

Key Issues in Assessing and Treating Serious Mental Illness

Program Description

This workshop will teach skills for assessing and working with major mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, schizo-affective disorder, other psychotic disorders and severe depression. Diagnostic criteria, including DSM-5 changes will be discussed. Complications of diagnosing when there is co-existing substance use will also be examined. Participants will practice diagnosing cases and preparing comprehensive treatment plans that are person centered and encompass a holistic approach to individuals. The afternoon will focus on providing treatment and the various possible treatment approaches. Special attention will be given to issues regarding building and maintaining rapport, medication adherence, substance abuse, and handling crises.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this workshop, participants should be able to:

1. List the diagnostic criteria for the major mental illnesses.
2. Explain the possible interactions between substance use and mental illness
3. Prepare a treatment plan for a client with serious mental illness
4. Describe the main treatment approaches for this population
5. Identify/Examine approaches to crisis intervention, working with families and helping clients adhere to medications.

Target Audience

Mental health and substance abuse professionals are the primary audience. The workshop is specifically targeted for clinicians working on community support teams, ACT teams, clubhouses, day programs or inpatient settings.

The workshop would also be helpful for DSS workers, rehab counselors and other professionals who may work with the individuals with serious mental illness.

Contact Hours

6.0 hours

Program Agenda

9:00	Overview of Population and Common Concerns
9:30	Review of diagnostic criteria and DSM-5 Diagnostic Changes
10:30	Break
10:45	Overview of substance use and mental illness interactions
11:15	Practice diagnosing cases
12:00	Lunch
1:00	Overview of treatment approaches and medication adherence issues
2:30	Break
2:45	Rapport building and maintaining relationships
3:15	Crisis intervention, working with families, skills practice
4:30	Adjournment

Faculty

Marilyn Ghezzi, MSW, LCSW, is a clinical assistant professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work. Before joining the faculty in 2008, Ghezzi worked for 20 years as a clinical social worker in the public mental health system. She uses her practice experience and mental health expertise to enrich her teaching in the MSW program in courses that cover an array of mental health topics, including mental health theory and practice, group work, brief treatment, dialectical behavior therapy, and differential diagnosis. Ghezzi is also involved in research as a co-investigator on the Mental Health Specialty Probation study. Ghezzi has won numerous awards for her teaching, including recognition as the “Most Outstanding Faculty Member” by the social work graduating classes of 2013, 2014, 2017 and 2019. In addition, Ghezzi was awarded the 2017 Distinguished Teaching Award for Post-Baccalaureate Instruction—an honor given to only four professors each year who are selected from the entire UNC-Chapel Hill system.