COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Eating Disorders Elective class will provide students with a comprehensive overview of eating disorders as biopsychosocial disorders and will focus primarily on methods and approaches to treatment within the confines of therapeutic social work practice. Students will gain an understanding of the etiology of eating disorders and accompanying personality issues from a developmental perspective. Diagnostic criteria will be fully covered and students will be able to identify specific eating disorders in their clinical practice. Students will become familiar with the underlying language of an eating disorder and available treatment options including the benefits of working in a treatment team with this population. Mandatory readings will be assigned as will a suggested reading list for students interested in further study. All aspects of high quality treatment for eating disorders will be addressed and students will leave this class with a solid base for understanding the complexity of eating disorders from a clinical and societal perspective. Class will be interactive and include role-playing and possible guest lecturers from the field.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand eating disorders as complex biopsychosocial disorders

2. Understand the full range of specific eating disorders

3. Identify eating disorders based on diagnostic criteria as well as a deeper understanding of and sensitivity to these disorders

4. Apply differential diagnosis to the full range of eating disorders

5. Develop awareness of societal issues which impact the development of eating disorders across the population
6. Understand eating disorders from a developmental perspective with a beginning foundation of theories of etiology underlying eating disorders

7. Display awareness of treatment options as well as current best practice recommendations

8. Value the benefits and challenges of working within a treatment team

9. Demonstrate awareness of medical issues with eating disorders

10. Demonstrate beginning, solid clinical skills for working with the eating disorder population

REQUIRED TEXTS

There will be one textbook for this course hereafter referred to as “Main Text” with related chapters assigned for each session. There are also three additional books that are required, listed below. Additional articles and readings are also assigned.


Orbach, Susie Hunger Strike: The Anorectic’s Struggle as a Metaphor for Our Age (1986) ISBN 0-393-02278-1 W.W. Norton & Co. ($9.00 New, paperback on Amazon)


COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

There will be two papers required in this course:

The first midterm paper will be for students to choose some aspect of the world of eating disorders that they wish to explore in depth. Requirements for this 12-15 page paper include individual discussion with professor for topic approval. The midterm is due at the 7th class session.
The final paper will be due on the 13th session and be of the same length requirement. This paper will be in response to three case examples provided by the professor. Students will choose one case to develop appropriate clinical response demonstrating a synthesis of course material and learning.

Grading will be based on both papers as well as attendance and course participation. This course will be instructional but will also have an expectation of high level student participation and class discussion.

COURSE OUTLINE

SESSION 1: Introduction to the class. Continuum of Eating Disorders. Why and how do we understand eating disorders as Biopsychosocial disorders? Why social work education is good preparation and fit with this particular population.

Required Readings

Main Text, Chapter 1: “A Perfect Biopsychosocial Storm”


SESSION 2: Anorexia Nervosa in-depth. New DSM-5 diagnostic criteria as well as beginning clinical understanding of this disorder, medical management and treatment standards.

Required Readings

Main Text, Chapter 6: “Medical Assessment of Eating Disorders”


ARTICLE: Strober, Michael, PhD, ABPP, Johnson, Craig, PhD (2012) *The Need For Complex Ideas in Anorexia Nervosa: Why Biology, Environment, and Psyche All Matter,*
**Why Therapists Make Mistakes and Why Clinical Benchmarks Are Needed For Managing Weight Correction** International Journal of Eating Disorders; 45:155-178

**Suggested Reading**


**SESSION 3: Bulimia Nervosa in-depth. New DSM-5 diagnostic criteria as well as beginning clinical understanding of this disorder, medical management and treatment standards.**

Main Text, Chapter 5: “The Assessment Process: Refining the Clinical Evaluation of Patients With Eating Disorders”


**SESSION 4: Binge Eating Disorder in-depth. New DSM-5 diagnostic category and criteria. BED as different than compulsive overeating. Beginning clinical understanding including awareness of “Health at Every Size” movement, medical management and treatment standards.**

Main Text, Chapter 2: “What’s Weight Got To Do With It? Weight Neutrality In The Health At Every Size Paradigm And Its Implications for Clinical Practice”


**SESSION 5: Society and Eating Disorders. Feminism, media, gender issues, age, culture and ethnicity. Understanding eating disorders as adaptive response. Body image and low self-esteem as resulting cause and symptom.**
Required Readings

Main Text, Chapter 4: “Are Media An Important Medium For Clinicians? Mass Media, Eating Disorders, In The Bolder Model Of Treatment, Prevention, and Advocacy

Main Text, Chapter 18: “Men With Eating Disorders: The Art and Science of Treatment Engagement”


Suggested Reading


SESSION 6: Family Dynamics and eating disorders. Genetic predisposition and nature v. nurture perspectives in the field.

Main Text, Chapter 20: “When Helping Hurts: The Role of the Family and Significant Others in the Treatment of Eating Disorders”

Main Text, Chapter 21: “The Most Painful Gaps: Family Perspectives on the Treatment of Eating Disorders”


Suggested Reading

SESSION 7: (Mid-term paper due) Eating Disorders as problems of development. Developmental psychology and theory will be discussed including issues of attachment and separation individuation. Neurobiology will be explored as well as current beliefs in the field regarding the etiology of eating disorders.

