

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**  
**School Psychology Program**

SPSY 692 Counseling in the Schools  
3 Credits, Spring 2020  
Mondays 7:20-10:00pm - Aquia Building 219, Fairfax

**Faculty**

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**Prerequisites:**

EDCD 603 or with permission of instructor.

**Catalog Course Description:**

- Examines theories, techniques, and counseling issues relevant to children and adolescents. Develops basic and advanced counseling skills, and provides experience receiving verbal and written feedback on simulated counseling sessions. Explores range of community agencies providing mental health services. Counseling practice provides an emphasis on process and culturally competent counseling strategies.

**Course Overview:**

- This course focuses on advanced counseling skills and techniques relevant to children and adolescents and builds on the knowledge and skills learned in the beginning counseling course. The course is designed to help students develop basic and advance counseling skills and experience receiving verbal and written feedback on simulated counseling sessions in order to prepare you for your internships and a professional career in school psychology. The course will also provide insight into role of multicultural factors in the development of counseling relationships.

**Course Delivery:**

- This course is taught through a combination of lectures, class discussions, small group discussions, group presentations, assigned readings, experiential exercises, research, multi-media and presentations. There may also be guest speakers to advance and evaluate students' knowledge and skills.

### **Learner Outcomes and Objectives:**

1. Explore and describe evidence-based strategies for prevention/wellness and intervention/counseling to address developmental and mental health issues commonly facing children and adolescents.
2. Understand and apply intervention strategies to effectively counsel children and adolescents individually and in groups.
3. Develop culturally competent counseling skills.
4. Discover and understand community mental health agencies that commonly collaborate with schools
5. Understand ethical obligations and guiding principles of School Psychologists as outlined by the National Association of School Psychologists.

### **Professional Standards:**

This course contributes to the development of knowledge and skills in the following National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) professional standards:

IV. Direct and Indirect Services: student level services

Element 4.2 Intervention and mental health services to develop social and life skills

VI. Direct and Indirect Services: Systems level services: family school collaboration services (community)

VIII. Research, Program Evaluation, Legal, Ethical, and professional practice

Element 8.2 Legal, ethical and professional practice

## **REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS**

De Lucia-Waack, J. (2006). *Leading psychoeducational groups for children and adolescents*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Cook-Cottone, C. P., & Kane, L. S. (2015). *Elements of counseling children and adolescents*. New York, NY: Springer Publications.

*Professional articles will be assigned and distributed via Blackboard or as indicated on the course Schedule; further articles may be assigned at any time during the semester.*

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Assignment 1: Participation and Attendance (10% of total grade)**

As a skill-based class, we will spend a great deal of time processing information through class discussion, group work, role-play and participating in experiential activities. Because the class will be experiential, the class experience cannot be replicated. For these reasons, your class attendance and active participation is vital not only to your learning, but to your classmates' learning as well. Several factors will go into your participation grade, including:

- a. participation (every student is expected to make every attempt to be at every class)

- b. punctuality (every student is expected to be ready to go when class begins, and to stay for the duration of class time)
- c. active participation in class exercises (contributing ideas, giving feedback, and participating in group discussions)
- d. substantive contributions to class discussions (not quantity of contributions, but contributions that demonstrate thoughtful analysis of information; comments that move discussion forward; comments based on knowledge and experience, not just opinion; and a demonstrated ability to propose new ideas and/or build on others' ideas in a meaningful way).

### **Assignment 2: Weekly Self-Reflection Journal (10% of total grade)**

In order to ensure ongoing professional development and personal growth it is vital for school psychologists to continually engage in self-reflection. This assignment will provide students the opportunity to engage in that process by producing a brief weekly journal entry in which the student will identify current areas of strengths as a counselor, areas of growth regarding counseling skills, and specific plan(s) to improve their counseling skills. Journals may also be used to reflect upon personal issues that may be brought up during counseling sessions or lectures, as it is important to be aware of one's need for self-care when working with students and families. Weekly journals will provide the basis for the group supervision model and may be reviewed in class. Students will determine which reflections to share with the larger group. Each journal entry will be submitted via Blackboard and will be graded as very insightful (1.0 point), adequate (0.5point), or inadequate/not turned in (0 points). Journal entries must be submitted after each class session and no later than the start of the next class session. **Begin Journal entries after 1<sup>st</sup> class on 1/27. Final entry due on 5/04.**

### **Assignment 3: Counseling Transcripts and Self-Evaluations (40% of total grade)**

The counseling transcript and self-evaluation is the performance-based assessment for this course. Students will record and transcribe a total of two role play counseling sessions. Each individual session should be between 20-30 minutes. Each student will take a turn being the School Psychologist/Helper and the Student/Client. Students are encouraged to incorporate strategies and approaches learned throughout the semester into their sessions. Students will be graded on the following:

- a) effective use of appropriate counseling strategies based on developmental stage and cultural considerations,
- b) case conceptualization,
- c) self-reflection and evaluation of skills,
- d) accuracy of transcripts and notation of specific skills, and
- e) growth in response to feedback from the professor and others throughout the semester.

