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PM 654 The Counseling Relationship: Process and Skills

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this course is to acquaint the student with the process of the care-counseling relationship and the skills that facilitate that process. It will blend theory with practice. The assumption upon which this course is based is that the ability to help persons deal with their experiences is based upon some acquired skills. These skills can be learned and practiced. Primary skills include observing, attending, responding, assessing and initiating. Readings, lectures, counseling demonstrations, weekly exercises, small groups, and practice counseling sessions are some of the ways students will learn to recognize and to apply a structured process to a counseling relationship.

GOALS:

This course is designed to achieve the following goals:

1. To acquaint students with the theory and stages of the counseling process that enables counselors to help client's process their issues.

2. To acquaint students with the interpersonal skills and techniques that facilitate the counseling process.

3. To provide students with opportunities to practice counseling skills and to receive feedback about their practice.

REQUIRED READINGS:


COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
1. Punctual class attendance is expected since the class periods are designed as experiential learning sessions. This includes the inter-action of members with each other and with their own self-understanding. Failure to attend class, except in case of significant reasons, can be reflected in the final grade. Any necessary absences need to be cleared with the student's small group and the instructor.

2. Each student will be expected to participate in a small group. These groups are designed to practice skills learned in class and from assigned workbook exercises. These groups will be expected to meet 12 hours outside of class time during the semester. These hours are scheduled on a weekly basis for at least one hour. (See the following "Lab Requirements" section.)

3. Each student will present one or two practice counseling session before the class. This session will be 20 minutes, with 10 minutes of feedback. The session will be observed by the class members. Feedback sheets emphasizing the positive will be provided to the counselor by classmates and the professor. The second one can be a video of the student’s counseling.

4. Reading the texts and completing designated assignments in a handbook of exercises are required. The exercises in the handbook are selected to illustrate the various stages and skills in a counseling process. VIDEO TAPES will be used in the early class sessions to demonstrate and illustrate the skills that are being taught in the course readings, workbook, and lectures.

LAB REQUIREMENTS:
1. Students will be assigned to small groups for the practice of skills learned in class and from the readings and workbook. These groups will meet weekly for one hour, for a total of 12 hours over the semester.

2. The weekly time is to be used for reviewing the workbook assignments, for completing the practical exercises, and for the practice of skill development.

3. Each student will be responsible to conduct four counseling sessions. One and maybe two of these sessions will be scheduled during a class period. Credit will be given for completing these in-class counseling sessions as scheduled. The quality of the counseling will be evaluated, but is not being graded. The other two or three of these are to be scheduled outside of class with his/her group. One of the counseling sessions is required to be video taped. A written summary of that session will be prepared including a typescript verbatim of a 3-5 minute segment of the session. This will be turned into the instructor. This should be no longer than five pages.
The following format is to be used for the written summary of this video session:

Section I - Identify place, date and time.

Section II - Provide a brief summary of any previous sessions related to this one, include a brief overview of the issue(s) leading up to this session.

Section III - Describe this session and include a verbatim segment (3-5 min.) of the dialog from this session.

Section IV - Conclude with a critique of the session. Discuss:
   What were your goals?
   Where were you in reference to the Egan outline and why?
   How did your responses facilitate and/or hinder the progress in the session?
   What did you like about what you did or did not do as the counselor?
   What would you like to do differently next time?

Section V - Summarize what you have learned from this session.

4. Students will be expected to meet with a supervisor for one session to review their sessions. The supervisor will be an advanced practicum student under Dr. Headley’s supervision. Information on how to make this appointment and how to use this time will be discussed in class. This will be a confidential supervisory session as are all class work and triad practice sessions.

COURSE EVALUATION:

The final grade will be determined by:

1. Attendance and quality of weekly participation in class.
2. Examinations of the student's understanding of the counseling process/skills.
3. The preparation of a written summary and critique of one video counseling session.
4. The completion of a reflection paper at the conclusion of the seminar. This paper is to be no more than five pages in length, doubled spaced, and will be prepared using the following outline:

   A - The Importance/Value of Understanding Process in Counseling
   B - The Strengths and Weaknesses of Egan's Method
   C - Description of Personal Growth and Gains During Semester
   D - Summary of Personal Growth Areas Needing More Development.
   E - Summary of the value of having been a counselee.
       (Use one page or less for each of the five categories)

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

1. Two Examinations: 60%
   First Exam - September 24 (20%)
   Final Exam - December 15 (40%)

2. The written video counseling session summary 20%

3. Final Reflection Paper 10%

4. Weekly class participation and completing assignments 10%

NOTE: This class requires members to share portions of their personal life and thoughts. Therefore rules regarding confidentiality should be followed. This applies both to class time and out-of-class group sessions. Tapes should be erased after they have been used. Visitors are not able to attend this class.