

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**  
**Counseling and Development**

EDCD 797.B01 – Advanced Solution-Focused Brief Therapy  
1 Credit, Summer 2017  
Tuesdays and Thursdays – June 8<sup>th</sup> – June 22<sup>nd</sup> 7:20 – 10:00 PM  
Krug Hall Room 107 – Fairfax

**Faculty**

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**Prerequisites/Corequisites**

Admission to the CNDV program, EDCE 603

**University Catalog Course Description**

Advanced study of selected topics in education for students who have been admitted to the Counseling and Development program.

**Course Overview**

The Advanced Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) course has been developed for mental health and school counselors who wish to develop a deeper understanding of the principles and uses of solution focused brief therapy with specific client populations.

This course is designed as a seminar to provide students with a basic understanding and practical application of solution-focused brief therapy. The content will include the history, principles, and practical techniques of solution-focused brief therapy. There will be a heavy emphasis on skill development and practice.

**Course Delivery Method**

This course will be delivered using a face-to-face format. In particular, this course will incorporate lectures, demonstrations of the practice interventions, experiential skill-building exercises, full class and small group discussions, cooperative learning groups, student presentations, and personal reflection.

**Learner Outcomes or Objectives**

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the core tenets of solution focused brief therapy.

2. Integrate and demonstrate the application of procedures, techniques, and methods of SBFT that reflect best practices for problem areas or helping diverse client/student groups.
3. Identify strengths in clients/students and client/student systems that can assist in resolving problems.
4. Help clients/students identify and capitalize on their own strengths through various interventions including the miracle question, exception questions, pre-session change questions, etc.
5. Select, apply and critically evaluate interventions in solution focused practice with various client/student systems
6. Apply the model in a flexible manner that incorporates the clients'/students' diversity, cultural backgrounds and environmental constraints
7. Conduct initial interviews using SFBT methods

### **Professional Standards (CACREP)**

EDCD 797 is a special topics course and meets the requirement that all master's students take 2-3 credits of special topics course work. This 1-credit course will contribute to counseling students' knowledge of a particular population of clients.

EDCD 797 fulfills the requirements of the following professional organizations

Virginia Department of Education requirement for school counseling licensure that candidates understand the knowledge, skills and processes of individual counseling. Virginia Department of Health Professions requirement that Licensed Professional Counselor candidates complete graduate study in theories and techniques of counseling and psychotherapy. Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) core requirement described in Section II.K.e: Helping relationships: An understanding of counseling and consultation processes. American Counseling Association Code of Ethics requirement that counselors establish counselor education and training programs that integrate academic study and supervised practice.

### **Required Texts**

Bannink, F. (2010). *1001 solution-focused questions: Handbook for solution-focused interviewing*. WW Norton & Company.

### **Course Performance Evaluation**

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, Tk20, hard copy).

#### **• Assignments and Examinations**

- **Assignment 1: Active Participation [20 points].** Students are expected to attend all classes and come to class prepared having completed all reading and written assignments. This course is practice related. Each class includes "Group Discussion Activities" and/or "Skill-building Exercises" as opportunities for students to share what they are learning or

practice the associated skills. There are opportunities for students to use their own family history and life experiences in these activities: therefore confidentiality is expected. Class participation includes active class involvement and discussion, demonstrating an understanding of SFBT techniques, and evidence of having read the readings. Class involvement is graded based on the professor's observation of class participation. The class participation grade is not only determined by the quantity of participation behaviors but also on the quality of the participation (i.e., making salient comments reflecting preparation and knowledge of the material, and raising thought-provoking questions, comments, and/or other pertinent information).

Active participation is also based on your presence in the class—one unexcused absence will automatically result in failing the class. Excused absences may be allowed or declined entirely at the discretion of the instructor on a case by case basis. Finally, lateness to or leaving early from class can count towards someone's absence and/or participation grade. If you must miss a class or arrive late, please call and notify the professor before the class meeting. **Contacting the instructor for absences, late arrivals or early dismissals is a courtesy and does not necessarily mean exemption from attendance and participation responsibility; this means points may be deducted as stated in the syllabus.** A rubric will be provided on Blackboard.