### **Individual Session Recording/Transcription #1 (20%)**

- For each individual session recording, students will transcribe a 10 – 15 minute section of the session.
- Students will turn in the transcription and recording of the session in which they are the School Psychologist/Helper along with the following materials: case conceptualization form, self-evaluation form, and peer-evaluation form. **Transcription #1 and all supplemental docs Due 3/2.**

### **Individual Session Recording/Transcription # 2 (20%)**

- For each individual session recording, students will transcribe a 10 – 15 minute section of the session.
- Students will turn in the transcription and recording of the session in which they are the School Psychologist/Helper along with the case conceptualization form and self-evaluation form. A peer evaluation form is not required for the second session. **Transcription #2 and all supplemental docs Due 4/13.**

**Coded Transcriptions:** For each individual session recording, students will transcribe a 10 – 15 minute section of the sessions. In the far-left column, list exactly what was said during the session, for example, using H1 for the helper’s first statement and C1 for the client’s first statement (for group sessions, use a key to denote how each student/client and helper/school psychologist will be coded). In the center column, list the skill you used with that statement. In the comments column on the far right, list your thoughts about what you said, what you might have said differently, your observations about the efficacy of your response based on what the client said, and any other observations you make regarding your skills during the session.

### **Transcription Example:**

<b>Client and Helper Responses</b>	<b>The Skill You Used</b>	<b>Comments/Reflections</b>
H1: What would you like to talk about today?	Open Question	I think I will try something less “canned” next time, such as “How would you like to begin?”
C1: I am having a problem with my boyfriend.		
H2: Tell me more about that.	Minimal Encourager and Door Opener	She paused as if she wanted me to say something, so I encouraged her to continue.
C2: I think he is keeping something from me. He is acting differently and seems very distant. He has never been like this before.		

### **Transcripts:**

The following questions may help you analyze your work that is included in your transcript:

- What were you thinking or feeling when the client said that?
- Were you able to respond to the client’s content and/or feelings?
- What alternative response could you have given your client?
- What were the nonverbal behaviors of your client?
- How did you demonstrate that you were open to your client?

- What, if any, verbal or non-verbal communication demonstrated your emotions (such as approval, disapproval, relief, anxiety, etc.) at what your client said or did?

**Case Conceptualization** – (a) a brief sketch of the child/children or adolescent(s) and the specific approach, (b) presenting concerns (in the language of the approach), (c) goals for the sessions, and (d) proposed process of counseling based on counselor approach, presenting concern, and child/adolescent developmental/cultural characteristics. Your case conceptualization form will also be used as a self-evaluation tool.

#### **Assignment 4: Group Counseling Presentation (30% of total grade)**

Students will work in small groups (2-3 students) to plan a 4-6 session group counseling intervention. The group counseling plan must include at least 3 creative therapy activities and/or interventions (e.g., biblio-therapy, games/board games, science experiments, mind-body awareness, computer-based resources, expressive arts –art, music, play, etc.) to use with children and/or adolescents.

Students will present their group counseling plan to the class. The entire class should be afforded the opportunity to participate in at least two activities from the group counseling intervention. Additionally, a handout, outlining the group counseling intervention, should be supplied to all class members as well as the instructor. The handout must include the following information:

- Description of the identified concern for the group
- Target population- include age range, presenting problem, etc.
- Target number of participants
- Recruitment Strategies
- Length and Number of Sessions
- SMART goal for the group counseling intervention
- Data Collection Plan (e.g., Pre-test administered before first lesson & Post-test administered after last lesson; Final outcome data [achievement/attendance/or discipline] compared against baseline)
- Needs Assessment (attach a copy to the end of the handout)
- Outline of each group counseling session including topics, activities/interventions, process/discussion questions, etc.
- Evidence Base for the intervention
- Developmental and Multicultural Considerations
- Overall Strengths and Weaknesses of the group counseling intervention
- References, Sources (*websites may be used as a resource. References should also include books and/or journal articles, and other professional sources*).

