

The University of Tennessee
College of Social Work
BSSW Program
Spring 2009

SW 462 – Child Welfare II: Skills and Practice Methods

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Section:	001		

Program Mission

The BSSW program at the University of Tennessee exists to fulfill a need for disciplined, highly educated and trained generalist social workers to help people improve their social functioning in a technologically complex, culturally diverse, and rapidly changing world without borders. There is a focus on the reciprocal relationships between persons and their environments. Social workers are doers; they are problem-solvers who are able to intervene in multiple-level systems and perform various professional roles. Their actions are guided and informed by a broad knowledge base, code of ethics, and professional values. Social workers are educated and trained to do things right as well as to do the right thing.

The mission of the BSSW program is to develop generalist social workers who are strategic thinkers, life-long learners and opinion shapers. The knowledge-base, skills, and values necessary for generalist practice are taught in an environment that fosters professional development, critical thinking, and leadership and prepares students to take appropriate action guided by the best available scientific evidence. We are dedicated to preparing practitioners for the challenges of today's complex pluralistic world. Since the amount of knowledge doubles approximately every five years, what is taught today may soon be obsolete. Our challenge, therefore, lies in the on-going development and implementation of a curriculum that prepares and energizes students for generalist practice today and in the future.

Program Goals

Provision of education and training that enable students to become generalist social work practitioners who:

- are committed to advancing social and economic justice and the principles, values, and ethics that guide the social work profession;
- are committed to evidence-based practice
- are grounded in systems theory and operate within a person-in-the-environment framework;
- use the problem-solving process to intervene in multiple-level client systems;
- have an understanding of human diversity, special populations, and domestic and international challenges, that informs practice interventions;
- use critical thinking, evaluative skills, and leadership skills to address the needs of a complex, changing global world; and
- are committed to continuous development of professional self.

Course Objectives

The objectives of this course are to provide students the opportunity to understand and analyze:

- the Tennessee Department of Children's Services Practice Model including joint decision making and levels of accountability

- the roles and responsibilities of social workers practicing in child welfare including child protection, foster care, adoption, juvenile justice, and education;
- the stages of the casework process including: intake, initial assessment, family assessment, service planning, service provision, monitoring of process, case transfers, and termination;
- federal and state statutory requirements related to case management including responsibilities such as mandatory reporting and expected competencies for child welfare and juvenile justice service providers
- the impact of the involuntary nature of the client's relationship with the child welfare service providers
- conceptual frameworks for assessment, planning, and intervention including systems theory, strengths perspective, solution-focused approach, crisis intervention, and family-centered planning

Course Competencies:

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

1. recognize the impact of age, race, ethnicity, social and economic class, culture, religion, sexual orientation, and other differences on the relationship between client and service provider and formulate culturally responsive, ethical engagement strategies accordingly;
2. demonstrate ability to conduct individual and family assessments, and to engage families in planning and establishing measurable treatment goals using a family team approach;
3. demonstrate skills in assessment and intervention that incorporate strengths-based, culturally responsive and family-centered practice;
4. demonstrate skills needed to evaluate case interventions and services for effectiveness and appropriateness;
5. discuss current public child welfare and juvenile justice laws and trends and the impact these have on direct practice;
6. demonstrate skills needed to effectively and ethically intervene and/or advocate for children and families at all system levels;
7. recognize one's own values and biases and how these can affect practice with children and families;
8. how to develop and utilize a network of community resources in case planning and management;
9. identify factors contributing to fatigue and burnout among child welfare professionals and list preventative measures for these;
10. demonstrate skills needed to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of community services for children and families on a case-by-case basis;
11. demonstrate skills needed to facilitate the transition of a case to another service provider ensuring continuity and support for the client throughout the transition;
12. demonstrate skills needed to facilitate the process of termination with clients when appropriate;
13. provide clear, informative presentations individually and as a part of a team..

Course Description

This course is designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of students interested in child welfare and subsequently improve the quality of services delivered by child welfare programs. Topics covered will include building trusting relationships with families; conducting family-centered assessments and planning; conducting family-centered CPS investigations; permanence; and juvenile justice.

Course Rationale

This course is designed to continue the student's preparation for entry-level child welfare practice. A focus on the Tennessee Department of Children's Services Practice Model will increase students' knowledge and skills for evidence-based, culturally competent, strengths-based, and family-centered child welfare practice.

