

University of Minnesota
School of Social Work

SW 5708: Substance Abuse and Social Work

Introduction

A survey of 2000 members of NASW that included social workers in private practice and organizational settings found that in the year prior to completing the survey, 71% had taken one of more actions related to clients with substance abuse disorders. The actions were roughly distributed among screening, treatment and referral.

Most social workers that take some action to assist their substance-abusing clients have no formal certification and little formal education in this area. Most (68%) reported their primary training was from workshops while 38% reported receiving some formal coursework in this area. Clearly social workers are performing a wide variety of substance abuse actions with little in-depth training and virtually no certification that attests to a level of proficiency in this area.

The MSW Program at the University of Minnesota offers only one course focused exclusively on the topic of substance abuse. Since there is only one course offering on this subject, it would be naïve to suggest that this course is a comprehensive or thorough examination of this topic. The primary focus of SW 5708 is the acquisition of basic skills that will enable the social work practitioner to recognize and intervene when clients demonstrate a problem with substance abuse.

A secondary purpose of the course is the placement of substance abuse in the larger context of an ecosystem where each part is affected and in turn affects the other. This larger environment includes the personal relationships of family and friends as well as the contexts of community, ethnicity, and larger society in general.

This course teaches a strengths perspective of substance abuse treatment. Along with the traditional Minnesota disease model of addiction, and the 12-steps of Alcoholic's Anonymous the concept of harm reduction is introduced especially as it applies to dually diagnosed clients. Miller and Rollnick's Motivational Interviewing techniques are applied using Prochaska and DiClemente's Change Model to assist individuals in moving toward increased responsibility for their use and the ability to make decisions regarding their own intervention.

Course Objectives

1. Become familiar with variations in public and personal attitudes toward substance abuse and the impact of these attitudes on public policy.
2. Be able to develop various strengths model intervention strategies applicable with a variety of populations and settings including child welfare, mental health, families, schools, adolescents, health care and aging.
3. Demonstrate advanced skills in the use of motivational interviewing techniques
4. Demonstrate understanding of the symptoms of abuse and dependence and be able to explain the etiology of these symptoms from an ecosystemic perspective.
5. Be familiar with the differences that exist when working with individuals, families and groups of varying backgrounds such as age, culture, gender, affectional preference, and religious affiliation.
6. Be able to identify a variety of resources that exist for the education, prevention support and treatment of substance abuse.
7. Demonstrate an ability to assess the individual and societal risks associated with substance abuse
8. Be familiar with the current laws and public policies that impact substance abuses and others in the environment.

Course Content

The main topics covered in the course are:

- Historical Perspectives of Substance Abuse
- Strengths-Based Helping Strategies

- Trans-theoretical Model of Change
- The Biology of Addiction
- Addiction Across the Life Span
- Substance and Behavioral Addictions
- Co-Occurring Substance and Mental Disorders
- Family Risks and Resiliencies
- Racial, Ethnic and Cultural Issues
- Gender and Sexual Orientation Differences
- Mutual-Help Groups
- Public Policy and Social Change

Course Texts

Van Wormer, Katherine & Davis, Diane Rae (2003). *Addiction Treatment: A Strengths Perspective*, Thompson Brooks/Cole.

Miller, William, Ph.D. (2000). *Enhancing motivation for change in substance abuse treatment, Treatment Improvement Protocol 35*, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, Rockville, MD. (This text is a free government publication and will be distributed the first class meeting.)

Course Readings

A number of articles will be required to augment the text and add both diversity and depth to the course text material. The articles are available online and can be downloaded and printed when assigned for a specific lesson. (reading assignments are listed in the course syllabus)