- **Assignment 2: Weekly Reading Questions [20 points].** In order to help students complete their reading assignments, students will hand in at least **one** multi-level question (typed) **for each** assigned chapter prior to the start of each class meeting. The multi-level question(s) will form the basis of class discussions. The professor will not accept late questions. Students will not be allowed to make up Reading Discussion Questions points under any circumstance (with the exception of an excused absence). Each set of questions not handed in on time will receive the score of zero (0). A rubric will be provided on Bb.
- **Assignment 3: Group Modeling of SFBT Components [30 points].** The class will divide into five groups for studying and preparing short video clips or live demonstrations that model the components of SFBT. Each group's goal is to experientially model one or a few specific intervention practices of SFBT in a client(s)/counselor format. The components to be modeled will match the classes related to the practice components of SFBT, including, but not limited to: 1) building an alliance; 2) exploring exceptions; 3) miracle questions; 4) scaling; 5) experiments, homework, and formulating goals. More details about this assignment will be given in class. A rubric will be provided on Bb.
- **Assignment 4: Video Demonstration of SFBT [30 points].** Each student must turn in a video demonstration of a solution-focused counseling session they have conducted. The video must include all the parts of a solution-focused counseling session as they are elucidated in the SFBT textbook. Students are free to use peers, friends, or other volunteers who know little about SFBT as their "interviewees" with the understanding that the participant is aware that the tape is being turned in as an assignment, that their participation is NOT confidential, and that the tape may be used (with their permission)

as a teaching instrument in the future. More details about this assignment will be given in class. A rubric will be provided on Bb.

For additional clarification and explanation about course requirements and assignments, please make necessary arrangement to speak with me.

## **SUMMARY OF GRADING SYSTEM AND COURSE REQUIRMENTS**

Active Participation	20 points
Weekly Reading Questions	20 points
Group Modeling of SFBT Components	30 points
<u>Video Demonstration of SFBT</u>	<u>30 points</u>
TOTAL:	100 points

### **Grading Scale:**

In accordance with the George Mason University Grading Policy, the following grades may be achieved:

A	97—100
A-	94—96
B+	91—93
B	87—90
B-	84—86
C	80—83
F	0—79

## **COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

APA Format: Students in Counseling & Development courses are expected to use APA style (6th ed.) for written papers.

### Electronic Devices

Turn off and put away all electronic communication devices during class. Cell phones, pagers, and other communicative devices are not allowed in this class. Please keep them stowed away and out of sight. Laptops or tablets (e.g. iPads) may be permitted for the purpose of taking notes only, but you must submit a request in writing to do so. Engaging in activities not related to the course (e.g. gaming, email, chat, text, etc.) will result in a significant reduction in your participation grade. Notify the instructor prior to class if you have an emergency situation that requires accommodation.

### Attendance

In accordance with the policies of the Counseling and Development Program, on-time attendance at every class meeting is expected. Late arrival to class may be considered an absence. Due to the short nature of this class, **more than one unexcused absences will result in class failure.** Attendance is required for all classes. Excused absences are permitted for illness, religious

holidays, or emergency situations only; documentation is required for the absence to be considered excused. Work-related absences are not considered excused.

### Course Requirements

Each student is expected to: (1) attend each class, (2) complete all reading assignments before class, arrive on time and stay for the entire class period, (4) participate in discussions and in-class work groups, (5) regularly check GMU email, and (6) submit or access documents via Blackboard as assigned.

### Assignments

As a graduate student, it is expected that all of your work will be turned in on the assigned dates. If an assignment is accepted at a later date, it is subject to a penalty of 10% of the award for every day it is overdue. Assignments are considered late after 10 minutes of the class session in which they are due. If you are absent, you are responsible for the information missed in class, including but not limited to assignments, change in due dates, content of discussion and/or lecture, and handouts. All assignment should be uploaded via Blackboard, as well as turned into class, at the start of class via hard copy on the day the assignment is due.

### **Professional Dispositions**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

## Class Schedule

Class	Date	Topic(s)	Readings Due	Assignment(s) Due
1	June 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2017	Introduction & Overview Solution-Focused Interviewing Motivational Interviewing	Bannink 2010 Chapters 1 & 2	
2	June 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2017	The First Session The Subsequent Session	Bannink 2010 Chapters 3 & 4	
3	June 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2017	Homework Suggestions Concluding the Session Reflecting on the Session	Bannink 2010 Chapters 5, 6, & 11	<b>Group Modeling of SFBT Components</b>
4	June 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2017	Solution Focused Skills Working with Other Professionals Impasse and Failure	Bannink 2010 Chapters 7, 8, & 9	
5	June 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2017	Solution Focused Interviewing from Start to Finish SFBT and CBT	Bannink 2010 Part 3: Chapters 12, 13, & Appendices	<b>Video Demonstration of SFBT</b>

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

### Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

### GMU Policies and Resources for Students

#### *Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

### *Campus Resources*

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to [tk20help@gmu.edu](mailto:tk20help@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursesupport.gmu.edu/>.
- The Writing Center provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing (see <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>).
- The Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance (see <http://caps.gmu.edu/>).
- The Student Support & Advocacy Center staff helps students develop and maintain healthy lifestyles through confidential one-on-one support as well as through interactive programs and resources. Some of the topics they address are healthy relationships, stress management, nutrition, sexual assault, drug and alcohol use, and sexual health (see <http://ssac.gmu.edu/>). Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone at 703-993-3686. Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community by going to <http://ssac.gmu.edu/make-a-referral/>.

**For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/>.**