

University of Minnesota
School of Social Work
Spring Semester 2004
Course Syllabus

SW 5810
Mood Disorders, New Directions in Clinical Care
2 Credit Course

Course Description:

Over 17 million Americans suffer from depressive illness. The majority of these individuals do not seek treatment although there are effective empirically tested treatments available. Of the 40% who eventually seek professional help, many wait until they experience serious impairment in social, occupational, educational and physical functioning.

Unfortunately the illness itself may prevent early treatment. Feelings of worthlessness, despair, and lack of hope often dominate the depressed person's outlook on life. Moreover, the negative perception of becoming a "psychiatric patient" often causes clients to remain silent, isolate, and delay seeing a mental health treatment provider. This course will provide students with a comprehensive understanding of depression that highlights current research from biochemical, genetic, familial and socio-cultural perspectives. Relevant gender, racial, ethnic, class and sexual preference issues concerning the prevalence, assessment and treatment of depression will also be discussed.

Participants will learn models of assessment and intervention for clients with depressive disorders. The course will emphasize cognitive-behavioral, family, and pharmacological treatments. Critical issues such as suicide, hospitalization, depression's impact on family members, the client's subjective experiences, managed care, and case management will be discussed. Differential application of treatment approaches to various populations will also be highlighted.

Course Outcomes:

After satisfactorily completion of this course, students will:

- understand steps used for diagnosing depression
- improve skills for assessing and treating depression
- improve skills for assessing and preventing suicide
- understand the impact neurochemicals, genetics, families, psychological perspectives, and cultures have on depressive symptoms
- understand the empirical research that provides a foundation for treatment methods have a basic understanding of psychopharmacology and social work's roles in medication treatment
- be knowledgeable of the unique assessment and treatment needs of special populations

Course Assignments:

1. **Taped Interviewing Assignment.** The purpose of this assignment is to help you develop an understanding of how medication works, and increase your skills for educating clients about

drug interventions. You are to produce an audio or video tape demonstrating a therapy session that educates the client about a prescribed medication, and answer the person's questions or concerns about antidepressants. This is a role play between you and a person pretending to be a client. A psychiatrist has just prescribed a serotonin-reuptake inhibitor antidepressant for the client. This person has never been on medications, and has no knowledge of how antidepressants work. As the social worker it is your job to explain issues like: how medication works; why a client with major depressive episodes needs medication; problems with medication; when the client should contact a psychiatrist about the medications; when and how the psychiatrist will take the person off medications; and answer questions presented by the (pretend) client. There is an expectation that the client will spontaneously ask questions that have not been rehearsed.

2. **Brief Paper.** Write a 3 to 6 page paper on any topic about depression or bipolar disorder that is not covered in this syllabus. Follow APA guidelines for writing the paper.
3. **Book Review.** The purpose of this assignment is to help you learn how a person experienced the pain and disability of a major mood disorder, and how that person found a path to recovery. In addition, some self-help books will also provide limited insights into the personal and family struggles caused by major mood disorders. Reading good personal accounts of depression/bipolar disorders and self-help books will increase your ability to assess and treat mood disorders. Therefore you are to critically review a biographical or self-help book
 - A. Read a personal account/self-help book focused on a major mood disorder
 - B. A suggested outline for completing this task will be provided in the next 2 weeks.
 - C. Write a brief 2 to 4 page report about the book (outline to be given)
 - D. A copy of your report will be given to each class member.

Required Texts:

1. DePaulo, J., Raymond. (2002). *Understanding Depression*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
2. Jamison, Kay Redfield. (1995). *An Unquiet Mind*. New York: Vintage Books.
3. Jamison, Kay Redfield. (1999). *Night Falls Fast*. New York: Vintage Books.
4. Stahl, Stephen M. (2000). *Essential Psychopharmacology of Depression and Bipolar Disorder*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
5. Assigned Internet web pages.