SW 8462-Advanced clinical social work practice with children and adolescents

Part I: Course information
SW 8462-Advanced clinical social work practice with children and adolescents
2 credits
Faculty Contact:
Name:
Email:
Phone:
Office Location:

Course descriptions:

a. Short: Build a framework for social work interventions using normative developmental supports and mental health case planning. Develop advanced clinical social work practice knowledge and skills for working with children and adolescents with mental health risks and provide knowledge for community social workers serving children who are exposed to stress.

b. Long: The purpose of this course is to prepare students to understand development, developmental stresses, disruptions and challenges, and to identify research-informed social work interventions that include individual children, their caregivers and community settings that provide primary and supportive mental health services. This course assumes basic knowledge of biopsychosocial functioning and assessment and is embedded in models of developmental resilience, developmental psychopathology, and stress biology, which contribute to learning and adaptive challenges. Attention will also be paid to how protective experiences, especially relational connections, support resilience and growth in the face of adversity. In each class, students will consider functions of development (biopsychosocial capacities that facilitate growth and adaptation) and then focus on how children and adolescents become identified as vulnerable or at risk; how these concerns can compromise developmental movement; and what supports and/or interventions contribute to problem-relief and change over time.

Pre-requisites:
1. This is an advanced social work class, and the material presented in this class is at an advanced level. Social Work students enrolled in this course should have completed the foundation classes listed below, or have advanced standing status.
   - SW 5051 - Human Behavior and the Social Environment
   - SW 5801 - Policies and Programs in American Social Welfare
   - SW 8151 - Social Work Practice Methods: Individuals and Systems
   - SW 8152 - Social Work Practice Methods: Families and Groups
   - SW 8153 - Models of Community Intervention
   - SW 8841 - Social Work Research Methods
2. You must have completed or be concurrently enrolled in either SW 8451 Assessment and Engagement in Clinical Social Work Practice or SW 8351 Advanced Practice 1: Families and Children
3. If you are not a Social Work student, you need permission of the instructor
Clinical Licensure Hours:
This course contains some clinical content, as required by the Minnesota Board of Social Work for eligibility for the Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW). The number of hours in each required category is listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Differential Diagnosis</th>
<th>Assessment based treatment planning</th>
<th>Clinical Intervention Methods</th>
<th>Evaluation methodologies</th>
<th>SW values and ethics</th>
<th>Culturally specific clinical assessment</th>
<th>Other areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
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Part II: Course outcomes

Course Objectives

Students will:
1. become knowledgeable about normative child developmental process, using an biopsychosocial lens;
2. using this normative lens, learn how stress, disruptions and difficulties impact acquisition of necessary developmental capacities;
3. become familiar with psychosocial constructs that describe functional adaptation and impairment;
4. apply knowledge of development to assessment and case planning/ intervention phases of social work practice with children, adolescents, and their families;
5. develop intervention strategies that facilitate mastery of developmental tasks, enhance resilience, and foster protective mechanisms;
6. integrate awareness of the diverse perspectives of families and communities, e.g. cultural, social class, racial, religious, etc.;
7. demonstrate systemic understanding about the process of change to permit practice evaluation;
8. and be able to use clinical knowledge, or awareness of developmental needs, to assess and influence public policy that impacts social and mental health services to children, youth and their families and consider how to make contributions to policy formation.

At course completion, students should be able to:
1. use developmental knowledge and principles to assess child clients, identify needs, and develop a case plan that is consistent with this assessment;
2. utilize assessment information to form a clear case formulation and intervention plans and strategies that fit the case and the child’s needs;
3. identify intervention possibilities in diverse settings and with resources at hand, with awareness that relationship engagement provides potential for new learning;
4. provide guidance and direction to parents and other caregivers regarding the developmental needs of child clients;
5. evaluate case process and progress;
6. read and use research about normative child development, as well as impact of disruptions on developmental growth, and apply this knowledge to practice;
7. integrate learning from other social work classes, to assure respect for and appreciation of the impact of cultural, racial and economic differences that are an integral part of any client system;
8. review agency policies and contribute to the effective organization of services, so that these best address needs of children.
EPAS COMPETENCIES
Successful completion of this course implies that the student has achieved competency in the practice behaviors associated with the following EPAS Competencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency: 2.1.1 – Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession’s history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession’s enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth. Social workers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Behavior</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Apply knowledge of social services, policies and programs relevant to their area of practice</td>
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<td>• Develop a plan for ongoing professional education, including supervision.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency: 2.1.2 – Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Behavior</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify and analyze value-based and ethical dilemmas that arise in their area of practice, using professional codes of ethical standards and through appropriate professional consultation.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Competency: 2.1.3 – Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Behaviors</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identify and synthesize multiple sources of knowledge to understand policy and practice issues related to their area of practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identify and evaluate models of assessment, prevention, intervention and evaluation that are appropriate to their area of practice.</td>
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<tr>
<th>EP 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice</th>
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<td>Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Behavior</td>
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</table>
- Engage in practice that challenges the systems of privilege and oppression by utilizing the culturally relevant assessments and interventions specific to the context of their area of practice. Integrated into case discussions

