

George Mason University  
Graduate School of Education

Course: EDCD 609 (002): Advanced Counseling Skills and Strategies  
Instructor: Priscilla Dass-Brailsford EdD  
Semester: Fall 2009  
Course Time: Wednesdays, 4:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.  
Location: Robinson Hall, A349  
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Office Hours: By appointment

**Catalog – Prerequisites**

EDCD 603 and admission to the counseling and development program or permission of instructor. Covers counseling skills, process and strategies associated with major counseling theories. Provides intensive practice in both technical and conceptual skills with emphasis on self-awareness, case conceptualization, racial-cultural considerations and supervised practice.

**Course Description**

EDCD 609 expands and refines the basic listening and attending skills learned in EDCD 603. The course will focus on therapist variables, self-knowledge and the counseling relationship as the essential elements for effective counseling. In addition students can expect to develop expertise in case conceptualization and application of more advanced counseling skills. Students will study and practice techniques and strategies from major counseling theories while exploring the need for self-awareness and role of racial and cultural issues in the application of these approaches. Students will gain solid skills that will be the foundation for application of these approaches in laboratory courses; they will be able to plan a course of counseling that is consistent with their personal attributes and theoretical preferences while being attentive to the diverse needs of clients.

## **Course Objectives/Student Outcomes**

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Apply basic listening and attending skills with increased consistency and effectiveness.
2. Understand and apply the technical and conceptual skills associated with major counseling theories, principles and topics.
3. Demonstrate self-awareness with regard to personal values and biases and racial/cultural worldview.
4. Integrate all aspects of counseling such as assessment, goal clarification, establishment of therapeutic relationship and effective termination.
5. Provide clear and constructive feedback to classmates.
6. Accept and implement feedback from the instructor and classmates.
7. Display an ongoing commitment to personal growth and development.

## **Pedagogical Approach**

This course is designed to provide you with the opportunity to explore and expand your repertoire as a helping professional and counselor in training. My aim is to collaborate with you to create a learning environment, which is welcoming, safe, challenging, stimulating and rewarding. It is important that you be engaged in the work of this course in the service of broadening and deepening your abilities to express, explore and evaluate your thoughts, feelings and actions as they impact your responsibilities and competencies as a counselor.

Much of the time in the classroom will be devoted to practice counseling sessions (role-plays) and group discussion and processing of those experiences. We will also spend time discussing a range of issues that relate to the counseling process. I don't intend to do much formal lecturing, however, there will be some topics that I'll want to contextualize and present didactically. For the most part I would like the class to function in a seminar-like fashion.

It is my belief that central to one's capacity to be an effective clinician is the ability to develop therapeutic relational competence. Among the components of this are, e.g., the ability to communicate to the client one's respect for their personhood; the capacity to empathize with the client and communicate that empathic awareness to the client; the capacity to be fully present with the client; the ability to make the client to feel/trust that one is present on the client's behalf; the ability to give the client reason to trust you; the ability to be an effective participant-observer

of the relational process (this includes awareness of transference and countertransference issues) thereby ensuring the client's safety within the therapy relationship; the ability to tolerate ambiguity. This list is not exhaustive but rather illustrative of the concepts I have in mind. The achievement of therapeutic relational competence takes time, reflection, self-evaluation, supervision, and experience. Although I do not expect that you will be experts at the end of this course, I am committed to fostering a learning environment in which you will feel safe enough to try things, thereby allowing you to learn from both your successes and your mistakes.

### **Relationship to Course and Program Goals and Professional Organizations**

EDCD 609 is a core course in the Community and Agency Counseling Program and builds on the foundational knowledge base obtained in EDCP 603 for the M.Ed. degree in Counseling and Development. This advanced course provides students with the skills needed to function successfully in a practicum or internship placement. It approaches counseling and the understanding of adults from a multidisciplinary framework inclusive of social, political, economic, familial and psychological factors that affect counseling with this population. After taking both EDCD 603 and EDCD 609, students have studied and practiced the techniques of major counseling treatment systems and their application to adults. Students have a foundational understanding of the relationship between counselor self-awareness and counseling practice. Students have a solid foundation for application in laboratory course and can begin to identify which theories of counseling are more suitable to their personal attributes and professional interests.

EDCD 609 fulfills the requirements of the following professional organizations:

- Virginia Department of Health Professions requirement that Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) candidates complete graduate study in theories and techniques of counseling and psychotherapy.
- Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) requirements that counselor education programs include the study of helping relationships.
- American Counseling Association Code of Ethics requirement that counselors establish counselor education and training programs that integrate academic study and supervised practice.

## **Professional Dispositions**

### **Professional Performance Criteria** (Effective February 25, 2003).

The American Counseling Association (ACA) code of ethics requires counselors and counselor trainees to maintain standards of professional competence and possess good moral character. The Counseling and Development Program in the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University has adopted a set of professional performance criteria that is consistent with the ACA code of ethics. Please refer to the dispositions found on the C & D Homepage at:

[http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/counseling/professional\\_performance.htm](http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/counseling/professional_performance.htm)

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See

<http://www.gse.gmu.edu> for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See

[http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC\\_H12](http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12) for the full honor code

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See

<http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

NOTE: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in the series, programs, or activities of all State and local Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See [www.gmu.edu/students/drc](http://www.gmu.edu/students/drc) or call 703-993-2474 to access DRC.

EDCD 609 incorporates student interviews and simulated counseling sessions as an integral and fundamental aspect of counselor skill training. Students are therefore required to model aspects of client confidentiality as well as treat fellow students with respect and dignity. Students are encouraged, although not required, to bring actual life experiences to the simulated counseling sessions, however it is important to emphasize that the sole intent of the counseling dyads is for training purposes and is by no means designed to be therapeutic.