Assignments		
Assignment	Purpose	Individual or Group
Course Website	Learn to use Vista	Individual
Personal Interest Statement	Provide the instructor with information to make the course more applicable.	Individual
Current Events Online Discussion Join a group from the list of group on the homepage	Explore the multitude of issues associated with substance abuse and the various ways social workers can create an impact.	Group
Resource Directory	Provide the class with a directory of resources related to substance abuse & social work.	Individual
Class Presentation	Deepen the class overall learning experience and gain practice, and organizational skills	Individual
Live Client Interview	Demonstrate an ability to use Motivational Interviewing Skills	Individual
Group Feedback	Small group written and oral feedback on the client interview	Individual & Group
Case Development	Join a group by 1/29 and prepare a case example that can be used for practice in class.	Group
Resource Interview or Group Observation	Critically think about and evaluate the efficacy of an ongoing substance abuse program or self-help group.	Individual
Quizzes (2)	Evaluate the retention of course material	Individual

Explore the Course Website

During the week following the first class meeting, explore the course website. Use the handout included with the course syllabus to make sure your Internet browser is configured to work with Vista. Many of the problems students experience using Vista are the result of an incorrectly configured browser. Write a short narrative (no more than ½ page) about your previous experience with WebCt. I am interested in knowing the frustrations you have experienced as well as things that you thought were helpful to your learning. After exploring this course website, what questions and concerns do you have?

Course Interest & Expectations

In the discussion area post a statement about your interest in this course, what do you hope to learn, and how do you think you will use it in social work practice. Respond to at least two other student's postings.

Five Current Events in Substance Abuse and Social Work

Current Event Topics: Five topic groups have been created: legislative, social welfare policy, social events, funding sources and research. When you log into the homepage of the course website you will see the icon for current events. When you click on this you will be able to see the groups available and choose the one you want to join. The groups are limited to 6 members so a particular group may be full. Since you will be doing this five times throughout the semester, you will have the chance to participate in another group at a later time. No student can participate in the same group more than once. This gives everyone an opportunity to join each of the groups during the semester.

Legislative

Sign up for this group if you have an interest in exploring recent proposals or changes to existing laws or federal and state legislative policies. An example is the recent legislation that passed lowering of the blood alcohol level to .08 as the criteria for a DWI citation.

Social Welfare Policies

Sign up for this group if you have an interest in exploring recent state and local policies that impact the delivery of substance abuse services and the impact of these policies on clients.

Social Events

Join this group if you are interested in social events that impact opinions or create strong controversy among individuals or groups. An example is a recent article in the Star Tribune that describes the problem that methamphetamine has become in Northern Minnesota.

Funding

Join this group if you are interested in learning more about how federal, state and local funding for substance abuse impact service delivery.

Research

Sign up for this group if you are interested in exploring new research into the etiology, and treatment of substance abuse.

Resource Directory

With the information provided by members in your current events discussion group, you will develop a resource directory that contains the citations noted in the group discussion. Each student will have responsibility for this assignment only once during the semester even though you will participate in 5 different groups. This assignment enables the entire class to benefit from the resources discovered by individual students.

Group Summary Class Presentation

One member of each group will have the responsibility of summarizing the current event

discussion and making a brief report to the class. Each student will do this once during the semester. An assignment will appear in Vista on the date the current event discussion is due for the student whose responsibility it is to summarize and present the material to the class on the class presentation date. Be sure you check the assignment section frequently and at least weekly.

Motivational Interviewing With Standardized Clients

Students will spend considerable time during the semester learning motivational interviewing techniques. Each student will be required to video record a live interview using the MI approach. Each student will interview two clients whom they do not know and who have been trained to standardize the interview so each student will have a similar experience.

Prepare a case example for practice in class

Each student is required to join a group and prepare a case example that will be used in a specific class to practice the various skills that are taught. The case example should be a composite of each student's personal or professional experience to create as realistic a case as possible. Course materials and resources and any other relevant material that the group discovers can also be used to create the case history. Resources used to develop the case should be cited. Any actual case material should be adequately disguised to protect anonymity.

Group Observation

In this assignment you are to either interview a social worker employed at a substance abuse program or observe a self-help group within your community. This cannot be a group that you are currently a facilitator, co-facilitator or member of. There are many groups that meet for a variety of purposes and are open to anyone who has a desire and need. Twelve-step groups can usually be observed if permission is asked prior to the group start. Obviously, anonymity is critical and any group may be suspicious of someone whose only desire is to observe. However, in most instances stating clearly that you are observing as a student for the purpose of learning about groups is sufficient to grant you access.