### EP 2.1.5 – Advance human rights and social and economic justice

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Assessed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Gain a full comprehension about disparities and their development, contribute to knowledge about institutional barriers to equality and apply concentration-appropriate strategies to advance social and economic justice.</td>
<td>Integrated into case discussions</td>
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### Competency: 2.1.7 – Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. Social workers:

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Evaluate and synthesize theories and perspectives of human behavior and the social environment to choose and apply methods of assessment, intervention and evaluation in their area of practice.</td>
<td>Classes 4, 6, 8, 10, 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demonstrate knowledge of ethnocultural, biological, psychological and spiritual frameworks, and multi-axial diagnostic classification systems used in the formulation of comprehensive mental health assessment and intervention planning.</td>
<td>Throughout course</td>
<td>Final paper</td>
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### Competency: 2.1.9 – Respond to contexts that shape practice

Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively. Social workers:

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<th>Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Assess the impact of historical and contemporary contexts on practice and policy in their area of practice.</td>
<td>Class 1, 14</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### CMH Competency: 2.1.10 (a)-(b) – Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families,
groups, organizations, and communities

Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behavior</th>
<th>Covered in class through (i.e., activity, reading, content)</th>
<th>Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Engage: Use empathy and collaborative interviewing skills to engage clients in identifying their strengths and problems.</td>
<td>Class 3, and throughout course</td>
<td>Assignment 2, class discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engage: Establish rapport and maintain effective working relationships with clients in clinical mental health settings.</td>
<td>Classes 4,6,8,10,12</td>
<td>Class discussion, ass. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engage: Employ diverse strategies to arrive at a collaborative focus of work and desired outcomes in clinical social work mental health practice.</td>
<td>Classes 4,6,8,10,12</td>
<td>Final assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assess: Employ knowledge of the DSM-IV, the psychosocial assessment interview, and collateral information from key informants and agencies when appropriate to develop a comprehensive collaborative assessment.</td>
<td>Classes 4,6,8,10,12</td>
<td>Final assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assess: Conduct risk assessment according to ethical and legal standards pertaining to child maltreatment, homicide, suicide and other life threatening circumstances.</td>
<td>Classes 4, 6,8,10,12, 15</td>
<td>Final assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assess: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to determine a range of potentially effective and appropriate interventions to improve practice outcomes related to clinical social work practice in mental health.</td>
<td>Class discussion</td>
<td>Final assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intervention: Use appropriate evidenced-based interventions to help clients resolve identified and agreed upon problems.</td>
<td>Classes 4,6,8,10,12</td>
<td>Class discussion, final assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Intervention: Maintain accurate records documenting the assessment, interventions and outcomes.</td>
<td>Class discussion, class 15</td>
<td>Class discussion, final assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evaluate: Apply research skills to analyze, monitor, evaluate and improve treatment alliance and interventions and programs in clinical</td>
<td>Class discussion, evaluation built into case formulation model</td>
<td>Final assignment</td>
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social work practice in mental health.

- Evaluate: Communicate and disseminate research and evaluation results to a variety of local, regional, national or global audiences when appropriate.

| Class discussion | Class discussion |

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Part III: Course requirements

1. This course will use two texts, as well as additional readings about practice issues and research evidence. Articles are identified within the syllabus and will be available on the course moodle site. Please note that identified readings are to be read before each class and students are expected to come prepared to discuss the salient content.


Additional books and articles will be recommended for advanced practice. Class participants will also be asked about special interests or practice issues and readings will be selected to address these.

2. There will be three assignments for this course:

- **1. Observation paper:** each student will observe a (non-clinical) child in a context (with parents or caregivers, or with peers or in a social setting) for one hour. During this observation, please watch how the child related to others, plays, expresses feelings, makes sense of what is happening, and finds ways to act according to social expectations (and possibly, not as expected). Choose a child of a similar age to children you work with, or are interested in. Note what seems typical about this child’s age-functioning, and any characteristics that you think make this child unique or distressed. Write up your observation, including what your experience was to be an observer (vs. an intervener), and what you learned from your own reflections. 5 /7 pages double-spaced.

