GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

EDCD 797: BRIEF THERAPY-LEVEL I (3 CREDITS)–SPRING SEMESTER 2005

Instructor: Nancy Newport, LPC
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Class: Saturdays 9:30 AM - 6:00 PM
       March 12, March 19, March 26, April 2 and April 16, 2005
Office Hours: By appointment
Office Address: 3913 Old Lee Highway, Suite 32-A
                Fairfax, VA 22030

Course Description

Brief Therapy is an approach to counseling that builds on the internal and external resources of the client in the process of fostering and promoting personal change. It derives from the tradition of family therapy and the work of Milton Erickson and reflects the current trend toward a more cooperative and respectful approach in the therapeutic setting.

This course will provide a brief overview of the history, evolution, philosophy and theoretical approaches of Brief Therapy. The main focus of the course will be on the learning and practicing of Solution-Oriented Brief Therapy strategies and interventions that lead toward assisting clients in making the changes they desire in their lives in an atmosphere of respect and optimism.

Learning Objectives

1. To become familiar with the history, evolution, philosophy and theoretical approaches of Brief Therapy.
2. To become familiar with Milton Erickson, MD and others who have influenced the development of Brief Therapy.
3. To become familiar with various models of Brief Therapy: Bill O'Hanlon's Solution-Oriented therapy, Solution focused therapy and other collaborative/competency based approaches to therapy.
4. To develop an understanding for the four common therapeutic factors in effective therapy: client/extratherapeutic factors, relationship factors, placebo, hope and expectancy factors, and model/technique factors.
5. To understand the concept of change and how these strategies work to create a friendly environment.
6. To become familiar with specific strategies and interventions that foster change in a respectful and optimistic environment.
7. To become familiar with goal-setting processes and effective ways to assist clients to achieve their goals.
8. To experience supervised practice in the use of change strategies and interventions in the classroom setting.

Course Requirements

I. Reaction Paper 3 pages Due: March 26, 2005

Based on the readings and class discussions, write your thoughts and reactions to the Brief Therapy Model and the concept of change and goal setting. How is it fitting with your personal belief system about change? What parts appeal to you most and why? What challenges, if any, is the Model creating for you and how are you working with that?

II. Case Study I Group Presentation Due: April 16, 2005

This assignment will be done in groups of five. Each group will create a written case scenario to evaluate and present orally to the class. Preparation time will be provided in class. Describe how you would use a Brief Therapy approach with your client. The main focus is on your demonstration of a comprehensive understanding of Brief Therapy thinking. Include strategies and interventions and explain how you choose them based on how you are thinking about:

- the client
- his or her problem
- what does your client want?
- your relationship with the client
- your views about possibilities for change for this client
- internal and external resources in your client
- how has your client solved similar problems in the past?

A written summary is to be distributed to class at presentation. Presentation will be 15-20 minutes including questions and class discussion.

III. Case Study II 10-12 Pages Due: May 2, 2005

Contract for therapy with a client for at least 2 sessions utilizing the Solution-Oriented Brief Therapy model. Audio tape your sessions with client consent. Write up the counseling sessions as a case study. (Submit your audiotape with your paper. Label the tape with your name, not your client’s name).

If you are in a clinical setting, you may choose to work with one of your clients. If you are not in a clinical setting, you may work with a fellow student in the GMU counseling program or even this class. If you work with a fellow student, please protect their confidentiality by using a different name and changing any identifying data.

1. Client Information:

   - Presenting problem and what client wants to be different
   - How client views and does the problem
• Internal and external resources of client that you noted
• Problematic patterns of interaction that you noted or client described

2. Clinical interventions utilized such as:
• Acknowledgement and validation
• Joining behaviors (matching, reading feedback)
• Possibility language (presuppositional statements, reflecting in past tense, etc.)
• Solution-oriented questions (coping, scaling, etc.)
• Pattern interruptions

3. Goal setting (behavioral terms)
• What strategies did you use to assist your client in identifying and clarifying his/her goals?

4. Task Assignments
• Rationale for task selection, Who selected task? Was there mutual agreement on task selected?
• Did your client do the task, modify the task, or not do the task?
• Your theory about the response to the task assignment

5. Resolution of case
• What progress did your client make?
• What will be his/her next step?

NOTE: All papers are to be written according to APA format (double spaced, numbered pages, a font of 12). Papers should be corrected for spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Mail your paper and audiotape in a large manila envelope with another large, self-addressed, stamped envelope (if you wish your paper to be returned to you). Deliver or mail to:
Nancy Newport, LPC
3913 Old Lee Highway, Suite 32-A
Fairfax, VA 22030

Your paper must be postmarked or hand delivered to my office by May 2, 2005. NO CERTIFIED MAIL.

IV. Class Participation & Practice / Experiential Learning

Students are expected to actively involve themselves in the experiential learning opportunities with classroom practice of strategies and interventions being studied. Opportunities for practice will be provided during class. Students will work in triads and take turns being the counselor, the observer and the client. Students are expected to use real
issues in their lives to work on in class. Confidentiality will be expected of each student. Each student may choose the level of problem they wish to work on and it is expected that students will use discretion in the selection of problems. All sessions will be audiotaped by the counselor for self-evaluation. Confidentiality of tapes will be respected. Classroom practice sessions will be assessed using feedback/intervention tools. Points will be subtracted from grade if student neglects to bring a functioning tape recorder and blank tape to each class. It is expected that students attend every class given the importance of active participation in the class discussions and exercises. More than one unexcused absence will result in not receiving credit for the course.

**Grading System**

Reaction Paper - 10 points
Case Study I (group presentation) - 20 points
Case Study II - 45 points (attached rubric will be utilized)
Class Participation, Attendance, and Experiential Practice - 25 points

96-100 points = A
91-95 points = A –
86-90 points = B+
81-85 points = B
76-80 points = B -
75-79 points = C+
70-74 points = C

**Required Reading**


**Class schedule**

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one" --Mark Twain

| Class 1 | March 12 | **Brief Therapy Overview:** History, Evolution, Philosophy of Brief Therapy, Theoretical approaches that foster change  
**Joining with the client:** Acknowledgement and Validation, Opening up to Possibilities, Matching Language, Inclusion  
O'Hanlon & Beadle, Front words and Chapter 1  
Bertolino & O'Hanlon, Preface, Intro, and Chapters 1 & 2 |
|---|---|---|

| Class 2 | March 19 | Changing the Viewing of the Problem  
O'Hanlon & Beadle, Chapter 2  
Bertolino & O'Hanlon, Chapter 5 |
|---|---|---|

| Class 3 | March 26 | Goal Setting, Connecting with Internal and External Resources  
**REACTION PAPER DUE**  
O'Hanlon & Beadle, Chapters 3 & 4  
Bertolino & O'Hanlon, Chapters 3 & 4 |
|---|---|---|

| Class 4 | April 2 | Changing the Doing of the Problem  
Preparation time for Group Presentations  
O'Hanlon & Beadle, Chapter 5 & Back Words  
Bertolino & O'Hanlon, Chapters 6 & 7 |
|---|---|---|

| Class 5 | April 16 | Brief Therapy Philosophy Integration  
**GROUP PRESENTATIONS**  
Bertolino & O'Hanlon, Chapters 8 & 9  
CASE STUDY DUE  
(postmarked by)  
May 2, 2005 |