Disability Services

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability please contact the Office of Disability Services at 2227 Dunford Hall at (865) 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

Honor Statement

An essential feature of the University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic dishonesty. By enrollment in this class, you pledge that you will neither knowingly give, nor receive, any inappropriate assistance in academic work in SW 462, thus affirming your own personal commitment to honor and integrity (*Hilltopics*).

Inclement Weather Policy

Class will be cancelled only if the University is closed due to inclement weather. Campus and local radio and TV stations will be notified so that appropriated announcements may be made. If class is cancelled, any assignments due that day will be due the next time class meets.

Instructor's Policy

Any assignments and/or exams that are not completed will be recorded as "0". Only in cases of a verified emergency will make-up examinations or assignment extensions be permitted. If there are extenuating circumstances, the instructor must be informed **prior** to the date/time of the exam or the due date of the assignment.

Course Requirements

The course format will be a combination of lecture, speakers, video, class discussion and activities. Students are expected to read, critically analyze, and discuss readings. Participation in class is a requirement and **students should come to each class prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that class session.**

Required Readings

Turnell, Andrew and Edwards, Steve.(1999). *Signs of safety: A solution and safety oriented approach to child protection casework*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company.

Other required readings will come from the Tennessee Department of Children's Services. These materials include DCS documents, policies, and the DCS training manuals for new case managers. Readings from these manuals will be marked with asterisks (*) throughout the syllabus. All reading materials will be posted on Blackboard.

Grading

The grading scale for SW 462 is:

279 – 300	A
270 – 278	A-
261 – 269	B+
249 – 260	B
240 – 248	B-
231 – 239	C+
219 – 230	C
210 – 218	C-
209 – 180	D
179 & below	F

Quizzes (4@ 20 points each)

There will be 4 quizzes in this class. Each quiz will cover required readings, class discussions, lectures, videos, and guest speakers. Each quiz will be worth 20 points.

Quiz 1 is scheduled for February 2nd and includes materials covered from Jan 12th thru January 26th.

Quiz 1 evaluates course competencies 1 and 5.

Quiz 2 is scheduled for February 23rd and includes materials covered from February 2nd thru Feb 16th.

Quiz 2 evaluates course competencies 1, 2 and 3.

Quiz 3 is scheduled for March 30th and includes materials covered from February 23rd to March 23rd.

Quiz 3 evaluates course competencies 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10.

Quiz 4 is scheduled for April 20th and includes materials covered from March 30th thru April 13th.

Quiz 4 evaluates course competencies 5, 8, 10, 11 and 12.

Burnout: Plan for Self-Care (20 points)

Burnout and vicarious trauma are potential risks faced by social workers and child welfare practitioners. This assignment consists of 2 activities that will assist you in taking a proactive approach to these risks. Activity 1 (10 points) will include reviewing information about factors leading to burnout and vicarious trauma and the symptoms of burnout and vicarious trauma. Activity 2 (10 points) will involve reflecting on your own experiences of burnout and devising a plan to prevent burnout and/or to quickly intervene when you begin to experience the symptoms of burnout. Activities 1 and 2 of this assignment evaluate course competencies 7 and 9.

“Difficult Aspect of Child Welfare Practice” Paper (100 points)

It is understood that social work in the child welfare arena is emotionally challenging. This assignment provides an opportunity to identify and explore a specific aspect of child welfare practice that you anticipate will be particularly difficult for you.

Your paper should include the following four parts (each part should be a separate section in your paper):

- I. Thoroughly define and describe the aspect of child welfare practice you have selected. (10 points)
- II. Examine the roots of your perceived difficulty, including an open discussion regarding your own perceptions, attitudes, biases, values, experiences, emotions, and beliefs that influence you regarding this aspect of practice. (25 points)
- III. A review of relevant professional literature on the subject and related NASW Code of Ethics considerations. (30 points)
- IV. A thoughtful description of the personal plan you have devised to address your perceived difficulty. (25 points)

Your paper should be in APA format, 7 to 10 pages in length (12-point Times New Roman font), with a minimum of 5 citations from current peer-reviewed professional literature. (10 points)

This paper evaluates course competencies 6 and 7

Class Attendance & Participation

Class attendance and participation are mandatory. Students are expected to attend each class and to be prepared to participate in class discussions and activities based on assigned topics and readings. Students are allowed to be absent **one time** during the semester without penalty. For each additional absence, 5 points will be deducted from the final course grade unless other arrangements have been made in advance with the course instructor.

Competency Practice Activities (4 @ 25 points each)

Throughout the semester, students will participate in in-class case simulation/competency practice activities. There will be 4 graded competency practice opportunities during the semester. These activities evaluate course competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, and 13.