- **2. Interactive interview with a child or adolescent:** using your internship or work setting, choose a child you are involved with as a social worker, and interview this child. This interview can be primarily conversation, or play, or a combination of both. Demonstrate skills from the anchor course(s) about engagement and setting the assessment contract. Describe the process of this interview: what the child provided and how you chose to respond (back and forth). Then review the interview and comment about your intentions, the verbal and non-verbal communication, and how you assessed the work within the session. Make sure you discuss how you facilitated this work and how you understood the interpersonal dynamics of this clinical exchange. 3/5 pages double-spaced.

- **3. Final Case planning paper:** using the assessment skills practiced in the anchor course and the outline provided in this course, write an assessment of a current case. Make sure to include DSM-IV diagnoses (five axes) and a succinct case formulation. Then build an intervention plan, including multidisciplinary teaming and multi-setting collaborations, when appropriate. In this case plan, be sure to identify your ideas about what will facilitate change, your role as an interventionist, and how you will evaluate if your case plan is helping this child. Also identify
obstacles to good outcomes and any actions you can include to address these obstacles as part of your overall plan.

This assignment must include these four components. Assignment missing any one of these will be returned.

1. **Introduction:** describe why you chose this case, and identify relevant research and theoretical understanding that you bring to this case. In this section, reference citations are welcome.

2. **Assessment and formulation:** using the outline provided in class, complete an assessment of a case. Make sure to address all components, including the five Axes of the DSM-IV. Remember, in the current functioning section, to consider how this child is similar and different from same-age peers. At the end, develop a succinct case formulation. This section should use professional writing, and can be in prose or outline format.

3. **Case plan:** First consider your theory of change in this case. Using the outline provided in class, consider your hypothesis about what will promote change and growth in the client system. Then construct an intervention plan identifying the work you will do (or have already done). Make sure your case plan is consistent with your assessment data and formulation, and reflects your theory of change. If this is a collaboration case, identify the goals and expectations of each collaborating partner, and mechanisms to assure collaboration effectiveness.

4. **Professional reflection:** use this opportunity to consider your experience in this case and the process of this assignment. Consider your social work role, and what you realized as you did this work. Use this opportunity to practice professional self-awareness.

This assignment will be discussed and practiced in class. 7/10 pages double-spaced.

- **Alternative assignment:** if you are not engaging in direct clinical practice, you can choose this alternative assignment. Identify a policy or programmatic intervention, and follow the same assessment outline, using the issue as the presenting concern and identify the shared needs of a population. Make an assessment formulation of the policy need or intervention intention and then write a description of how a policy or intervention will address the needs of children represented in your assessment. Follow the same process looking at your theory of change. In the case plan, discuss steps towards implementation as well as obstacles to service delivery. Include all four sections as in the first option; instead of using a specific DSM-IV diagnosis, describe the mental health vulnerabilities for this population, and the protective factors that may offset risk.

1. Grading and weight of assignments: Papers 1 and 2 count for 20% of the grade each; paper three counts for 50% of the final grade. The remaining 10% reflects class participation and attitude.

**Course Policies**

There are many University and School of Social Work policies that govern this course. Please go to [http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/Documents/SSWCoursePolicies.pdf](http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/Documents/SSWCoursePolicies.pdf) to see a complete description of all the policies.

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**Part IV: Course content**

In this course, each class will include lecture, discussion of readings and case examples. While children’s ages/stages are not discrete times as much as descriptive periods of learning, it is useful to organize this course using this typical developmental lens. The focus will start with what happens for most children and how are core developmental capacities supported within the parent(s)-child and family context; then we will consider how developmental compromises and mental health needs emerge; and finally, what do children...
need from adults to recover and repair these capacities so that they can move forward and adapt as best as they can.

Students are expected to compete assigned readings before each class. Additional readings will be included that address particular interests and learning needs of enrolled students. Because this is an advanced practice course, it is imperative that students are prepared with both understanding of the reading content and with case examples from their own work and placement experiences. Social work students are reminded that while this is an academic class, it is also professional training, and confidentiality about case material will be expected. If any student is not actively working with children then accommodations will be made to connect this student with community resources.

