical Disorders and Mental Health  
   Waner: Ch 13

12. Nov. 21  Mental Health Issues as Viewed by various Cultures  
   Waner: Ch 15

No Class — Nov. 28

13. Dec. 5  Miscellaneous  
   **Exam II**
Grading System

Grades will be given as follows: A+ = 4.3; A = 4; A- = 3.7; B+ = 3.3; B = 3.0 and so forth. Each assignment will be multiplied by the weight listed under Course Requirements, and then all assignments totaled. A total of 3.9 or higher is necessary to receive an A in the course. Students will be downgraded .3 for more than 2 absences or failure to participate in class discussion.

Additional Readings and Resources


Comments from nine mothers about their experiences raising children with various disabilities, i.e. autism, Down syndrome, ADD.

Meyer, Donald (ed.) (1997) Views from our shoes: Growing up with a brother or sister with special needs. Woodbine House.


An excellent text book for school social workers... discusses each of the special education disabilities.