THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course Number: SOWO 753
Course Title: Interpersonal Psychotherapy
Semester and Year: Spring 2010
Instructor: Betsy (Sarah E.) Bledsoe
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Course Description: This practice course focuses on interpersonal psychotherapy, an empirically-supported intervention for depression in adolescents and adults. Adaptations for other mental health disorders are discussed.

Course Objectives: At the conclusion of this course, students will:

Objectives
1. Understand the historical and theoretical context of interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT) for depression and the epidemiology and diagnosis of depression framed in the context of social work values and ethics
2. Be able to conduct interpersonal psychotherapy for the treatment of depression consisting of:
   - initial sessions including the interpersonal inventory, identification of interpersonal problem area and case formulation,
   - middle session focused on the four interpersonal problem areas: grief, interpersonal disputes, role transitions, and interpersonal deficits, and
   - termination of both successful and unsuccessful treatment
3. Demonstrate an ability to apply IPT therapeutic techniques
4. Understand the therapist’s role in IPT and be able to identify and respond to common therapeutic issues and patient questions
5. Have knowledge of the empirical evidence related to IPT for mood and non-mood disorders
6. Be familiar with the application of IPT with diverse populations as well as adaptations of IPT for intervention with mental health diagnoses including adaptations for other mood disorders and non-mood disorders.

Expanded Description:
This course is an advanced practice course that builds on required foundation HBSE and direct practice courses. It is designed to increase students’ competencies in both assessment and intervention using IPT, an empirically supported psychotherapy. IPT was originally developed as an outpatient treatment for adults with major depression and its value has been supported with numerous clinical trials. IPT has since been adapted to treat other mental health disorders. Clinicians interested in learning IPT generally begin with didactic work and supervision in the application of IPT for the treatment of major depression in adults, as IPT was developed for use with this population and psychiatric disorder. Therefore, the focus of the course will be on the use of IPT to treat major depression. Adaptations of IPT for the treatment of depression in specific populations and other mood and non-mood psychiatric diagnoses – including empirical evidence regarding the value of each adaptation - will be presented but will not be reviewed in detail given the time limitations of the course. Empirical evidence to date does not support the use of IPT outside of the treatment and prevention of psychiatric disorders and symptoms. However, given the prevalence of major depression alone, it is likely that any social worker directly serving individuals or families will encounter clients who may benefit from their knowledge of IPT.

By the end of the course, students will be more confident in their ability to assess, articulate a case formulation and provide treatment for clients with major depression using IPT. Advanced practice skills that will be addressed throughout the course include, psychoeducation, contracting, conducting an interpersonal inventory, exploratory techniques, encouragement of affect, clarification, communication analysis, use of the therapeutic role, behavioral change techniques, and handling non-response to treatment. Case material and experiential exercises will be used to increase students’ practice skills. Students will also become familiar with empirical evidence on the use of IPT with specific disorders and populations to support evidence-based practice. While IPT is an empirically supported intervention for major depression and has been adapted for treatment of other psychiatric disorders, there are certain cases where IPT may not be indicated based on empirical studies.

**REQUIRED TEXTS/READINGS:**

Required texts are available in the UNC Bookstore.

Additional required readings for this course can be obtained via blackboard or the UNC electronic library.

**RELATED READINGS:**
See attached bibliography.
TEACHING METHODS:
This course will involve interactive lecture, discussion, role playing, video clips, and student case presentations. These teaching strategies will be used to help students master the theoretical approaches and necessary skills needed to treat adult and adolescent clients with major depression using IPT. It is expected that each student will be actively involved in this course; thus, active participation in class discussion, role-play, and case presentation is mandatory.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS
All class assignments, with the exception of the final assignment, are due at the beginning of class and should be turned in both electronically prior to the beginning of class (using the blackboard class web-site) and in hard copy to the instructor at the beginning of the class session on the day the assignment is due. If you are unable to be in class on the day an assignment is due you should make arrangements with a classmate to turn in a hard copy of your assignment. The final assignment should be turned in both electronically and in hard copy (in the instructor’s mail box, 1st Floor, School of Social Work, TTK), no later than 5pm on the Friday following class 7.