As an observer, your job is to determine how the group functions. You can use the group dynamics that you have been discussing in the classroom. What are the structure, process, purpose, and goals of this group? Does the group have a way of evaluating itself? If this is a self-help group, how is leadership determined? Also note your personal experience of the group. How do you feel as an outsider? What would this group be like for you if you were coming because you have a substance abuse problem?

Write a 5-page paper describing your observation or interview. Evaluate this program in terms of its suitability for specific populations. Does the program offer a cultural component? Does it rely solely on the 12-step model? Does it work with dually diagnosed clients in an integrative way?

Course Outline

Class 1 Course Introduction

- Gain a thorough understanding of course assignments and expectations
- Become acquainted with the course website
- Become acquainted with your classmates
- Understand the scope of the problem
- Identify some evaluation outcomes on treatment effectiveness

- Video: Changing Lives: Moyers On Addiction
- Discuss a variety of approaches to treatment of substance abuse.

Required Reading

- Course syllabus

Assignments

- Explore course website
- Personal interest statement
- Join a current events group

Class 2

Historical & Contemporary Perspectives on Addiction

- Understand the social and legal history of substance use in the U.S. over the past 100 years.
- Explore some of the social attitudes about addiction through discussion of current events in substance abuse. An example is the series of articles in the Star Tribune (May, 2004) on the use of alcohol and drugs among youth on the Leech Lake Ojibwe Reservation.

Required Reading

- Addiction Treatment: A Strengths Perspective. Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 3-65 and chapter 13, pp. 401- 416
- Abbott Ann A (2003). *Meeting the challenges of substance misuse: Making inroads one-step at a time*. Health & Social Work; May 2003; 28, 2; (available on course website)

Assignments

- Online current event posting and discussion
- Designated group member prepares resources for directory

Class 3

The Psychopharmacology of Addiction

- Become familiar with how various drugs of abuse are introduced into the body, absorbed, distributed, and eliminated.
- Understand the biological basis of addiction and relapse
- Know some of the physiological, psychological and social consequences of long-term substance abuse.
- View video "The Addicted Brain"

Required Reading

- Addiction Treatment: A Strengths Perspective. Chapters 4, pp. 97-145.

Assignments

- Designated group member with input from other members, develops a summary of online discussion
- Designated group member posts resources on Vista for entire class to view
- Group 1 case example development

Class 4

Enhancing Motivation for Change

- Understand the Trans-theoretical Model of change
- Learn some of the motivational interviewing strategies that enhance motivation to change.
- View the motivational interviewing video on opening strategies.
- Practice the MI strategies

Required Reading

- Chapter 3 and 4, pp. 39-82 *Motivational Interviewing as a Counseling Style in Enhancing Motivation for Change in Substance Abuse Treatment*; Center for Substance Abuse Treatment TIP Series 35.
- Prochaska, James, O. (2000). Change at differing stages. In *Handbook of psychological change*, edited by C.R. Snyder and R.E. Ingram. John Wiley & Sons, New York (available on course website under lesson 4).

Class 5

Substance Abuse & Other Behavioral Addictions Assessment & Intervention

- Demonstrate an ability to accurately diagnose various substance dependence disorders using the DMS-IV.
- Be able to recognize and assess the behavioral addictions that exist.
- Know how to use several assessment instruments.
- Practice conducting an assessment using a case example in class

Required Reading

- *Addiction Treatment: A Strengths Perspective*. Chapters 7, pp. 213-246
- Evans, William N. (1998). Assessment and diagnosis of the substance use disorders. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, Summer, 1998, pp. 325-333.

Assignments

- Designated group member prepares resources for directory

Class 6

Assessment & Intervention with Families

- Understand the concept of family systems.
- Become acquainted with how systems change to accommodate a substance abusing family member
- Learn several intervention methods effective with substance abusing families.
- Practice conducting a family session in class.