Attendance on days that Competency Practice activities are scheduled is required. The current schedule for these activities is: January 28th, February 18th, March 24th, and April 21st.

Tentative Course Outline

Unit I: Building Trusting Relationships with Families

Session 1: January 12 **Orientation to course**
TN DCS Practice wheel
Core conditions for helping
Working agreements

Readings: *Core conditions for helping
 *The practice wheel
 *The helping relationship

January 19 **Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday**

Session 2: January 26 **TN DCS Practice model**
(Family-centered practice, culturally responsive practice, family
systems, and the strengths perspective)
Documentation
(TN Kids, Family Functional Assessments, and Purpose of Contact
documentation format)

Readings: *Signs of Safety*
 Introduction
 Chapter 1 Child protection: A global perspective
 Chapter 2 Practice principles that build partnerships
 * Family-Centered practice and child welfare
 * Thinking of families as social systems
 * Essentials of cultural competence in child welfare practice

Unit II: Conducting Family-Centered Assessments

Session 3: February 2 **QUIZ 1**

Assessment as an ongoing process & Assessment tools

**TN DCS Assessment tools: Structured Decision Making (SDM) Safety Assessment, (SDM) Family Risk Assessment, Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment
The Family Functional Assessment**

Readings: *Signs of Safety*

Chapter 3 A map for the territory: The six practice elements

Chapter 4 Starting out right: The referral

* The Eco Map and Genogram: Techniques for assessing and working with families

Session 4: February

**Assessing safety, permanence & well-being
Considering developmental stages when conducting assessments
Use of questions**

Readings: *Signs of Safety*

Chapter 5 Child protection assessment with safety in mind

* Stages of child development

* How do I connect with children at different developmental levels?

* How do I assess child and youth development?

Session 5: February 16

Competency practice 1

**Assessing resources
Reaching mutual understanding**

Readings: *Signs of Safety*

Chapter 6 Knocking on the door: More than an investigation

* How do I assess a parent-child relationship?

* The effects of poverty on children

Unit III: Family-Centered Planning & Interventions

Session 6: February 23

QUIZ 2

**Overview of the family-centered planning process
Preparing for case planning & CFTM
Developing the plan with the family & team
Writing goal statements**

- Readings: *Signs of Safety*
Chapter 7 Developing a cooperative case plan
- * Building effective teams”
 - * Family group conferencing
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Session 7: March 2 Competency practice 2

Family-centered interventions
Community based resources
Crisis intervention
Solution-focused approach

- Readings: *Signs of Safety*
Chapter 8 Maintaining the focus on safety

- * Strategies for facilitators of child and family team meetings when domestic violence is suspected or present
 - * Parent-child visits as an opportunity for change
 - *How do I assess the likelihood of an intervention succeeding?
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Unit IV: Family-centered Child Protective Services (CPS) Investigations

Session 8: March 9 Steps in the CPS Case Process
CPS case response priorities
Multiple Response System (Investigation, Assessment, & Linkage)
Indicators of: Abuse, neglect, methamphetamine production, domestic violence, and mental illness
Family Crisis Intervention Services

- Readings: *Signs of Safety*
Chapter 9 Focusing on good practice: The key to successful implementation

- * How do I protect my personal safety in the community?
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March 16 Spring Break

Session 9: March 23 Competency practice 3

Developing an investigative strategy
Removing children from their homes
Reasonable efforts
Due process
Child Protective Investigative Team (CPIT)
Child Abuse Review Team (CART)

Readings: * How do I assess a child’s behavior related to separation and visitation?

Unit V: Permanence and Juvenile Justice

Session 10: March 30 Quiz 3

The foundation of permanence
Facilitating the transition into custody
Diligent searches
Case transfers

Readings: * When is termination of parental rights and adoption the best permanency option?
* How do I facilitate visits between foster children and their biological families that support the goals and objectives of intervention?

Session 11: April 6 **Engaging the family team in placement decisions**
Permanency plans & need statements
Permanency options
Concurrent permanency planning
Developing, implementing, and revising the plan

Readings: * When can a child be safely reunited with her/his family?
* Concurrent planning benefits and pitfalls

Session 12: April 13 Competency practice 4

Levels of care & Youth Development Centers
Community Risk Assessments
Monitoring and updating the permanency plan
Stabilizing placements
Making and implementing permanency decisions

Readings: * How do I prepare families for case closure?

Session 13: April 20 Quiz 4

“Aging out” of foster care & Interdependent Living
Foster care review boards
Case closure/termination