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 (with special emphasis on relapse prevention), 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 so as to improve their interactions with 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 diagnoses, treatment options and case disposition within the mental health system.

COURSE CONTENT

This 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. Family interventions will be highlighted as well as rehabilitation techniques. Major concepts of recovery, empowerment, stigma will be addressed. The various models of intervention (i.e. self-help, twelve-step, cognitive/behavioral, biological, psychoeducation, 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 macro-micro 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, education, 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 purpose of promoting mental health, early intervention, treatment, and continuing service, with an emphasis placed on problems faced by people who suffer from severe and persistent mental illness, substance abuse, and/or 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, memoirs, and case studies that describe experiences of the onset and development of mental disorders, including major depression, bipolar illness and schizophrenia as well as the individuals’ complex experiences with the mental health system and mental health professionals.

**CLASS FORMAT**

Classes will usually contain a lecture related to assigned readings. Guest speakers from key community
agencies and organizations will help to address central themes of the class. Videotapes and group exercises will be integrated into classes to help teach assessment and intervention techniques.

**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 help 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 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 the 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 backyard” phenomenon.

SOURCE MATERIALS

Books and Articles

• Newman, Sandra J. “The Accuracy of Reports on Housing and Neighborhood Conditions by Persons with Severe Mental...


- Straussner, Shulamith, “Alcoholism in Women: Current Knowledge and Implications for Treatment,” Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly. 1985, 61-77


Journals

- Administration and Social Policy in Mental Health
- Alcohol Treatment Quarterly
- American Journal of Orthopsychiatry
- Families in Society
- Hospital and Community Psychiatry
- International Journal of Group Psychotherapy
- Journal on Mental Health Administration
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation Journal
- Research on Social Work Practice
- Social Work

Required texts at Ulrich’s Bookstore and on reserve at SSW Library


Best Practices in Psychosocial Rehabilitation, Ruth Hughes & Dianne Weinstein (Eds), 2000, IAPSRS, Columbia, MD.
Recommended texts (on reserve)

**Native American Postcolonial Psychology** Eduardo Duran and Bonnie Duran, 1995, State University of New York


Recommended Websites:

http://www.mentalhealthpractices.org
socialworkers.org/nasw/default.asp
www.nimh.nih.gov

Recommended Mental Illness Memoirs/Narratives/Texts:


**A Guard Within**, Sarah Ferguson, 1973, Pantheon Books (a “breakdown” narrative with exploration of the impact of


**Natalie on the Street,** Ann Nisette, 1994, Calyx Books (a memoir about the author’s relationship with an elderly homeless woman).

**Healing the Blues: A Success Story of a Patient and Her Therapist.** Dorthea Nudelman & David Willingham, MSW, 1996, Health Information Press.


**The Quiet Room: A Journey Out of The Torment of Madness,** Lori Schiller and Amanda Bennett, 1994, Warner Books. (a schizophrenia memoir).
Call Me Crazy: Stories From the Mad Movement, Irit Shimrat, 1994, Press Gang Publishers (a memoir and history of the ‘mad movement’ or mental health consumers movement in Canada, written by an activist who was diagnosed schizophrenic but lives without medication.)

Prozac Diary, Lauren Slater, 1998, Random House, (a memoir written by a woman who suffered from nightmarish mood swings, compulsions, phobias).


Night Fall Fast: Understanding Suicide, Kay Redfield Jamison, 1999, Knopf

Holy Hunger: A Memoir of Desire, Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, 1999, Knopf

First Person Plural: My Life As A Multiple, Cameron West, 1999, Hyperion

Mockingbird Years: A Life In And Out Of Therapy; Emily Fox Gordon, Basic Books, 2000.


The Music of Madness: Surviving Schizoaffective Disorder, Tracy L. Harris, 2001, Writers Club Press.

Passing For Normal: Living with Tourettes, Amy Wiletsky, Broadway, 2000


Course Assignments and Requirements:

Course Assignments, Requirements, and Grading

Much of our work together this semester will be spent in discussion of readings and class presentations. It is essential that all come to class prepared to talk about the assigned readings and to take part in class activities. Class attendance and participation are vital to the success of our class and will figure into the final evaluation of each student’s work this semester. **10% of your grade will be based on class participation.** Class participation will be graded according to attendance, currency in reading, and participation in group discussions. Class attendance will be taken weekly by sign-in sheet. The major assignments for the course will be articulated below. Papers are expected to be handed in on their due dates and papers must meet all academic standards for ethical documentation. Papers will be marked down 5% for every day late unless there has been an arrangement worked out with the instructor. The following criteria will be taken into account when papers are graded:

