

University of Massachusetts Boston
Graduate College of Education
Department of Counseling and School Psychology
Family Therapy Program
COU 625, Family Therapy Assessment and Intervention (3 Credits), Summer 2010
Course Instructor: Kristi Palmer, M.Ed., Ph.D. Candidate
Office Hours: By appointment
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Start date: June 14, 2010, End date: June 25, 2010
Meetings: Monday - Friday, 8:30am - 12:00pm, UMass-Dartmouth
Prerequisites: COU 616, 621, 622

Course Description

Family therapy has historically incorporated novel theories and struggled with the impact of race, ethnicity, gender, and other social and cultural determinants in the therapy encounter. The original family therapy founders had a passion for themes associated with change and therapeutic effectiveness, the person of the therapist, opening the therapeutic process to witnesses and observers, therapy as a team effort, and a focus on systems rather than isolated individuals. An ecosystemic approach to the practice of family therapy guides the practice of assessment and intervention skills, as well as clinical and ethical decision-making. Family systems concepts are examined in order to provide the basis for constructing family therapy interventions since a theoretically grounded clinician is more capable developing sound therapeutic interventions. Since the original major models in family therapy contributed a tremendous amount of assessment and intervention procedures, this course takes from the major family therapy theories the most useful systemic techniques, which have been demonstrated by research and clinical practice, to use as tools for conducting family therapy.

This graduate level course and will focus on the *practice* of systemic and ecosystemic family therapy techniques to assess and intervene. Brief didactic presentations provide the start for classroom discussions that are conducted in a collaborative and reflexive manner. Most of the class time is experiential and students are expected to participate fully in the various exercises. Students participate in role-plays that are videotaped and observed. The course emphasizes the learning of systemic family therapy modalities and attention is paid to the interview pragmatics, assessment, and intervention design. Videotaping interviews, team observations, enactment of family situations, interviews of families outside the classroom, use of consulting teams, and other methods are employed to heighten the learning process. Students should have a basic knowledge of general systems theory and the basic concepts informing intergenerational, structural, and strategic family therapy.

AAMFT Membership Requirement for Students in the UMass Boston Family Therapy Program: All matriculated UMass Family Therapy Program student must become student members of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). Student applications may be obtained from the AAMFT website: www.aamft.org.

Course Learning Objectives

1. To review major theories and interview strategies to assess family functioning using systemic, ecosystemic, and feminist perspectives and to integrate these theoretical concepts into coherent and ethical family therapy interventions.
2. To practice and experience the application of systemic, ecosystemic, and feminist family therapy techniques.
3. To prepare students to design and deliver sound clinical interventions with families and to continue acquiring a systemic mind in the discussion of cases.
4. To acquaint students with current multicultural professional practices in family therapy with a particular focus on resilience processes.
5. To learn how to work in family therapy teams, the pragmatics of live team supervision, and the creative use of observers of the therapeutic work.
6. To develop a keen understanding of the influence therapists exert on families and reflect about the ways the therapists' history influence interventions with families.

Required Texts

Becvar, D. S. (2007). *Families that flourish: Facilitating resilience in clinical practice*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Gehart, D. (2010). *Mastering competencies in family therapy: A practical approach to theories and clinical case documentation*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Additional required readings are listed in the course bibliography.

Course Policies

Class Participation and Attendance: This course relies heavily on experiential exercises. Students are expected to attend all classes and engage in classroom discussions and role-play activities. Each class member's contribution is valuable, and thus critical to class discussions and to class exercises. Class participation in this course requires a commitment to collaborative learning. A student will receive a grade of I (Incomplete) if more than two absences (for any reason) from class occur. Students are fully accountable for not attending.

If you plan to be absent from class:

- Inform the instructor through email.
- Contact your "role-play family" to let them know you will not be attending the class.

Accommodations: This graduate level course makes extensive use of discussion and requires writing, reading, fieldwork, review of videotapes, and personal commitment. If you need special accommodations, please inform the instructor about your situation the first day or by e-mail prior to the first class. Section 504 and the American with Disabilities

Act of 1990 offer guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain adaptation recommendations from The Ross Center (617-287-7430). Within the first two (2) days of the course, the student must present and discuss The Ross Center recommendations with the instructor.

Informed Consent Regarding Experiential Learning: This course relies heavily on experiential learning through in class and out of class role-plays, many of which are video recorded. During the first class, the instructor will discuss the video recording component of the course and obtain students' consent for recording. As part of the role-plays and related assignments, students will be asked to reflect on how their own personal histories intersect with their training to become a family therapist. Students should be aware that role-plays and the accompanying self-reflection, while offering many benefits for learning, may also bring up difficult emotions. While it is encouraged that students reflect on and incorporate their personal histories, it is not required that students self-disclose. Students who feel overwhelmed during class exercises are encouraged to consult with the instructor to discuss coping and possible accommodations.

