Course Description

This course addresses important information regarding social work services with men and their families. It is designed to be a broad overview of common issues faced by men who come to the attention of social services and what social workers can do to support and engage with men in practice. Recent evidence is reviewed concerning patterns of fatherhood, men’s involvement with their children and the impact of paternal involvement on children’s development. Participants will reflect on their own experiences with men in their lives, will conduct an agency assessment and will analyze and develop best-practice service delivery plans that are centered on the needs and issues of men. The organizing framework for intervention strategies will include the application of ecological-systems assessment and family-centered practice techniques. Additional emphasis will be placed on issues of class, race, marital status, sexual orientation and culture and how these things affect men’s participation in social services.

Course Rationale

Little attention has been given in social work education to understanding issues that affect men and fathers and how these issues fall within the mission of professional social work. Traditionally, the mediating systems in our society, such as the social service system, education system and health care system, which are designed to intervene around needs and concerns of individuals and families, have systematically excluded men and fathers from their services and interventions. This exclusion has occurred sometimes very consciously, and other times more covertly through the ways in which these systems conceptualize and design their services. The outcome, however, leads to a devaluing and minimizing of the important role men and fathers play in family and community well-being. A number of factors contribute to the lack of participation by men and the lack of inclusion of fathers and men in family interventions and services. Agency policy, social work education, individual bias and fear and hours of operation are all factors that reduce the number of fathers and men who might otherwise benefit from needed services. Social Work services that are targeted towards fathers and men as an integral part of families and communities and which are competently and sensitively delivered have the potential to benefit individuals, families, communities and ultimately, society at large. This is a core concern of the profession of Social Work.

Course Objectives

1. To develop awareness of the importance of including men and fathers in social services.
2. To develop understanding of common issues that affect men, especially low income disenfranchised men and how these issues could be addressed within the context of social work practice.
3. To identify the barriers to effective service delivery for fathers and men.
4. To develop effective strategies to increase male involvement and participation in social work services.
5. To explore cultural, class and racial conditions that impact men in relation to families and their utilization of social work services.
6. To develop skills for working with men and families informed by the ecological systems perspective and elements of family-centered practice.
Lecture, Content and Discussion Topics

Class #1 – 6/26/06

Why a class on Men and Families?
• Introductions/Orientation and overview of class.
• A problem in social work practice, theory, research and education – exclusion of men's issues!
• Men matter in families!
• The mission of social work – how men fit in.
• Invisible men – poor, disenfranchised and underserved men.

Class #2 – 6/27/06

Historical perspective on men and families.
• Changing historical perspectives on the role of men in families.
• Media images of men (Film – Tough Guise).
• Men of color and families/Elderly Men.
• Gender, class, culture, sexual orientation and race – how they influence social work with men and families.

Class #3 – 6/28/06

Fatherhood, issues common to men, strategies for helping men.
• Research related to fathers.
• In-class assignment – case-scenario/brainstorming.

Class 4 – 6/29/06

What is going on for you?
• Personal history and experiences affect our ability to work with men – let's talk!
• Self/Agency-Assessment (In-clas assignement).
• Bias and fear when dealing with men.

Class 5 – 6/30/06

What did you learn? Resources and Strategies.
• Strategies & Resources.
• Class Presentations.
• That’s a Wrap.

Teaching/Learning Methods

Primary modalities will be co-teaching from instructors, discussion, lecture, small group and dyad exercises and individual feedback. Assignments will include: short, written synopsis of literature and research articles, self-assessment, agency assessment and short class presentations. Guest speakers and panels will present on special topics. Instructors reserve the right to change syllabus, lectures & speakers when necessary.
Assignments

1. Article summaries.
Find and read an article/study that deals with men’s issues or other relevant content, then type a 1-page synopsis of the article chosen. A bibliography of articles will be handed out on the first day of class from which students may choose. Hand in article summary on Tuesday night and Thursday night. One of the articles must be from a professional journal; the other can be from popular media or other sources if it deals directly with issues that pertain to men. Please write your synopsis in a 3 paragraph format with the first paragraph summarizing the article or study, the second paragraph reflecting your thoughts and opinions and the third paragraph addressing whether the information, ideas or findings have implications for social work practice. Keep the synopsis brief! *A copy of the article must be attached to your synopsis.

2. Class presentation.
Choose one article from the above assignments that you will share with the class as a short presentation during the quarter. The presentation should include a brief summary of the article/study, your thoughts and opinions and lastly, whether you think there are any implications for social work practice. As an option, you can prepare a short presentation summarizing and discussing one of the elective books listed on the last page of this syllabus.