1. Brief Case Description (10% of Course Grade) Due Week 2:
For this 1-2 page assignment you will provide a basic, written description of the case you will be role playing across the 7 week course. This brief description should contain information that you might expect in a good referral – basic demographic information, known health history, prominent symptoms, and a short summary of the presenting problem. When conceptualizing this case you will want to frame the presenting problem associated with the onset of the current episode of depression in an interpersonal context. While you should not provide a case formulation, you want to choose or create a case that can be formulated using an interpersonal framework. This means that there should be a clear interpersonal event that is associated with the onset of the current episode of major depression. It will be up to the therapist to determine the case formulation in collaboration with the client you will be role playing. If you plan to use a true case example rather than the role played case to complete the remainder of the assignments for this course, please plan on role playing that case. While you will not be the therapist in the role play, this will allow you an opportunity to see how another therapist might handle issues with the same client. If a true case example, issues of confidentiality must be respected. For learning purposes, all students will be expected to describe a case where major depression is a primary diagnosis though you may choose a case with comorbid diagnoses. However, students should not choose a case with current comorbid substance abuse or dependence, psychotic disorder, or mania.

2. Case Formulation Assignment (30% of Course Grade) Due Week 3:
Case formulation using an interpersonal model in the initial sessions of treatment is paramount to the application of IPT for depressed clients. In this assignment, students will demonstrate an ability to formulate a case using IPT. This formulation should use either a fictional character, role played in class, or a true case example from your practice. If a true case example, issues of confidentiality must be respected. The written assignment will include a discussion of dealing with depression (diagnosis, explanation of diagnosis and treatment, using the ‘sick role’), relating depression to the interpersonal context (interpersonal inventory, identification of major problem areas) and presenting the IPT case formulation and contract. The contract should
include the number of agreed upon sessions and an initial plan for termination. This paper should be written in the format of case notes (example will be given in class) and should be 4-8 pages long, double-spaced and in 12-point font and 1 inch margins. This case will be the foundation for the final clinical intervention assignment due week 7. If you choose a true case from your practice for this assignment you should be reasonably sure that you will be able to work weekly with this case using IPT in order to complete the final assignment. It is suggested that you also role play the case that you are working with in your practice so that, in the event that the true case terminates early, you will still be able to complete the assignment. Please include a copy of your role play partner’s brief case description when you turn in this assignment. If any sources outside of class reading (either assigned or optional) are used these should be cited and referenced using APA formatting.

3. Clinical Intervention Assignment (30% of Course Grade) Full Assignment Due on or before 5pm on the Friday following Week 7 (Case Notes 2-5 due week 4, 5, 6, and 7 at the beginning of class respectively):

   This paper is designed to give students an opportunity to demonstrate competency in the application of IPT. It should include a description of the application of IPT with either a fictional character role played in class or true case example from your practice. If a true case example, issues of confidentiality must be respected. This assignment will build on the initial case formulation assignment and will include a description of the initial, middle and termination sessions in the format of 6 sets of case notes including the 1 sets focused on the initial case formulation (with any revisions). Application of specific techniques applied during each phase of IPT treatment should be apparent in the case notes and application should reflect a culturally competent approach to treatment. Since the time limitations of the course do not allow for completion of a true case using IPT, students using IPT with a current client may focus on the treatment to date and, in the final case note, present a plan for future sessions including termination. Each case note should be approximately 1-3 pages typed, double spaced. The final portion of this assignment should include a brief reflection on the application of IPT including any challenges, remaining questions or reflections on how you might have handled the case differently upon reflection. This should be approximately 1-2 pages typed, double spaced. Please use 12-point font and 1 inch margins. If any sources outside of class reading (either assigned or optional) are used these should be cited and referenced using APA formatting.