Code of Conduct: Students are required to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct, including requirements for academic honesty, delineated in the University of Massachusetts Boston Graduate Studies Bulletin and relevant program student handbook(s).

Documentation: Students are advised to retain a copy of this syllabus in personal files for use when applying for licensure or transfer of credits.

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change.

Class Schedule

	Monday 8:30a-12p	Tuesday 8:30a-12p	Wednesday 8:30a-12p	Thursday 8:30a-12p	Friday 8:30a-12p
Week 1	June 14 Form Role Play Families	June 15	June 16 Assign 1 DUE	June 17 <i>Guest Instructor: Lindsay Edwards</i>	June 18 <i>Guest Instructor: Lindsay Edwards</i>
Week 2	June 21 Assign 2 DUE Assign 4a DUE	June 22	June 23 Assign 3 DUE	June 24	June 25 Assign 4b DUE Assign 4c DUE

Assignments

Due to the experiential nature of the course, we will not have enough time to review all the readings in class. The course assignments, however, require throughout understanding of the conceptual ideas included in the texts.

1. Family Interactions and Persona. Write an analysis of your understanding (hypotheses and interpretations) of your “role-play family.” Create a dialogue (a conversation) between your persona (the voice of your “role-play family member”) and yourself. This will not be shared with the rest of the “role-play family” (3-4 pages).

2. Model Comparison Summary and Reflection. Review chapters 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15 in the Gehart text (2010), as well as supplemental readings on family therapy models. After reviewing these references, complete the model comparison chart, summarizing the following dimensions for each model: key theoretical concepts, goals of therapy, role/stance of the therapist, assessment strategies, and key interventions. After completing the model comparison chart, write a brief (1-3 pages) reflection paper discussing your impressions of the strengths and weaknesses of the models included in the chart.

3. Family Genograms and Comparative Analysis

- Draw a genogram of your family of origin. Summarize one or two core themes of your own family of origin that may be highlighted by your participation in the “family role-play.” Use guidelines developed by McGoldrick, Gerson, and Shellenberger (1999) to build the genogram (3-4 pages).
- Write report in a manageable length as if you were going to include it in a client clinical record. Imagine that a family therapist has had the opportunity to interview your family when you were a child or an adolescent. How would a family therapist assess and intervene with your family using one of the systemic conceptual frameworks studied in this course? Utilize references as needed. All disclosures in this assignment will be kept in confidence (3-4 pages).
- In a reflexive essay, hypothesize about how the themes of your “role-play family” may resemble, remind, or resonate with your family of origin interactional, emotional, and contextual themes. This is an opportunity to work through issues that relate to the self-of-the-therapist (you) and not a detailed account of what happened in the family simulation (2-3 pages).

4. Family Therapy Interview. Each class member will interview and videotape one of the simulated families for approximately 30 minutes. This exercise will involve collaboration with your “role-play family” (classmates).

4a. Assessment. Write a paper (4-6 pages) addressing the following questions:

- What therapist stance was most successful in joining with the family?
- Chose two family therapy models and discuss how these two models can be used to assess the family’s concerns, expectations, and goals.

- 4b. Interventions. Write a paper (6-8 pages) addressing the following questions:
- What were the questions you asked and what was the family's reaction to them?
 - What questions or ideas would you formulate in a different way?
 - What elements should be included in a treatment plan with this family?
 - What would you do differently or repeat in a new interview?
 - What were the clinical and therapeutic challenges?
- 4c. Self of the Therapist. Write a paper (3-5 pages) addressing the following questions:
- What were your experiences as an interviewer?
 - What did you learn about interviewing families?
 - What concerns, regarding your response to this family, would you bring to a supervisor or team?

5. Take-Home Final Exam. Comparing Theoretical Approaches to Generate Hypotheses and Interventions. Students will view a video (created in class) that will form the basis for a paper addressing clinical hypotheses and interventions. This paper is integrative and assesses the level of comprehension of major concepts and techniques acquired through reading and experiential exercises. Students will be asked to identify several (2-3) hypotheses and then offer interventions.

Course Grading

Assignment	Due Date	Percent of Grade
1. Family Interactions and Persona	June 16	10%
2. Model Comparison Summary & Reflection	June 21	20%
3. Family Genogram & Comparative Analysis	June 23	15%
4. Family Therapy Interview		40%
4a. Assessment	June 21	(15%)
4b. Intervention	June 25	(20%)
4c. Self of Therapist	June 25	(5%)
Take-Home Final Exam	July 5	15%

Course Outline

Monday, June 14, 2010

Introduction and Overview

Overview of course

Introductions

Becoming aware of our lenses: Assumptions in family therapy assessment and intervention

Review of family systems concepts and models

The self-of-the-therapist

Formation of role-play families

Readings

Becvar (2007), Introduction and Chapter 1

Gehart (2010), Chapter 7 and Chapter 8

Pipher (2003), Introduction

Rober (2005), Therapist's inner dialogue and the self-of-the therapist

(These readings will be discussed during the first class. Please review them after the first class, as they present concepts that will be important throughout the class.)

