

## GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

### EDCD 797: BRIEF THERAPY-LEVEL II (3 CREDITS)–FALL SEMESTER 2005

Instructor: Nancy Newport, LPC  
Phone: 703-352-9005 Fax: 703-352-8999  
Class: Saturdays 9:30 - 6:00  
**October 1, October 15, October 29, November 5 and November 19, 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 more in-depth study of Brief Therapy strategies and interventions that will lead toward assisting clients in making the changes that they desire in their lives in an atmosphere of respect and optimism. This advanced class will focus on specific therapeutic issues and how to address them utilizing the Brief Therapy approach. Specific issues covered will be anxiety, depression, trauma, chronic mental illness, substance abuse and eating disorders.

#### Learning Objectives

1. To achieve more experience using specific strategies and interventions with clients that foster change.
2. To deepen the understanding of the concept of change.
3. To develop more skill in being an agent of change in the therapeutic setting.
4. To become familiar with the application of Brief Therapy principles with a variety of treatment populations.
5. To experience supervised practice in the use of Brief Therapy strategies and interventions.

## Course Requirements

### **I. Class Participation and Practice/Experiential Learning**

Students are expected to actively involve themselves in the experiential learning opportunities with classroom practice of strategies and interventions being studied.

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.

### **II. Case Study**

**10-12 Pages**

**Due: November 5, 2005**

Contract for therapy with a client for at least 2-3 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. Tapes will not be returned).

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
- Possibility language/hopeful rephrases
- Joining behaviors
- Solution-oriented questions
- Presuppositional language
- Goals (in behavioral terms)
- Pattern interruptions
- Other interventions and rationale for use and client response
- Task assignments, rationale, mode of delivery and client response
- Resolution of problem or how you envision the problem will be solved

Note: If, due to the nature of the presenting problem, you are unable to include any item above, please so indicate and describe how you would have included it if you could.

NOTE: All papers are to be written according to APA format (double spaced, numbered pages).

Mail your paper 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 Monday, November 28, 2005. NO CERTIFIED MAIL.**

### **III. Group Presentation**

**Due: November 28, 2005**

This assignment will be done in small groups. Each group will create a written case scenario to evaluate and present orally to the class. Focus will be on recognition and interruption of patterns of interaction. A written summary is to be distributed to the class at presentation. Presentation should be about 15-30 minutes including questions and class discussion.

Group grade will be based on:

- Assessment of case utilizing Brief Therapy principles
- Presentation of case including written summary
- Quality of group teamwork demonstrated

### **Grading System**

Case Study - 40%

Group Presentation – 20%

Experiential Practice/Class Participation and Attendance – 40%

96-100 points = A

91-95 points = A-

86-90 points = B+

81-85 points = B

76-80 points = B-

70-75 points = C

### **Required Reading**

O'Hanlon, B., and Bertolino, B. (1998) Even From a Broken Web. John Wiley and Sons, Inc.:  
New York

O'Hanlon, B., and Weiner-Davis, M. (1989) In Search of Solutions. W. W. Norton: NY

Rowan, T., and O'Hanlon, B. (1999) Solution-Oriented Therapy for Chronic and Severe  
Mental Illness John Wiley and Sons, Inc.: New York.

**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** October 1 **Anxiety and Depression Treatment  
Risk Management**

O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, Forward, Chapters 1-4

**Class 2** October 15 **Problematic Patterns**

O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, Chapters 5-9

**Class 3** October 29 **Chronic Mental Illness, Substance Abuse**

Rowan & O'Hanlon, entire book

**Class 4** November 5 **Eating Disorders**  
**Laura Ratner, LCSW – Guest Speaker**

**Group Presentations, Pattern Interruptions**

**Class 5** November 19 **Trauma**  
**(including rape, sexual abuse, domestic violence)**

Bertolino & O'Hanlon, entire book

**Case Study Due (postmarked by) November 28, 2005**