4. Class Attendance and Participation (30% of Course Grade):

   As this course is designed, participation in class activities is essential for learning course material and completing assignments and is therefore required. Attendance and participation in discussion, role play, group work, and case presentation is mandatory. Because of the importance of attendance and participation in this course and the commitment expected from students, attendance and active participation will be counted as 30% of the course grade. 94-100 (H) is assigned to those students who have attended all classes and have been regular and active participants in discussion and in presenting past or current case scenarios. 80-93 (P) is for students who have missed one class but who regularly and actively participate or for students who have attended all classes but do not fully participate in class discussion and case conference on a regular basis. 70-80 is for students who do not participate actively in class and have missed one class. Under 70 means that the student has missed two or more classes or that a student has
demonstrated through class discussion and activities that s/he has not done the readings or for a student who actively disengages from class activities.

**Attendance and Participation**
Attendance at all class sessions is expected; it is important to be on time so as not to disrupt class. We will be covering a great deal of information in each class. If you will not be able to attend a class, let the instructor know as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to obtain handouts, information about class content, and information about announcements, etc., from your classmates if you are unable to attend a class. **Students with more than one absence will receive an “L” unless they have made prior arrangements with the instructor and their role play partner. Students with more than two absences will receive an “F” unless they have made prior arrangements with the instructor and their role play partner.** In order to fully participate in and benefit from each class session, students must complete required readings and come to class prepared to discuss and apply those reading to case examples.

**Grading System**
H = 94 and above  
P = 80 to 93  
L = 70 to 79  
F = 69 and below

In order to be as objective as possible in my grading of your assignments, use your student **PID number. DO NOT USE YOUR NAME.**

**Late Assignments**
**Late assignments are strongly discouraged.** To obtain permission to submit an assignment after the deadline, the student must seek approval from the instructor **before** the assignment is due. **If permission for late submission is not granted before breaking a deadline, the grade will automatically be reduced 10%, and another 10% reduction will occur each day, including weekends.** In case of an emergency, a late paper may be accepted without penalty at the discretion of the instructor. However, the student must alert the instructor to the emergency within a reasonable time period and negotiate a new due date with the instructor in order for any late penalty to be waived. Avoid having last minute computer failures prevent you from turning papers in on time. Plan ahead! Keep backups; don’t rely on having computers, printers, servers, and email programs working perfectly a half-hour before class.

**Cell Phone Policy**
Cell phones can be disruption to the learning process. Most students are expected to turn off their cell phones during class. Students who are on-call or have personal/family responsibilities that necessitate having access to a cell phone are asked adjust cell-phones or pagers to vibrate and to be respectful of other students if they must answer a page or call by stepping out of class.

**Policy on Academic Dishonesty**
Please refer to the APA Style Guide, The SSW Manual, and the SSW Writing Guide for information on attribution of quotes, plagiarism and appropriate use of assistance in preparing assignments. All written assignments should contain a signed pledge from you stating that, "I have not given or received unauthorized aid in preparing this written work". In keeping with the UNC Honor Code, if reason exists to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, a referral will be made to the Office of the Student Attorney General for investigation and further action as required.

**Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**
Students with disabilities which affect their participation in the course must notify the instructor if they wish to have special accommodations in instructional format, examination format, etc.