Tuesday, June 15, 2010

Conceptualizing families: Themes in family functioning and family assessment

Families as systems

Intergenerational relationships

Life cycle stages and transitions

Family genograms

Readings

Becvar (2007), Chapter 2 and Chapter 3

Hanna (2007), Chapter 3, Themes in family functioning

McGoldrick, Gerson, and Shellenberger (1999), Appendix, Genograms

Carter & McGoldrick (2005), Life cycle perspective

The family therapy interview

Referral, intake, and first session procedures

Readings

Patterson *et al.* (2003), Chapter 3, The first session

Roberts (2005), Self-disclosure

Wednesday, June 16, 2010

Assignment 1 DUE

Assessment fundamentals

Application of systems concepts to assessment

Problem definition

Assessment tools

Readings

Gehart (2010), Chapters 2 and 3

Hanna (2007), Chapter 7, Relational assessment as intervention

Patterson et al. (2003), Chapter 4, Assessment guidelines

Becvar (2007), Chapter 6

The family therapy interview (continued)

Students begin role-play interviews with “role-play families”

Pragmatics of live supervision and reflecting team

Thursday, June 17, 2010

Guest Instructor: Lindsay Edwards, M.A., Ph.D. Candidate

Formulating questions

Students role-play interviews with “role-play families” (continued)

Readings

Ivey & Ivey (2003), Chapter 3, Questions

Fleuridas et al. (1986), Evolution of circular questioning

Friday, June 18, 2010

Guest Instructor: Lindsay Edwards, M.A., Ph.D. Candidate

Special considerations in couple assessment

Begin model comparison activity

Readings

Bigner & Wetchler (2004), Therapy with same-sex couples

Monday, June 21, 2010

Assignment 2 DUE

Assignment 4a DUE

Overview of family therapy models and interventions

Comparative analysis of structural, strategic, behavioral, humanistic, transgenerational, post-modern, and eco-systemic approaches

Video examples of interventions

Readings

Gehart (2010), Chapters 9-15 (review as part of Assignment 2)

Becvar (2007), Chapter 5

Tuesday, June 22, 2010

Structural and Strategic Family Therapy Models

Theory, assumptions, assessment, and interventions

Case example

Model-specific role-plays with “role-play families”

Readings

Gehart (2010), Chapter 9 and Chapter 10

Mitrani & Perez (2003), Structural-strategic therapy

Wednesday, June 23, 2010

Assignment 3 DUE

Experiential and Transgenerational Family Therapy Models

Theory, assumptions, assessment, and interventions

Case example

Model-specific role-plays with “role-play families”

Readings

Gehart (2010), Chapter 11 and Chapter 12

Whitaker & Keith (1981), Symbolic-experiential family therapy

Nichols (2003), Family-of-origin therapy

Thursday, June 24, 2010

Narrative, Solution Focused, and Eco-Systemic Family Therapies

Theory, assumptions, assessment, and interventions

Case example

Model-specific role-plays with “role-play families”

Readings

Gehart (2010), Chapter 14 and Chapter 15
McDaniel et al. (2001), Introduction to ecosystemic family therapy
Anderson (2005), Myths about not-knowing
McKergow & Korman (2009), Solution-focused approach
Sluzki (1992), narrative transformations

Friday, June 26, 2010

Assignment 4b DUE

Assignment 4c DUE

Course Wrap-Up and Final Exam Activity

Review course concepts
Summary of core interventions
Explanation of final take-home exam
View video for final take-home exam

Course Bibliography

Required Texts

Becvar, D. S. (2007). *Families that flourish: Facilitating resilience in clinical practice*. New York: Norton.

Gehart, D. (2010). *Mastering competencies in family therapy: A practical approach to theories and clinical case documentation*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Required Articles and Chapters

Anderson, H. (2005). Myths about "not-knowing." *Family Process*, 44, 497-504.

Chapter from Bigner & Wetchler (Eds.) (2004). *Relationship therapy with same-sex couples*. New York: Haworth Press. [Specific Chapter TBA]

Fleuridas, C., Nelson, T. S., & Rosenthal, D. M. (1986). The evolution of circular questions: Training family therapists. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 12(2), 113-127.

