Prerequisites: Completion of all required SOWK 500 level courses.

Course Description:

This advanced elective course examines the phenomena of clinical crises and emergencies, as well as the related treatment modalities of crisis intervention and emergency intervention. This course builds on foundation content about psychological crises and crisis intervention in Individuals and Families, and Human Behavior in the Social Environment. It also builds on foundation/advanced content with regard to treatment of particular populations in Individuals and Families II, and the content on psychosocial diagnosis and the DSM-IV in the second Human Behavior in the Social Environment course.

Consistent with traditional understanding, a crisis is defined as a loss of psychological equilibrium, or an upset in an individual’s steady state of functioning, triggered by either a normative or traumatic stressor. Psychological or mental health emergencies are defined as immediate situations in which harm may occur if an intervention is not forthcoming. Emergencies include potential suicide, potential violence, situations of significantly impaired judgment (such as acute psychosis, delirium, dementia, or dissociation), and situations of victims of violence (child or elder abuse, domestic violence).

Specific interventions for crises and emergencies are each described. Attention will also be paid to generic crisis intervention, in which predictable patterns of crisis response can be described, and interventions can be designed to focus on those patterns. Implications of these models for women, people of color, and other populations at risk will also be explored.

This course is especially appropriate for students in the Health and Mental Health Cluster, which focuses on individuals who are struggling with mental or physical illness or disability. Such individuals are particularly at risk for crises and emergencies. In addition, it is also relevant for students in the Families and Children cluster, since specific attention is given to crises among children and adolescents, and comprehensive school-based crisis responses are also addressed.

Research-based practice models are utilized where available.

Learning Objectives:

Students are expected to demonstrate, through assignments, mastery of the following objectives:
Knowledge


2. An understanding of crisis theory, including several models of crisis intervention, as well as understanding the similarities and differences between crisis intervention and psychotherapy.

3. An awareness of several of the most common crises in contemporary society, as well as the generic crisis intervention model that applies to each.

4. A thorough understanding of the risk factors for suicide, and how they relate to demographic, social, and diagnostic variables.

5. A thorough understanding of the risk factors for interpersonal violence, and how they relate to demographic, social, and diagnostic variables.

Values

1. A dedication to the values and ethics of the social work profession and a beginning understanding of how these may be operationalized in crisis intervention work.

2. An appreciation for the significant benefits that crisis intervention and emergency intervention can provide for clients.

3. A commitment to achieve excellence in assisting clients with life and death situations such as suicide and interpersonal violence.

4. An appreciation of the complex and difficult ethical dilemmas that assisted suicide and the wish for a dignified death represent.

5. A commitment to the profession’s responsibility to promote social and economic justice for oppressed people.

Skills

1. An ability to apply crisis intervention and emergency intervention models of practice.

2. An ability to assess suicide risk or risk of violence in actual cases.

3. Comfort and competence in working with clients in situations that typically evoke strong feelings in practitioners, such as potential suicide, potential
homicide, being the victim of a traumatic incident, and related topics.

4. An ability to recognize and manage issues that students encounter with emphasis on gender, life style, minority, and cultural issues.

5. An awareness of how one's own attitudes can affect working with clients in crisis or emergency situations.

Teaching Methodology:

It is expected that course objectives will be achieved through a combination of lecture, class discussion, case presentations, readings, videotape and other audiovisual presentations, and completion of class assignments.

Students with Special Needs:

Students having any form of special need should notify the instructor immediately so that available accommodations can be discussed.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is essential to a student's professional development, their ability to serve others, and to the University's mission. Therefore, students are expected to conduct all academic work within the letter and the spirit of the Statement on Academic Honesty of Loyola University Chicago, which is characterized by any action whereby a student misrepresents the ownership of academic work submitted in his or her name. Knowledge of what plagiarism is will help you from inadvertently committing it in your papers.

Plagiarism is a serious ethical violation, the consequences of which can be failure of a specific class and/or expulsion from the school. Responsibilities of Academic Honesty are detailed in The Graduate manual of the Loyola University Chicago. Please read the Graduate Catalog on the university policy on plagiarism. Please read “What is plagiarism” at http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/what_is_plagiarism.html

Concisely, plagiarism.org states that plagiarism is “to steal and pass off the ideas or words of another as one’s own.” However, there is a lot more to it than just that. I urge you to read this webpage as well as other pages, guides, and handouts at www.plagiarism.org.

This commitment ensures that a student of the School of Social Work will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thereby, affirming personal and professional honor and integrity. In addition, students may not use the same assignment content to fulfill different course requirements.
Required Texts:


All of the rest of the required readings (with one or two exceptions) are available in “Assignments” in Blackboard.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: Introduction

Learning Objectives:
* definitions of crisis, emergency, normative stressor, traumatic stressor
* overview of the course
* crisis intervention and emergency intervention
* history of crisis intervention
* types of crises and types of emergencies

Required Readings:


Recommended Reading:


Week 2: Basic Concepts of Crisis intervention

Learning Objectives:
* the nature of crisis
* normative and traumatic stressors as precipitants
* models and principles of crisis intervention
* beginning steps
Required Readings:


Callahan, J. (2011). Crisis Intervention (handout; bring to class).