**APA Formatting**
Unlike many of your courses, assignments do not need to follow APA formatting as we will be turning in ‘case’ notes from our in class role plays and reflections on using IPT. However, it is an expectation of this course that you will correctly cite any material NOT included in the course syllabus following the most recent edition of the APA manual and include a reference list at the end of your assignment if you choose to use outside materials to support your assignments. If you are not familiar with this style, please refer to the manual, the study guide on the school’s website or see Diane Wyant, the School’s editor at dwyant@email.unc.edu.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

Class 1: Introductions, Course Overview, Introduction to Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT)

Class 2: Initial Sessions: Beginning Tasks of IPT

Class 3: Middle Sessions: Focal Goals and Strategies - Grief (Complicated Bereavement) & Interpersonal Disputes

Class 4: Middle Sessions: Focal Goals and Strategies - Role Transitions & Interpersonal Deficits

Class 5: Specific Techniques and Common Problems

Class 6: Tasks of Termination in IPT

Class 7: Adaptations of IPT
Week 1: Introduction, Course Overview & Introduction to IPT

1. Introductions
2. Course overview
3. Historical context and empirical evidence supporting IPT for major depression
4. Epidemiology and morbidity of major depression
5. What is IPT?
6. Interpersonal theoretical groundwork
7. Assessment for diagnosis of major depression

Assigned Reading:
Weissman, Overview of IPT (pp. 1-18).
Weissman, Chapter 2, An Outline of IPT (pp. 19-26).

Optional Reading:
Weissman, Chapter 10, Efficacy Data for Acute Treatment of Major Depression (pp. 163-172).

Class 2: Initial Sessions: Beginning Tasks of IPT

1. Dealing with depression
2. Using the sick role
3. Conducting and interpersonal inventory
4. Choosing an interpersonal focus (problem area)
5. Contract and interpersonal case formulation

BRIEF CASE DESCRIPTION DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.

Assigned Reading:
Weissman, Chapter 2, The Initial Phase (pp. 27-60).

Class 3: Middle Sessions: Focal Goals and Strategies - Grief (Complicated Bereavement) & Interpersonal Disputes

1. Tasks of the middle sessions
2. Strategies and techniques for facilitating change
3. Grief (complicated bereavement) – goals and strategies
4. Interpersonal disputes – goals and strategies

CASE FORMULATION DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Assigned Reading:
Weissman, Chapter 3, Grief (Complicated Bereavement) (pp. 61-74).
Weissman, Chapter 4, Interpersonal Role Disputes (pp. 75-88).

Optional Reading:

Class 4: Middle Sessions: Focal Goals and Strategies - Role Transitions & Interpersonal Deficits

1. Role transitions – goals and strategies
2. Interpersonal deficits – goals and strategies

CASE NOTE 2 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Assigned Reading:
Weissman, Chapter 5, Role Transitions (pp. 89-102).
Weissman, Chapter 4, Interpersonal Deficits (pp. 103-117).

Optional Reading:
Weissman, Chapter 12, IPT for Dysthymic Disorder (IPT-D) (pp. 185-194).

Class 5: Specific Techniques and Common Problems

1. Exploratory techniques
2. Encouragement of affect
3. Clarification
4. Communication analysis
5. Use of therapeutic relationship
6. Behavior change techniques
7. Anticipating and handling common problems
8. Adherence and common client concerns

CASE NOTE 3 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Assigned Reading:
Weissman, Chapter 8, Specific Techniques (pp. 123-138).
Weissman, Chapter 9, Common Problems (pp. 139-162).
Weissman, Appendix A: An Integrative Case Example (pp. 403-434).

Class 6: Tasks of Termination in IPT

1. Tasks of termination
2. Difficulties with termination
3. Indications for long-term treatment
4. Maintenance IPT

CASE NOTE 4 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS
Assigned Reading:
Weissman, Chapter 7, Termination of Treatment (pp. 117-122).

Optional Reading:

Class 7: Adaptations of IPT
1. Interpersonal psychotherapy for depressed adolescents
2. Adaptations of IPT for specific populations and other mood and non-mood mental health diagnoses
3. Wrap up and evaluations

CASE NOTE 5 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Assigned Reading:

Optional Reading:

FRIDAY FOLLOWING CLASS 7: CLINICAL INTERVENTION ASSIGNMENT DUE
BIBLIOGRAPHY:
