Course Syllabus

Purpose:
It is imperative for Mental Health Counselors and Substance Abuse Professionals to have expert knowledge and skills to use in their practice of counseling. Practices that affect client progress and eventual successful outcome in the therapy process should be integrated in the theoretical philosophy of the counselor. Therapists must be comfortable with their personal beliefs and understand the processes of change, as well as become familiar with a variety of counseling techniques based on empirically based theories.

Course Description:
Inquiry into abnormal behavior, its categories, causes, and treatments.

Contact Hours:
The course will be held during the regular term meeting schedule.

Course Objectives:

1. Define abnormal behavior (psychological disorder) and describe psychological dysfunctions, distress, and atypical or unexpected cultural responses.

2. Distinguish between multidimensional vs. unidimensional models of causality.

3. Explain the nature and purposes of psychiatric diagnosis and how the DSM V is used to help therapists and counselors make an accurate psychiatric diagnosis.

4. Describe the basic components of research, including the distinction between a hypothesis and a testable hypothesis, independent and dependent variables, internal and external validity, and statistical and clinical significance.
5. Describe psychological and biological similarities and differences between anxiety, fear, and a panic attack.
6. Identify the defining features of somatoform disorders and distinguish the major features of hypochondriasis from illness phobia and somatization disorder.
7. Describe the clinical symptoms of major depression.
8. Describe the possible social, psychological, and neurobiological causes of eating disorders.
9. Discuss how psychological factors affect immune system functioning.
10. Describe how sociocultural factors influence what are considered “normal” sexual behaviors.
11. Describe the nature of substance related disorders and distinguish among substance use, substance intoxication, substance abuse, and substance dependence.
12. Describe the essential features of personality disorders according to the DSM V.
13. Define schizophrenia and explain the difference between schizophrenia and psychosis.
15. Discuss the three main divisions of cognitive disorders.
16. Define and discuss the concept of patient rights, including the right to treatment, the right to refuse treatment, the right to the least restrictive alternative, and other rights in the context of mental health law and ethics.

Course Materials:


Thoughts and Feelings: Taking Control of Your Moods and Your Life – McKay, Davis and Fanning

Course Requirements:

All students are required to attend course meetings, complete all course readings, develop a portfolio, answer weekly study guide questions, and write a paper.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on their presentations, participation, and paper. It is imperative that all students for each class—not limited solely to those making a presentation—research some of the topics present in the readings for that class. This can take the form of internet searches, reading original research, speaking with someone knowledgeable about the topic, etc. There is no established limit to how this research might be conducted (e.g., it is absolutely fine to bring a video to class to include in the presentation—do clear it with those presenting that evening).
To assist with this research, some internet sites of special interest include:

www.aasmnet.org
www.sleepfoundation.org
www.nihm.nih.gov  (go to National Institute of Mental Health)
www.edap.org
www.psychcentral.com
www.mentalhealth.com
www.workplacementalhealth.com
www.apa.org
www.nami.org
www.dbsalliance.org

(If you find additional resources as you conduct your research for this class, please let me know so I can add it to our syllabus for future classes.)

**Course Format:**

This will be an interactive course that includes an elevated level of classroom participation, including lecture and instruction, videos, and case studies.