Recommended Readings:


Week 3: Variations of Crisis Intervention

Learning Objectives:
* maintaining a positive setting
* coping, meaning, and support
* crisis due to illness and physical disability

Required Readings:


Callahan, J. (2011). Crisis intervention cases (handout; bring to class).

**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 4: Crisis intervention with traumatic stress**

**Learning Objectives:**
- symptoms of traumatic stress
- coping, meaning, and support
- traumatic events and critical incidents
- epidemiology of traumatic events

**Required Readings:**


Recommended Readings:


Week 5: Crisis intervention with disasters and mass violence

Learning Objectives:
* acute stress disorder
* traumatic stressors as precipitants
* disasters
* type I vs. type II trauma

Required Readings:


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 6: Psychological First Aid vs. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing**

**Learning Objectives:**

* crisis intervention with trauma victims
* individual vs. community approaches
* cultural issues
* grief and traumatic stress in traumatic death (suicide, homicide)
* application to school and workplace settings
* the controversy about critical incident stress debriefing

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 7:** Mid-term exam (2 hours)

**March 10, 2011** Spring break; no class

**Week 8:** Emergency intervention with suicidal clients I

**Learning Objectives:**
* demographics and epidemiology of suicide
* emergency intervention with suicidal clients
* assessment of suicide risk; risk and protective factors
* gender issues

**Required Readings:**

Shea:

Chap. 1: Suicide: The ultimate paradox (pp. 3-16).
Chap. 2: Descent into the maelstrom: Etiology and phenomenology of suicide (pp. 17-68).


World Health Organization (2004). Suicide rates by country, year, and sex (handout; bring to class).

**Recommended Readings:**


Week 9: Emergency intervention with suicidal clients II

Learning Objectives:
* assessment of suicide risk continued
* self-destructive behavior
* minorities, race, and cultural issues

Required Readings:
Shea:
Chap. 3: Risk factors: Harbingers of death (pp. 69-106).
Chap. 4: Before the interview begins: Overcoming the taboo against talking about suicide (pp. 109-123).


Callahan, J. (2011). Questions for suicide risk assessment (handout; bring to class).

Recommended Readings:


**Week 10: Emergency intervention with suicidal clients III**

**Learning Objectives:**

* assessment of suicide risk continued
* standards of care regarding suicidal clients
* suicide “caused” by antidepressant medication
* chronic suicidality

**Required Readings:**

Shea:

Chap. 5, Validity techniques: Simple tools for uncovering complex secrets (pp. 125-141).

Chap. 6, Eliciting suicidal ideation: Practical techniques and effective strategies (pp. 143-188).

Chap. 7, Putting it all together: Safe and effective decision-making (pp. 191-247).


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 11: Emergency intervention with suicidal clients IV**

**Learning Objectives:**

* risk management; malpractice; legal issues
* difficulties in working with suicidal clients
* cases

**Required Readings:**

Shea:

Appendix A: How to document a suicide assessment (pp. 249-285).
Appendix B: Safety contracting revisited: Pros, cons, and documentation (pp 287-303).

Psychological Association.


**Recommended Readings:**


Week 12: Emergency intervention with potentially violent clients I

Learning Objectives:
* overview of client violence
* assessment of potential violence
* emergency intervention with violent clients
* violence directed at the social worker

Required Readings:

Newhill:
Chap. 3, Understanding client-initiated property damage and threats (pp. 57-70).
Chap. 4, Understanding client-initiated physical attacks (pp. 71-87).
Chap. 5, Risk factors associated with violent behavior (pp. 88-118).

Callahan, J. (2011). Emergency intervention: Clients who are potentially violent (handout; bring to class).


Week 13: Emergency intervention with potentially violent clients II

Learning Objectives:
* emergency intervention with violent clients
* violence directed at the social worker
* duty to warn
* impact on family members of victims

Required Readings:

Newhill:
Chap. 6, The risk assessment of violent clients (pp. 121-146).
Chap. 7, Approaching and engaging the violent client (pp. 147-165).
Chap. 8, Intervention modalities for treating the violent client (pp. 166-186).


State of Illinois (2000). Duty to warn -- legal justifications (handout; bring to class).

**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 14:** Emergency intervention with potentially violent clients III; Secondary traumatization, countertransference, and self-care

**Learning Objectives:**
- the contagiousness of trauma
- secondary traumatization and secondary victimization
- the impact on the clinician

**Required Readings:**

Newhill:
- Chap. 9, Strategies to prevent client violence in office and field settings (pp. 187-204)
- Chap. 10, General strategies for the prevention of violence (pp. 205-221)
- Chap. 11, When client violence occurs: The multidimensional impact on social workers (pp. 222-235).


**Recommended Readings:**


Social Work, 52(1), 63-70.


Week 15: Final Exam (During exam week)

Organizations