Required Reading

Main Text, Chapter 3: “Neuroscience: Contributions to the Understanding and Treatment of Eating Disorders”


SESSION 8: Co-Morbid Conditions, Dual Diagnosis including personality disorders, trauma history, emotional regulation, substance abuse and self injury and the handling of these issues in practice.

Required Reading

Main Text, Chapter 13: “Borderline Personality and eating Disorders: A Chaotic Crossroads”

Main Text, Chapter 14: “Managing the Eating Disorder Patient With A Comorbid Substance Use Disorder”

Main text, Chapter 15: “Comorbid Trauma and Eating Disorders: Treatment Considerations and Recommendations for a Vulnerable Population”

Main Text, Chapter 23: “The Case For Integrating Mindfulness In The Treatment of Eating Disorders”

ARTICLE: Author Unknown “Wasting Away: The Double Danger of Eating Disorders and Substance Abuse”, Cross Currents. Adapted from Food For Thought: Substance Abuse and Eating Disorders (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, 2003. Pg. 16 Vol 10 No. 3 ISSN: 1706-9548 (Spring 2007)
SESSION 9: The Language of Eating Disorders. More in-depth understanding of necessary treatment techniques with this unique population. What is successful treatment and recovery? Role playing will accompany this class.

Main Text, Chapter 9: “Science or Art? Integrating Symptom management Into Psychodynamic Treatment of Eating Disorders”

Main Text, Chapter 19: “Mutuality And Motivation in the Treatment of Eating Disorders: Connecting With Patients and Families For Change”

Costin, Carolyn 8 Keys To Recovery From An Eating Disorder pps. 36-92

Suggested Readings


SESSION 10: Treatment Options: all current modalities will be presented including, CBT, DBT, FBT, Maudsley and Relational theory. In-patient, out-patient and higher levels of care will be explained. Treatment design integrating different techniques will be thoroughly discussed.

Required Readings

Main Text, Chapter 10: “New Pathways: Applying Acceptance and Commitment Therapy to the Treatment of Eating Disorders”


ARTICLE: Barth, F. Diane “The Use of Group Therapy To Help Women With Eating Disorders Differentiate And Articulate Affect” Volume 18, Number 2 Summer, 1994, Brunner Mazel, Inc.


Suggested Readings


**SESSION 11:** Treatment Team: therapist, dietician, medical doctor, psychiatrist. How to manage working as the therapist along with a team of professionals. Benefits and challenges of working in different size teams. Issues of cost, insurance and splitting will all be covered.

Required Readings

Main Text, Chapter 7: “Psychiatric Medication: Management, Myths and Mistakes”


**SESSION 12:** What’s food got to do with it? More in depth class about managing food, weight and related symptoms and behaviors.

Required Readings

Main Text, Chapter 8: “Nutritional Impact on The Recovery Process”

ARTICLE: Hutton, Deborah  *Food For Thought: Orthorexia Nervosa*

ARTICLE: Malden, Jill (Specifics to be listed later).

**SESSION 13:** (Final Paper Due) Good Treatment: Further discussion of what is required for successful treatment of this population. More role playing opportunity for clinical work including motivational interviewing techniques.

Required Readings

Main Text, Chapter 12: “Recipe For recovery: Necessary Ingredients for the Client’s and Clinician’s Success”
ARTICLE: Davis, William N., “Reflections on Boundaries in the Psychotherapeutic Relationship” From the Center For The Study of Anorexia and Bulimia.


SESSION 14: Wrap up of course content. Reiteration and review of most important aspects of high quality diagnosis and treatment will be presented and discussed. Any course content requiring further explanation will be completed.

Main Text, Chapter 26: “Body Talk: The Use of Metaphor and Storytelling in Body Image Treatment” and Chapter 27: The Research-Practice Gap: Challenges and Opportunities for the Eating Disorder Treatment Professional”.
COMPLETE READING LIST

REQUIRED TEXT


ARTICLES


Author Unknown “Wasting Away: The Double Danger of Eating Disorders and Substance Abuse”, Cross Currents. Adapted from Food For Thought: Substance Abuse and Eating Disorders (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, 2003. Pg. 16 Vol 10 No. 3 ISSN: 1706-9548  (Spring 2007)


Barth, F. Diane “The Use of Group Therapy To Help Women With Eating Disorders Differentiate And Articulate Affect” Volume 18, Number 2 Summer, 1994, Brunner Mazel, Inc.


Hutton, Deborah “Food For Thought: Orthorexia Nervosa”

Madden, Jill

Davis, William N., “Reflections on Boundaries in the Psychotherapeutic Relationship” From the Center For The Study of Anorexia and Bulimia.


BOOK CHAPTERS AND EXCERPTS


Costin, Carolyn *8 Keys To Recovery From An Eating Disorder* pps. 36-92


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