3. Self-Assessment. In class assignment
In class we will ask students to complete a brief self-assessment about your own experiences, ideas and feelings related to the important men in your life, or other men in your experience. Address the following questions: 1) who have been the significant men in your life? What makes them significant? 2) What have been your greatest influences on your feelings towards men? 3) What are the expectations you have of a “father,” a “husband or male partner,” a “brother,” an “uncle,” and men in general? 4) Do you think that things in your experience would make it comfortable or uncomfortable in your work with men in your role as a social worker/therapist/case manager? How? 5) As you think about the mission of social work and your role in helping with that mission, what implications do your thoughts and experiences have for your ability to serve men as you practice social work? 6) Lastly, what do you think you need as a current or future practitioner to support/enable your ability to work with men in the helping process?

4. Social Work Intervention Project – In Class. Students will form groups of 4-6 people and and discuss putting together a plan for social work intervention. After reading a case-vignette, the group will be asked to develop assessment questions, treatment strategies, formulate related goals, develop a list of possible community resources and make decisions about the need for professional evaluations based on the information provided. The group will then present the methods, questions, rationales and outcomes to the larger group. Below are the steps and processes needing to be completed – and from which the presentation will be graded. The purpose of this assignment is to think through and plan for scenarios you will likely see in practice, as well as, to share your learning with your fellow students. Please address the following points and questions:

1. Describe the agency context you are operating in and describe the professional role or roles of the people intervening with the individual or family.
2. What assessment tools or intake processes did you utilize? Why? Please include copies of the instruments or questions you used in your assessment and treatment planning processes. Assessments and evaluations could include ecological assessment tools, needs assessment, stregths assessment and assessment of natural/informal supports. Include or address what clinical of medical evaluations needed to be included to address the needs of the client.
3. What community resources would you enlist or refer the individual or family to? Why?
4. What will the interventions look like? Possibilities include: individual treatment, group treatment, social skills training, recreational therapy, multi-disciplinary team involvement, support groups, home-visitation, parenting classes?
5. What community and family supports and resources could you enlist to support your client’s goals?
6. Develop a treatment/intervention plan that integrates the clients said needs & goals, and information from your intake, assessment process, collateral information received and any clinical evaluations done. The plan should outline the client’s goals, whom is responsible for what, what timelines are associated with the goals and what the objectives or actions will be necessary to make progress on the goals. How will you measure progress or success?
7. Address issues of termination or case closure.
## Grading/Evaluation

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<th>Assignment/Participation</th>
<th>% Of final grade</th>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
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| Class Participation and Attendance                            | 20%              | • Expectation is 100% attendance, with a phone call if student cannot attend a class.  
• Participation in class discussion and group work.            |
| Article Summaries                                             | 30%              | • Ability to summarize professional literature, articulate thoughts relevant to class content & article, discuss implications for social work.                                                                       |
| Class Presentation                                             | 10%              | • Ability to effectively summarize and communicate the main conclusions drawn from professional literature that is relevant to the class content, in allotted 10-minute time frame.  
• Students will get points for clarity, relevance and creativity.|
| In-Class Self-Assessment Group Discussion                     | 20%              | • Assignment will be evaluated on the student's ability to reflect on their personal experiences and discuss how these experiences might influence their social work practice with men. Instructors will be sensitive to the student’s comfort–level in sharing personal information. |
| **Group Project**                                              |                  |                                                                                                                                                    |
| Strengths/Needs Assessment, Treatment Planning and Evaluating Progress. | 20%              | • Groups will be graded on developing an assessment process, goal-formulation, treatment planning ideas and presentation.                                                                                      |
Bibliography


Assigned Text & Elective Readings

Assigned Text:

• Fathering at Risk: Helping nonresidential Fathers, James R. Dudley and Glenn Stone

Elective Books:

• The Grown Up Man, John Friel Ph.D.
• Men and the Water of Life, Michael Meade
• If Men Could Talk, Alon Gratch, Ph.D.
• Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps, Barbara and Allan Peas
• Masculinities, R.W. Connel, 1995
• Iron John, Robert Bly
• Lost Boys: Why our Son's Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them, James Gabarino, Ph.D.
• Fatherless America: Confronting our most urgent social problem, David Blakenhorn
• Fire In The Belly, Sam Keen
• Opening Our Hearts Towards Men, Susan Jeffers
• Life as We Know It: A Father, a Family, & an Exceptional Child, Michael Berube
• In Daddy's Arms: African American's Celebrating Fathers, Javaka Steptoe
• Fathering: Old Game, New Rules: A Look at the Changing Roles of Fathers, Lowell D. Streiker

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