Class 1: Overview of course: principles and context of social work with children and adolescents.
Reading for this class:
Davies, Introduction, chapters 1 and 2;

Activities: Class introductions and review of course syllabus

Class 2: Development, developmental stress, disruptions and developmental repairs
Readings:
Davies, Chapter 3 and 4
NSCDC (website: National Scientific Council on the Developing Child) # 3: Excessive stress disrupts the architecture of the developing brain;
#4: Early exposure to toxic substances damages brain architecture;
#8 Maternal depression can undermine the development of young children.

Activities: Using case examples in class, students will discuss how the biopsychosocial approach is necessary to understand how development occurs, and how compromises occur.

Class 3: Transactions at the core of social learning: relationships and context/culture: present and past.
Readings: Davies introduction to part II and chapter 5;

Class 4: Stressors and Disorders of infancy and parent/infant functioning
Readings:
Davies, chapter 6;
Slade (2002), Keeping the baby in mind: a critical factor in perinatal mental health, Zero to Three.

Activity: Students will identify their own case and start to consider the developmental issues particular to the child’s age, as well as specific history and difficulties.
Class 5:  Emerging arousal regulation, emotion regulation and negotiation: the work of toddlers
Readings:
Davies, Chapter 7;

Activity:  Students will begin to observe how symptoms or difficulties emerge from the parent/child relationship into child coping strategies.

Class 6:  Stressors and Disorders of toddler functioning
Readings:
Davies chapter 8

Activity:  Students will consider emergence of internal risk factors as the result of interactive patterns; using DSM categories, students will examine the phenomenon of inside/outside functioning, and appreciate both person-in-situation, and situation-in-person phenomena.

Class 7:  Social learning and generalization into the community: how preschoolers move into the larger social environment.
Readings
Davies, chapter 9;
NSCDC #9: *Persistent Fear and Anxiety Can Affect Young Children’s Learning and Development*

Activity:  Students will examine the impact of trauma and other fear-producing events on children’s developmental trajectories.

Class 8:  Stressors and Disorders of preschool functioning
Readings:
Davies, chapter 10;
NSCDC # 10: *Early Experiences Can Alter Gene Expression and Affect Long-Term Development;*
#11: *Building the Brain’s ‘Air Traffic Control’ System: How Early Experiences Shape the Development of Executive Function*

Activity:  Students will begin to construct case formulations that include present functioning (risks and strengths), significant past events and difficulties, and current needs (focus of intervention).

Class 9:  Shifting to how the world works: cognition, exploration and school aged learning.
Reading:
Davies, Chapter 11;
Gearity, Developmental Repair, chapters 2 and 3.

**Activity:** Students will consider the shift from experiential learning to formal or academic learning as a major expectation of childhood and consider how neurocognitive difficulties impact social/emotional functioning and mental health.

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**Class 10:** Stressors and Disorders of school age functioning  
**Reading:** Davies, chapter 12;  
Gearity, Developmental Repair, ch. 4.  

**Activity:** Students will examine theories of change, and how research evidence is translated into evidence-informed practices.

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**Class 11:** Increasing consolidation, self reliance and self-awareness: moving into adolescents  
**Reading:** McKenzie, chapters 2, 3, 5 and 6.  
NIMH : The teen brain: still under construction

**Activity:** Students will explore adolescents from both a personal lens and an observational lens, to understand developmental continuity and developmental change.

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**Class 12:** Stressors and Disorders of adolescent functioning  
**Reading:** chapters on practice settings (McKenzie) will be identified to fit the students’ interests.

**Activity:** Students will use the selected chapters to explore how settings influence clinical and supportive social work.

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**Class 13:** Treatment challenges: lingering effects of disruptions of care, of trauma, of brain impairments (fetal alcohol effects, autism, trauma, etc.)  
**Readings:** to be identified by the interests of the students.

**Activity:** Building on the earlier class, students will revisit their own work settings to look at context: how developmental work requires social workers to assess child needs and the receptivity of any setting to support development (transactions).

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**Class 14:** Work challenged: cases identified by students  
**Readings:** to be identified by the interests of the students.

**Activity:** using students’ case examples, practice how to move from assessment to case planning and practice evaluation; also, how to make a...
useful case plan in the face of significant vulnerability, impairment or risk. In this class students will be encouraged to address a wide range of intervention modalities that provide protection for normative developmental energies as well as repair developmental vulnerabilities. Students will examine what is most effective given the sanction of the work setting and available resources within the child and family and within the work setting. This reexamination of a range of services will permit students to consider how many models of social work can be beneficial when planned with assessment intention.

Class 15:  Ethics and boundaries working with children and their families; documenting work and process of change and repair

Activity: using case examples, students will discuss ethical issues and challenges in work with children, adolescents and families experiencing stress.