Presentations should be approximately 25 minutes followed by two activities from the group intervention. The presentation should ideally be both creative and interactive. Finally, design and provide a form for peer evaluation/ feedback of the presentation. **Group Counseling Presentations scheduled for 4/20 and 4/27.**

### **Assignment 5: Community Agency Paper (10% of total grade):**

In order to gain a better understanding of mental health and coaching services that are provided in the community, students will complete a short overview (2 page maximum) of a community agency to whom referrals may be made. It is **highly recommended** that students visit the agency and interview a clinician who works with the agency. The Community Agency Overview should include the following information:

- Name and location of the agency or service
- An overview of the services or interventions the agency provides
- Mental Health professionals employed by the agency
- Schedule of services
- Website or web resources
- Clientele (i.e. target age range, presenting problem, etc.)
- Means of referral
- Costs/Insurance Accepted
- Merits and drawbacks
- Brochures or materials
- Overview of your visit and/or interview

### **Community Agency Paper Due 3/23**

#### **EVALUATION- ASSIGNMENT WEIGHTS**

1. Participation and Attendance	10%
2. Weekly Self Reflection Journal Entries	10%
3. Individual Counseling Transcripts and Supplemental Materials	
a. Counseling Tape #1 (Individual Session Role Play)	20%
b. Counseling Tape #2 (Individual Session Role Play)	20%
4. Group Counseling Presentation	30%
5. Community Agency Paper	10%

#### **GRADES**

**Grading Scale** (Please note: A course grade less than B- requires that you retake the course. A grade of “F” does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education. Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 [B average] to remain in good academic standing.)

A+ = 99-100; A = 93-98; A- = 90-92

B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82

C= 70-79

F= below 70

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

### **Electronic Devices**

Please silence cell phones during class. Laptops or tablets (e.g. iPads) may be permitted for the purpose of taking notes only. 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 or family situation that requires accommodation.

### **Assignment Policy**

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 15 minutes of the class session in which they are due. When 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 via hard copy on the day the assignment is due.

Students must have their own audio/digital recording equipment. Digital recorders are recommended. Students are expected to be able to use a computer, send and retrieve email, open attachments, access to the internet, participate in online discussions, use Blackboard, and conduct a library search on line. In addition, students should check Blackboard and their GMU email for course updates on a daily basis. All course documents will be available on Blackboard. Email messages sent using Blackboard need to be forwarded to your GMU email. For more information on checking-out audio/digital recording equipment, please visit [STAR Multimedia](#) or call (703) 993-8990. Please note that the C&D program has video equipment available for check-out. Please speak with the instructor for more information.

### **Professional Dispositions**

#### ***Ethical Obligations***

All school psychologists and school psychology students, to include University Supervisors, Students, and On-Site Supervisors, are bound by the professional ethical standards and practices of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). University and On-Site Supervisors must also adhere to NASP's Code of Ethics, Section on Supervision: Supervision, Training and Teaching. See the NASP Ethical Codes (2010) for detailed information.

See also <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures>

## Tentative Class Schedule

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

<b>Class</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic(s) Activities</b>	<b>Readings Due</b>	<b>Assignment(s) Due</b>
1	1/27/20	Orientation, Introductions, Ethics & Syllabus	NASP Ethical Guidelines	
2	2/3/20	Counseling Children and Adolescents Developmental Framework <i>Basic Skills Review</i>	Cook-Cottone et al.; Ch.1	<b>First Journal Entry Due</b>
3	2/10/20	Expressive and Creative Counseling Techniques Evidence-Based Counseling Curricula <i>Skill Work</i>	Cook-Cottone et al.; Ch.2 Article on Blackboard	
4	2/17/20	Brief Therapy with Children and Adolescents Solution Focused Counseling <i>Skill Work: Transcription #1 Recording</i>	Cook-Cottone et al.; Ch.3 Article on Blackboard	
5	2/24/20	Counseling Children from Diverse Backgrounds <i>Activity</i>	Cook-Cottone et al.; Ch.4 Article on Blackboard	
6	3/2/20	Small-Group Counseling <i>Skill Work</i>	DeLucia-Waack Ch. 1-2	<b>Transcription # 1 and supplemental docs Due</b>
7	3/9/20	No Class. Spring Break		
8	3/16/20	Small-Group Counseling <i>Advanced Skills Review</i>	DeLucia-Waack Ch.5-7	
9	3/23/20	Counseling Children and Adolescents with Special Needs/ Exceptional Children <i>Activity</i>	Articles on Blackboard	<b>Community Agency Paper Due</b>
10	3/30/20	Counseling At-Risk Children and Adolescents Motivational Interviewing <i>Skill Work: Transcription # 2 Recording</i>	Cook-Cottone et al.; Ch.5 Article on Blackboard	
11	4/6/20	Counseling At-Risk Children and Adolescents Crisis Intervention/ Mandated Reporting <i>Activity</i>	Cook-Cottone et al.; Ch.6	
12	4/13/20	Group Counseling Preparation and Group Work <i>Skill Work</i>	DeLucia-Waack Ch.8 Resources on Blackboard	<b>Transcription # 2 and supplemental docs Due</b>
13	4/20/20	Group Counseling Presentations		
14	4/27/20	Group Counseling Presentations		
15	5/4/20	Class Summary/Reflection Course Evaluation	Cook-Cottone et al.; Ch.7	<b>Final Journal Entry Due</b>



## 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 <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/> 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/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

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