Required Reading

- *Addiction Treatment: A Strengths Perspective*. Chapters 9, pp. 283-310
- Hohman, Melinda M., (1998). *Motivational interviewing: an intervention tool with for child welfare case workers working with substance-abusing parents*, Child Welfare, 0009-4021, May 1, 1998, Vol. 77, Issue 3 (on course website under lesson 6)
- Rowe Cynthia L, & Howard A Liddle (2003). *Substance Abuse Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*; Jan 2003; 29, 1 (available on course web)

Assignments

- Designated group member with input from other members, develops a summary of online discussion
- Designated group member posts resources on Vista for entire class to view

Class 7

Co-Occurring Substance Abuse and Mental Illness

- Understand the interplay of substance abuse and mental health disorders.
- Become familiar with the similarities and differences in assessment and treatment of dually disordered clients.
- View the Minkoff lecture CD (This lecture series will be viewed in class, but will also be available on the course web.)
- Practice Motivational Interviewing

Required Reading

- Addiction Treatment: A Strengths Perspective. Chapters 8, pp. 247-279
- Smyth, Nancy J. (1996). Motivating persons with dual disorders: a stage approach. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services* (available on course website)

Assignments

- Designated group member presents current event summary in class.

Class 8

Tailoring Service To People From Diverse Backgrounds

- Understand the unique needs of the diverse groups and individuals who struggle with substance abuse.
- Develop interventions based on your understanding of what is in the best interest of your client.
- Learn a variety of resources that exist for the populations that require unique or special services.

Reading

- Addiction Treatment: A Strengths Perspective. Chapters 10 & 11, pp. 311-369
- Walle, Alf (2004). *Native Americans and Alcoholism Therapy: The Example of Handsome Lake as a Tool of Recovery*. *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse*, Vol. 3(2), 2004.

Assignments

- Designated group member with input from other members, develops a summary of online discussion
- Designated group member posts resources on Vista for entire class to view

Class 9

Motivational Interviewing Advanced

- Develop skills in advanced Motivational Interviewing techniques
- View video of Rollnick and Miller
- Practice use of skills in class

- Prepare for IERC videotaped session on April 2nd.

Reading

- Chapter 5 and 6, pp. 83-110 *Motivational Interviewing as a Counseling Style in Enhancing Motivation for Change in Substance Abuse Treatment*; Center for Substance Abuse Treatment TIP Series 35.
- Hanson, Meredith and Gutheil, I (2004). *Motivational strategies with alcohol-involved older adults: implications for social work practice*, Social Work, Vol. 49, No. 3, July, 2004.

Assignments

- Designated group member presents summary of current events in class

Class 10

Motivational Interviewing Observation

- Gain experience using Motivational Interviewing intervention methods with a client whom you have never met and have limited information about.
- Draw on the skills you have developed during the semester and be able to recognize your progress.
- Have the benefit of a videotaped interview to evaluate your skills

Reading

- None

Class 11

Small Group Video MI Review

- Receive feedback from instructor and peers via small group presentations of videotaped session.

Reading

- Review instructions on providing feedback

Assignments

- Oral feedback for small group members.

Class 12

Group Treatment of Substance Abuse

- Become familiar with a variety of both self-help and psychotherapeutic approaches to group treatment.
- Be able to make a referral to an appropriate group based on individual circumstance, needs and availability.

Reading

- Addiction Treatment: A Strengths Perspective. Chapters 12, pp. 371-400

Assignments

- Designated group member presents summary of current events discussion in class

Class 13

Addiction Across the Life Span

- Understand how drug use spans the human life cycle.
- Learn the special circumstances that need to be considered when intervening at various life cycle stages.
- Be able to identify the environmental stressors and resources that exist at various stages.
- Know how to make use of these resources when doing assessments and making referrals

Reading

- Addiction Treatment: A Strengths Perspective. Chapters 6, pp. 175-211

Assignments

- Designated group member posts resources on Vista for entire class to view

Class 14

Recent Developments and Alternative Interventions

- Become familiar with some of the more recent pharmacological, behavioral, and spiritual interventions for substance abuse.
- Class evaluation and feedback

Assignments

- Designated group member presents summary of current events discussion in class

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