COURSE DESCRIPTION
Social Work Practice with military families and soldiers is an elective course that focuses on the specific problems of those who serve in the military with a focus on the needs of family members and children and the response of social workers to those needs. The course will explore the nature of war, its impact on those who are wounded - physically and mentally -- and their loved ones/caregivers. The course content will look at theories, research and intervention strategies for social workers who choose to work with this population.

Students will be introduced to a theoretical orientation to combat stress management which acknowledges the stressors of war and the adaptations made by those engaged in battle. In addition, students will be provided with an overview of the management of various war related physical and mental health challenges for the returning war veteran. Particular emphasis will detail the impact of the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan on returning veterans and their family members with emphasis on the management of those suffering with PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury and substance abuse problems. Intervention strategies specifically designed for work with the war injured and their families/caregivers will be introduced.

Readings from the text will be used as well as numerous journal articles to further understanding of the scope of military related social work practice.

COURSE COMPETENCY OUTCOMES
At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly. They will employ a strengths based perspective based in person-in-the-environment. They will engage in life-long learning, supervision, and consultation to enhance their knowledge and skills needed to work effective with service members, veterans and their families and communities (CSWE Advanced Competency 2.1.1).

2. Apply social work ethical principles that guide professional practice. They will be able to recognize their personal values, make informed ethical decisions, and manage professional boundaries. They will be able to recognize and understand the military
culture with an emphasis on mission, service, honor, and cohesion and the potential value and ethical issues that can be provoked (CSWE Advanced Competency 2.1.2).

3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments. They will analyze relationships between the client, family and worker and use appropriate practice models. They will understand the unique relationships between the client, family, and the military (CSWE Advanced Competency 2.1.3).

4. Engage diversity and difference in practice. They will manage potential conflicts between personal feelings and institutional responsibility, recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping lives, gain self-awareness to eliminate their personal bias. They will communicate with a culturally responsive approach toward service members (CSWE Advanced Competency 2.1.4).

5. Locate, evaluate, and analyze current research literature related to military social work and evaluate research to practice with service members, veterans, their families and their communities. (CSWE Advanced Competency 2.1.6)

6. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment. They will use conceptual frameworks to guide the process of assessment, intervention and evaluation including a recognition of the impact of military transitions and stressful life events throughout the individuals’ and family’s life course. (CSWE Advanced Competency 2.1.7).

7. Respond to contexts that shape practice. Practitioners in military social work are knowledgeable about the histories, traditions, and mission of those who serve/served and the current trends in the service delivery system to meet the needs of service members veterans, their families and communities. (CSWE Advanced Competency 2.1.9).

8. Engage, assess, intervene and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. They will engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate their clients (CSWE Advanced Competencies 2.1.10 a, b, c, and d).

**PLAGIARISM**
Students should remember that the School will not condone plagiarism in any form and will sanction acts of plagiarism. A student who presents someone else's work as his or her own work is stealing from the authors or persons who did the original thinking and writing. Plagiarism occurs when a student directly copies another's work without
citation; when a student paraphrases major aspects of another's work without citation; and when a student combines the work of different authors into a new statement without reference to those authors. It is also plagiarism to use the ideas and/or work of another student and present them as your own. It is not plagiarism to formulate your own presentation of an idea or concept as a reaction to someone else's work; however, the work to which you are reacting should be discussed and appropriately cited. Any student who can be shown to have plagiarized any part of any assignment in this course will automatically fail the course and will be referred to the Associate Dean for disciplinary action that may include expulsion.

**HIPAA ALERT**
In line with the new HIPAA regulations concerning protected health information, it is important that you understand that any case information you present from your work, will need to be de-identified. What this means is that any information that would allow another to identify the person needs to be changed or eliminated. This includes obvious things like names and birth dates but may also contain other information that is so unique to the person that it will allow for identification, including diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender. If diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender is directly related to the case presentation it can be included if it will not allow for identification.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**
Given the nature of classroom discussion and the presentation of case materials and at times personal revelation in class, students are reminded that the same commitment to confidentiality with clients extends to classmates. What is shared in class stays in class.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**
Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations are asked to make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, Rochelle Kohn, Beren Campus, 917-326-4828, rkohn1@yu.edu, Abby Kelsen, Wilf Campus, 646-685-0118, akelsen@yu.edu, during the first week of class. After approval for accommodations is granted, please submit your accommodations letter to Disability Services Office immediately.

**E-RES (Electronic Reserve)**
Many of the articles mentioned in the curriculum are available on electronic reserve [E-RES]. You can access the full text articles from your home or from a university computer at no charge.

**How do I Use E-RES?**
1. Go to the library’s online resources page: [http://www.yu.edu/libraries/online_resources.asp](http://www.yu.edu/libraries/online_resources.asp)
2. Click on E-RES. If you are off-campus, at this point you will be prompted for your Off Campus Access Service login and password.
3. Click on “Search E-RES” or on “Course Index,” and search by instructor's name, department, course name, course number, document title, or document author.

4. Click on the link to your course.

5. Enter the password given to you by your instructor - BESWK.

6. Locate and click on the item you wish to view. Titles beginning with "A", "An", or "The" are alphabetized under "A" and "T" respectively.