- Systematic and logical presentation of arguments;
- Appropriate use of evidence;
- Familiarity with and appropriate use of relevant literature and concepts;
- Clarity and coherence of presentation;
- Originality and creativity;
- Conformity with the requirements of the assignment;
- APA style for final paper

While papers are judged on their individual merit, in any class there is a “standard” around each assignment. The way I grade is to read all the papers first and make comments on each and then to think about where the individual papers fall in terms of the standard of excellence set by the class and then go back to each and place a letter grade.
Course Overview

Throughout the semester we will attempt to become aware of the beliefs and biases that shape our intellectual and emotional responses to work with people who present symptoms of or have been diagnosed with mental illnesses. These beliefs are deeply embedded in our culture’s mythology and ideology regarding:

- acceptable feelings and behaviors
- what we define as civilized conduct
- what are appropriate expressions of one’s gender identity, age, familial role, citizenship
- illness, disease, and impairment
- the role of the helper
- who may become a client/patient/consumer
- the long term consequences of psychiatric labels and treatment in a mental health system

These same biases have influenced the ways in which psychiatry, social work, and psychology have organized systems of diagnosis, treatment, and care giving. As we read, we will attempt to uncover some fundamental assumptions about normality, “being human,” and illness/disease that underlie our practices as social workers in mental health care roles and settings, as well as speculate about who these practices may serve or disserve.

The course will be guided by four important themes:

A) Understanding people with mental illness from multiple perspectives (including gender, race, ethnicity, culture, privilege, oppression, social justice)

B) Understanding the mental health practitioner roles of social workers

C) Understanding the best evidence practice methods for our work with individuals with severe and persistent mental illness

D) Developing intolerance for poor practices or treatment of mentally ill persons and their families and to acquire the skills and muster the courage to “do things differently” if it will aid these courageous persons to have better lives (Mary Ann Test)
Paper 1 (Looking at a personal memoir through a “cultural lens”)

25% of grade. 7-10 pages.  
Due: June 7th

Please select one or more of the memoirs in the recommended readings list or propose another. Address your reactions to the memoir(s) and consider the following questions:

a. Why did you pick this memoir? What are your personal responses to this story and the author’s construction of his/her illness/disability/disease and the methods of treatment he/she received?

b. Using approaches to understanding the intersections of culture and mental illness in class, discuss how the author’s experience, idioms of distress, and efforts to accept or resist labeling and treatment reflect cultural values, folkways, and attitudes about psychological suffering. Also discuss how this author’s experience may differ from cultural values, folkways, etc.

c. How do gender, race, class, historical context etc. influence the experience of illness by the author and others in connections with the author?

d. Describe the impacts of the significant relationships on the author’s experience of the illness/disability, particularly emphasizing therapeutic relationship(s) discussed in the book. What stands out to you as especially significant, helpful, not helpful? What is missing in her/his relational world? What are the challenges for the people in relationship to the author and how well were these challenges managed?

Search-Research Groups  
Each student will participate in an S-R Group which will function as a home-base group for two projects:

- Developing discussion questions and contribution to the facilitation of discussion about readings for 2 class sessions during the semester. (15% of grade)
- Service Delivery Innovation Project (25% of grade).

1) Discussion Facilitation:

Group 1: May 17 & June 28  
Group 2: May 24 & July 12
2) **Service Delivery Innovation Project:**

Groups 1 & 2: July 26  
Groups 3 & 4: August 2

The S-R group will work with an individual case which will involve thought about assessment, diagnosis, understanding cultural implications and identifying intervention strategies and resources. The case will serve as the clinical example for the presentation and for the final paper. Some examples of challenges related to treatment and service delivery in the case would include:

- Problem of violence and mental illness
- Problems related to dual disorders
- Challenges of working on an interdisciplinary team
- Incorporating alternative and complementary treatments
- Services for families and care-givers
- Innovative community-based treatments and restrictions to executing those evidence-based treatments

The presentation may be structured as a professional in-service training. Each group must prepare an evaluation form for the rest of the class to use. The presentation will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour.

**Final paper  25% of grade  7-10 PAGES**

**DUE: AUGUST 2**

1. Choose the severe and persistent mental health disorder represented in your case (Discuss disorder features in some depth with DSM multi-axial assessment included)
2. Choose an empirically focused treatment for that disorder – use the one from the presentation or something else you feel is a good fit
3. Choose the social work role(s) that align best with delivery of this treatment from the Bentley book and discuss the role in relation to the case
4. Adjust and alter the delivery of the treatment for a particular ethnic group, gender, developmental life-stage, location, socio-economic group of your choosing and talk about that in the paper (e.g. a Latino male in prison with severe depression and substance abuse)
5. Clinical next steps – where do you go from here
Class Schedule and Readings

Class 1  May 10  
Introduction to class

Who are we? What do we bring to the arena of mental health practices?
What strengths? What biases? What is the historical role of social work in the area of mental health practice? What is a severe and persistent mental disorder? What is recovery? What is the role of culture?

