

The University of Tennessee
College of Social Work

SW 530 Seminar in Clinical social Work: Play therapy

Instructors

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SYLLABUS

THE HONOR STATEMENT

An essential feature of the University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the university, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity. (*Hilltopics* 1999-2000, page 31)

CODE OF CONDUCT

It is the student's responsibility to have read the College of Social Work Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct code that is in the College of Social MSSW Handbook. (www.csw.utk.edu)

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the office of Disability Services at 191 Hoskins Library at 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the social work student to the art of play therapy, a child-centered, developmentally-customized approach to assessing and intervening with child clients. Students are introduced to the history of the field, the theoretical frameworks underpinning play therapy, and pioneers of play therapy, past and present. The course assumes and builds on a thorough understanding of child development. The continuum of non-directive vs. directive play therapy approaches will be discussed and demonstrated.

RATIONALE

The social work profession has a long history of preparing social workers to work effectively with particular populations. Specifically, social work practice includes work with children of various backgrounds and experiences. The functioning problems that

children have as a result of trauma, neglect, abuse, social deprivation, domestic violence, etc. often result in problems in children's developmental progress. Professionals have become increasingly convinced that play therapy is the most developmentally appropriate approach to working with children. Social workers using play therapy are better equipped to help children of various ages and backgrounds work through various traumatic experiences.

OBJECTIVES:

By completion of this course, students are expected to be able to (through course activities, assignments and/or exams):

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the major points in the historical development of play therapy as well as its major contributors.
2. Identify and discuss directive vs. non-directive approaches used in play therapy and various theoretical perspectives along that continuum.
3. Identify major current proponents and practitioners of play therapy.
4. Discuss the major developmental theories and utilize those theories in assessment, diagnosis, and the design of interventions for child clients, particularly those from high risk and vulnerable populations and/or characterized by varying race, ethnic, age, gender, socio-economic, spiritual and sexual orientation backgrounds.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of a variety of specific play therapy modalities and techniques.
6. Critically evaluate the applicability of play therapy to various high risk and vulnerable clients.
7. Recognize, analyze and resolve ethical dilemmas that may arise in play therapy.

TEXTS:

James, O'Dessie Oliver. Play Therapy: A Comprehensive Guide. North Bergen, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1997.

Oaklander, Violet. Windows to Our Children. Highland, NY: The Center for Gestalt Development, Inc., 1988.

Axline, Virginia. Dibs In Search of Self. New York: Ballantine Books, 1964.

EVALUATIONS:

Students will be evaluated in the following manner:

Attendance/Participation: 25%

Written assignment: 25%

Class Presentation: 25%

Final Examination: 25%

The grading scale for this course will be:

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

75-79 = C

64-69 = D

64 and below = F

SESSIONS:

August 21, 2002

Introduction and Overview

Course outline-review of texts

Discussion of play as it relates to therapy

Class structure

Axline's 8 principles

Audio tape, *Emotional Healing*, Garry Landreth

Discussion

August 28 and September 4

The Elements of Play Therapy

READ James text Part I—Essential Elements, PG 3 – 110

The Child

The Parent(s)

The Therapist

The Ethics

The Materials and setting

Film: *Essentials of Play Therapy*, Eliana Gil

Discussion

September 11 and September 18

History, Theories, Techniques

READ James text Part II—Theories and Techniques, PG 111-170

The History of Play TX as we know it

Directive vs. Non-directive continuum

Video Collage Demonstrating Theories and techniques

Discussion

September 25

Review of Child Development

DIBS ASSIGNMENT DUE

Erickson, Piaget, Freud, Kohlberg--What they would say about PI TX

Importance of Knowledge of age-appropriate behavioral expectations

Video, *Children's Verbalizations in play Therapy*, Kevin O'Conner

Discussion

October 2 and October 9 and October 16

Varieties of Children, Varieties of Techniques

Read Chapters 1-7 in *Windows to Our Children*, Violet Oaklander

Categories of Children who come to Pl TX

Oaklander Techniques

Video clips of Oaklander sessions

Presentation of cases for group assignment

Discussion

October 23 and October 30

The Process

READ James text Part III, PG 171—212

Stages of Pl TX

Organization and use of play room

Rules and Limit-setting

A Child's First Book of Play Therapy

Video, *Techniques of Play Therapy*, Nancy Boyd Webb

Discussion

November 6

Group Presentations 1 and 2

November 13

Group Presentations 3 and 4

November 20

Group presentation 5 and 6

November 27

Review and completion

December 4

Final examination

ASSIGNMENTS:

Based on your reading and discussion of *Dibs in Search of Self*, write about the ways in which Virginia Axline demonstrated the 8 principles of non-directive pl tx in her work with Dibs. Cite specific examples with page numbers.

Group projects will be presented to class on 11-6-02, 11-13-02, and 11-20-02. Each group will be given the case of a child with a particular difficulty/presenting problem. The group will be asked to develop and present a plan for treating the child and/or family using play therapy. The presentation should include rationale for choosing particular

techniques as well as a live demonstration of the techniques used. The group members can be designated as clients or a child participant can be used.