7. When the article text or book record appears on the screen, you can print, email, or save it to disk.

To view documents that are in pdf format, the computer you are using must have Adobe Acrobat Reader software. You can download it FREE at www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html

REQUIRED TEXT


SUGGESTED TEXTS


ASSIGNMENTS

1) Each student (or pair of students) will interview an active service member or Veteran and present a 20-minute overview of the interview to the class. Each service member and Veteran deals with the impact of the military in a different way; members of the military have had differing experiences. The goal of the interview/presentation is to present as many of those experiences as feasible. Questions to consider during the interview:

- Why did you join the service?
- How old were you when you joined?
- What was your experience at the recruiting station?
- What was the primary motivation that made you join?
- What was the reaction of your family and friends when you told them you joined?
- What did you pick the branch you joined?
- Describe your orientation experience and first few days.
- Where were you stationed?
- What were those first few weeks like for you?
- What was the experience transitioning from civilian to service member?
- Did you keep in touch with family, friends, how?
- What was the service like for you?
- Tell me about a few of the most memorable experiences.
- Did you see active combat? How was that?
- How long were you deployed or away from family?
- Did your military experience influence your thinking about war or active service?
- How was the reintegration experience for you? For the family?
- What do you think is important for social workers to know about military service?

(CSWE Advanced Competency 2.1.3, 2.1.6, 2.1.9)

2) Each student will pick an area of interest/topic covered in class or in your readings or outside class content. The student will then discuss the topic and provide an overview of the problem/issue and its characteristics. When available provide statistical data on the topic. Explore what services are available for this population; are there any gaps in resources available? What does the most current research suggest in terms of management of this particular topic? What would be the best social work approach to management of this population?

Several sources are required and the paper should be between 8-10 pages.
(CSWE Advanced Competency 2.1.3, 2.1.6, 2.1.7)

Evaluation
This course will be graded in the following manner:

- 75% written assignments/class presentation
- 25% Class participation and attendance
Unit 1. Introduction to military life, warfare
Sessions 1 - 3

Classroom focus - Overview of the experience of being a service member in battle; identification and discussion of combat stress, identification of the physical and mental challenges of being at war.

Required Readings:
Beder (2012). Chapter 1 – The importance of understanding military culture; Chapter 2 – No one leaves unchanged.

Beder (2016). Chapter 1 – Military cultural competence; Military culture and veteran transition; Chapter 4 – Women service members and Veterans.


Suggested Readings:
Figley - The stressor of war, pp. 11-32; Chapter 3 - Combat/operational stress adaptations and injuries, pp. 33-64.


Unit 2. The lasting impact of war; Combat trauma
Sessions 4, 5, 6

Classroom focus - Exploration of post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury; impact on the service member and his/her family.
Required Readings:
Beder (2012) – Chapter 3 – Treatment of post traumatic disorder; Chapter 4 – Care coordination in military traumatic brain disorder’ Chapter 5 – Working with survivors of military sexual trauma.


Suggested readings:
In Figley, Chapter 6 - Combat stress management: The interplay between combat, physical injury, and psychological trauma, pp. 119 - 136. Chapter 7 - Secondary traumatization among wives of war veterans with PTSD, pp. 137-157


Unit 3. Reintegration - Special Populations
Sessions 7, 8, 9

Classroom focus - Discussion and exploration of the impact of deployment and subsequent reintegration.

Required Readings:
Beder (2012) - Chapter 9 – Those who have served in Afghanistan/Iraq; Coming Home; Chapter 6 – When they return from Afghanistan/Iraq: The needs of the wounded. Chapter 10 – Family resilience and the fortunes of war

Beder (2016) - Chapter 3 – Older Veterans; Chapter 7 – The impact of war and deployments in young military connected children; Chapter 8 – Caring for Caregivers; Chapter 10 – Sexual and gender minority Veterans; Chapter 16 – Moral injury.


The Children


Unit 4. Social Work in the Military
Learning Objectives – 4,5
Sessions 10,11

Required Readings


Unit 5. Interventions
Sessions 12-13
Classroom focus - Discussion of clinical treatment approaches used by social workers working with wounded service members and their families/caregivers.

Required Readings
Beder (2012). Chapter 11 – Assessing and responding to suicidal risk; Chapter 14 – Clinical overview of assessment and treatment of substance abuse disorders; Chapter 15 – Animal assisted intervention; Chapter 16 – VA Integrated care.
Beder (2016). Chapter 15 – Occupational therapy for our military; Chapter 17 – Telebehavioral health; Chapter 18 – Traditional and whole health and patient-centered care at the VHA: An overview.


**Suggested Readings**


**Unit 5. Impact on Social Workers**
Sessions 14

Classroom focus - To develop an understanding of the stressors that social workers may face in working with the war wounded, introduce the concepts of compassion fatuigue and burnout and suggestions for self-care.

**Required Readings**
Beder (2012) – Chapter 18 – Cost of caring; Chapter 17 – Ethical considerations.
Suggested Readings


Additional References


and interventions for disaster and trauma workers. Pre-hospital and Disaster Medicine, 19(1), pp. 73-78.