**Video**  – “People Say I’m Crazy”

Class 2  May 17  
A Cultural Framework for Understanding Mental Illness and Working with the Mentally Ill

**Readings**

Castillo  Chap 1  “Why Culture?”
Chap 2  “Culture and Clinical Reality”
Chap 3  “Culture and Personality”
Chap 4  “Cultural Assessment”

Cuellar & Paniagua  
Chap 1  “Culture and Mental Health”

Psychology, 51, 571-598. (Electronic -Psych Info)

Video “Eyes of Dust”

S-R Groupwork: Meet your client

Class 3 May 24 Contextualizing Health, Illness & Recovery
Introduction to Psychosocial Rehabilitation

Readings
Hughes & Weinstein
Chap 2 What is PSR?
Chap 3 Research in PSR
Chap 4 Person Centered Planning & Practice

Cuellar & Paniagua
Chap 2 Cultural Models of Health & Illness


Spaniol Chap 5 “The Helping Culture” (on reserve)

Class 4 May 31st Memorial Day (No Class)

Class 5 June 7 Trauma ** First paper due - memoir

Readings
Cuellar and Paniagua
Chap 4 Gender as Subculture

Castillo Chap 6 Personality Disorders
Chap 9 Substance-related disorders
Chap 13 Dissociative Disorders
Duran and Duran: Part II, Clinical Praxis (with Cultural Trauma)
(on reserve)

**Small Groupwork #2:** Culture-Illness Connection  
**Speakers:** Orli Aviyonah, PhD. and Marian Kryzowski, MSW

---

**Class 6** June 14 Consumers and the Process of Recovery

**Readings**
- Castillo  Chap 14 Psychotic Disorders
- Spaniol Chap. 2, “The Experience of Recovery”  
  Chap. 6 “Self Help”  
  Chap. 8, “Advocacy and Empowerment (on reserve)
- Zide & Gray  Chap. 3 “Schizophrenia & Other Psychoses”

**Speakers:** Donna Orrin, MSW and Linda Rama  (10am-12noon)

**Video:** “Fountain House”

---

**Class 7** June 21 Assertive Community Treatment Supported Employment

**Readings**
- Mentalhealthpractices.org  article download
- Bentley  Chap 8 “Social Workers as Case-managers”
PACT Start-up), NAMI *
*Introduction to treatment manuals and fidelity scales
- Hughes  Chap 9  “Vocational Rehabilitation”

**Speaker:** Carol Mowbray, PhD.

**Class 8** June 28 Homelessness/Housing/Legal Issues

**Readings**
- Mentalhealthpractices.org  article download
Hughes  Chap 11 Housing
Bentley  Chap 5 Social Workers as Mediators

Video  “Cursing the Sun”
Speaker  Tim Florence, MD  Project Outreach, CMH & UM Psychiatry

Class 9  July 5 – Holiday – No class

Class 10  July 12  Family Psychoeducation/
Families Coping with Mental Illness

Readings
Mentalhealthpractices.org article download
Bentley  Chap 10  “SW as Consumers & Family Consultants”
Spaniol  Chap. 3 “Coping and Adaptation”
Zide & Gray, Chap. 4 & 5 Mood/Anxiety Disorders

Video  Mental Illness in the Family
Speaker  To Be Announced

Class 11  July 19  Psychopharmacology: Medication Management issues & Cultural sensitivity in medication use

Readings
Mentalhealthpractices.org article download
Bentley  Chap 9  Social Workers as Medication Facilitators
Chap 7  Social Workers as Skills Trainers

*Demonstration of community re-entry module


Speaker  Joe Harvey, MD
Class 12 July 26th Co-Occurring Disorders: Integrated Dual Disorders Treatment

Readings

Evidence-based practices web-site article downloads

Castillo Chap. 9, “Substance-Related Disorders

Cuellar & Paniagua Culture Bound Syndromes & Substance related disorders; pp 155-156

Bentley Chap. 4 “Social Workers as Therapists”

S-R Group Presentations 1 & 2

Class 13 August 2 Future of Social Work Practice in MH

Bentley Chap 14 Social Workers as Administrators & Policy Analysts
Chap 15 Emerging Knowledge & Future Trends in Mental Health
Chap 4 Social Workers as Therapists

S-R Group Presentations 3 & 4

Final Paper due week of August 2nd – date will be firmed up in class