Hanna, S. M. (2007). Integration of theory: Common themes (Chapter 3, pp. 54-84). In *The practice of family therapy: Key elements across models* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Hanna, S. M. (2007). Relational assessment as intervention (Chapter 3, pp. 172-206). In *The practice of family therapy: Key elements across models* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Ivey, A. E., & Ivey, M. B. (2003). Questions: Opening communication (Chapter 3, pp. 67-94). In *Intentional interviewing: Facilitating client development in a multicultural society*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

McDaniel, S. H., Lusterman, D., Philpot, C. L. (2001). Introduction to integrative ecosystemic family therapy. In S. H. McDaniel, D. Lusterman, & C. L. Philpot (Eds.), *Casebook for integrating family therapy: An ecosystemic approach* (pp. 3-17). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Carter, B., & McGoldrick, M. (2005). Overview—The expanded family life cycle: Individual, family, and social perspectives. In M. McGoldrick & B. Carter (Eds.), *The expanded family life cycle: Individual, family, and social perspectives* (3rd ed.) (pp. 1-26). New York: Allyn & Bacon.

McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., & Shellenberger, S. (1999). Appendix, In *Genograms: Assessment and intervention* (pp. 191-197). New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

McKergow, M. W., & Korman, H. (2009). In between - neither inside nor outside: The radical simplicity of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 28(2), 34-49. Retrieved June 12, 2010, from <http://www.sfwork.com/jsp/index.jsp?lnk=6d8>

Mitrani, V. B., & Perez, M. A. (2003). Structural-strategic approaches to family therapy. In T. L. Sexton, G. R. Weeks, M. S. Robbins (Eds.), *Handbook of family therapy* (pp. 83-100). New York: Brunner-Routledge.

Nichols, W. C. (2003). Family-of-origin treatment. In T. L. Sexton, G. R. Weeks, M. S. Robbins (Eds.), *Handbook of family therapy* (pp. 83-100). New York: Brunner-Routledge.

Patterson, J., Williams, L., Edwards, T. M., Chamow, L., & Grauf-Grounds, C. (2009). The initial interview (Chapter 3, pp. 24-41). In *Essential skills in family therapy: From the first interviews to termination* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford.

Patterson, J., Williams, L., Edwards, T. M., Chamow, L., & Grauf-Grounds, C. (2009). Guidelines for conducting assessment (Chapter 4, pp. 42-76). In *Essential skills in family therapy: From the first interviews to termination* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford.

Pipher, M. (2003). Introduction. In *Letters to a young therapist* (pp. xv-xxiv). New York: Basic Books.

Rober, P. (1999). The therapist's inner conversation in family therapy practice: Some ideas about the self-of-the-therapist, therapeutic impasse, and the process of reflection. *Family Process*, 38, 209-228.

Rober, P. (2005). Some ideas about not-knowing and the therapist's inner conversation. *Family Process*, 44, 477- 495.

Roberts, J. (2005) Transparency and self-disclosure in family therapy: Dangers and possibilities. *Family Process*, 44,45-63.

Sluzki, C. E. (1992). Transformations: A blueprint for narrative changes in therapy. *Family Process*, 31(3), 217- 230.

Whitaker, C. A., & Keith, D. V. (1981). Symbolic-experiential family therapy. In A. S. Gurman & D. P. Kniskern (Eds.), *Handbook of family therapy* (pp. 187-225). New York: Brunner/Mazel.

Recommended Texts and Journals

McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., & Shellenberger, S. (1999). *Genograms: Assessment and intervention*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Hanna, S. M. (2007). *The practice of family therapy: Key elements across models* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

The Journal of Marital and Family Therapy: Published by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. A subscription is included with your AAMFT membership.

Family Process: The oldest journal in the field with a multidisciplinary focus, their website www.familyprocess.org allows subscribers to access the whole collection of articles published in the last four decades.

The Journal of Systemic Therapies: A quarterly peer review journal directed to relational therapists. It often publishes cutting-edge articles by senior authors and clinicians in practice (including graduate students).

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.) is the standard to reference written and electronic materials in our profession. If you are not familiar with it, please do acquire a copy. You will need it for various courses and the preparation of the capstone project.

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COU 625: Family Therapy Assessment and Intervention
On-Line Family Therapy Program, 3 Credits
On-Site Course at UMass Dartmouth
Instructor: Kristi Palmer, M.Ed., Ph.D. Candidate

Student Consent for Videotaping

This course employs videotape and simulated interviews in which faculty and students participate. This release has been created with the purpose of pointing out how we will use this material. With your signature you are authorizing the instructor, Kristi Palmer, to videotape the role-plays and other class exercises. The purpose of the videotape is:

- To enhance the educational experience of those participating in the course
- To make accessible the material to students via a CD and/or website
- To allow participants to employ this material in their capstone portfolio
- To participate in collaborative projects that will be discussed in class
- To create educative materials to train clinicians
- To improving the class activities and provide feedback to faculty involved in the course

Student Name_____

Signature_____

Instructor Signature _____

Date: _____