### **Course Materials: Required Texts**

- Ivey, A.E. & Ivey, M.B. (2003) *Intentional Interviewing and Counseling. Facilitation Client Development in a Multicultural Society* (5<sup>th</sup> ed). Pacific Grove, CA: Thomson/Brooks/Cole.
- Lukas, S. (1993). *Where to start and What to Ask: An Assessment Handbook*.
- Rubin, L. (2003). *The Man with the Beautiful Voice*. Boston: Beacon Press.

### **Additional Reading Material**

- Boyd-Franklin, N. (2003). *Black Families in Therapy: Understanding the African-American Experience*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Brammer, L.M. and MacDonald, G. (2003). *The Helping Relationship*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Corey, M.S. and Corey, G. (2003). *Becoming a Helper*. CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Dass-Brailsford, P. (2003). A Golden Opportunity in Supervision: Talking about Countertransference. *Journal of Psychological Practice*, 8(1); pp. 56-64. (via MyLesley).
- Dass-Brailsford, P. (2003). Child Abuse and Neglect. In *The Complete Guide to Mental Health for Women*. Eds., L.S. Slater, J. H. Daniels & A. E. Banks, pp. 164-172. Boston: Beacon Press. (via MyLesley)
- Gibbs, J.T. et al. (1998). *Children of Color*. CA: Jossey Bass.
- Harper, F.D. and McFadden, J. (2003). *Culture and Counseling: New Approaches*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Meier, S.T. and Davis, S.R. (2001). *Elements of Counseling*. CA: Wadsworth.
- Mikulas, W. L. (2002). *The Integrative Helper*. CA: Wadsworth
- Sue, D.W. and Sue, D. (2003). *Counseling the Culturally Diverse*. New York: John Wiley Press.
- Teyber, Edward. (2006) *Interpersonal Process in Psychotherapy*. Belmont,

CA: Wadsworth. Brooks/Cole.

Yalom, I. D. (2002). *The Gift of Therapy*. New York: HarperCollins

## **Course Requirements/Assignments**

### **Class Attendance:**

Students are expected to attend each class and complete all reading assignments for class. Due to the limited time, class attendance is indispensable. Therefore, it is expected that students will attend all classes (which includes arriving on time and staying for the entire class). This course relies heavily on experiential exercises to foster skill development therefore attendance at all class sessions is critical. Please consider that absences will not only affect individual student learning, but will negatively impact other class-members as well. Subsequently, any unexcused absence (eg. family emergency, illness with doctor's note) will result in a lowering of the final grade. Students, who miss 2 or more classes with unexcused absences, will not receive a passing grade for the course. If there is a scheduling conflict that interferes with attendance during any portion of the class, students should see the instructor in the first class to discuss continuing in the class this semester or taking the course during another semester.

### **Class Participation:**

Classroom participation is a vital part of this course. Students will contribute to class discussions and engage in all the activities including student role play interviews, counseling dyads/triads and process observation. Students' progress in applying skills and strategies and providing feedback to classmates will be monitored weekly by the instructor. Students are also encouraged to complete weekly practice exercises from the Ivey & Ivey text. An audio (standard or micro-cassette) recorder and several blank tapes will be needed for practicing and critiquing counseling skills throughout the course. Specific class activities will include student interviews, simulated counseling dyads and process observation. Students will be interviewed as part of a dyad on the major influences in their development as a counselor and will also participate in the interview of fellow students. Further information on the interview will be provided in class.

## **Written Assignments**

All written assignments must be typed and must follow APA format. Grading on written work will take into account the following factors: quality of written work, knowledge of content area, and adherence to requirements of assignment. You are expected to submit all work on assigned dates, and a penalty of 10% of the assignments grade will be applied for every day the assignment is late.

### **Self Reflection - Paper 1:**

**Part 1:** Reflect on your initial response to the description of the client whom you will be counseling. Discuss your feelings and thoughts in response to the clinical vignette. What do you anticipate might be challenges for you in working with this client? Specifically, focus on the following issues with respect to yourself and your client: gender, race, ethnicity, class background, sexual orientation, religion/spirituality, physical ability/challenge, experiences of privilege, and experiences of oppression. How do you propose to meet those challenges? (1.5 pages).

**Part 2:** Reflect on your initial response to the description of the client whom you will be enrolling. Discuss your feelings and thoughts in response to the clinical vignette. What do you anticipate might be challenges for you in enrolling as this client? Specifically, focus on the following issues with respect to yourself and the client: gender, race, ethnicity, class, background, sexual orientation, religion/spirituality, physical ability/challenge, experiences of privilege and/or oppression. How do you propose to meet those challenges? (1.5 pages).

### **Mid-term Paper**

In “A Man with a Beautiful Voice,” Lillian Rubin discusses her clinical work with psychotherapy clients. Choosing one of the cases, briefly describe the client and his/her presenting issues. Examine and comment on any issues of countertransference (the feelings/reactions the therapist has to the client) and how Rubin deals with it, within the context of the therapeutic relationship. What is your assessment of the effectiveness of the therapist and the accuracy of her understanding of the client's issues? Make comments on interventions that you thought were therapeutically helpful or not helpful. When appropriate, make suggestions on how you may have worked differently with the client (4 pages).

### **Final Paper (6 pages)**

The purpose of this paper is for you to reflect on your work with your client and to assess your counseling skills at this point in your training. This is not a research paper.

#### **Part 1 (4 pages):**

A. Write a biopsychosocial assessment of your client. Chapter 13 (How to write an assessment) of Lukas provides some ideas on how to write this assessment. Additionally, you can use the format we will discuss in class.

NOTE: the final section of the assessment discussed by Lukas is the DSM Diagnosis. Rather than providing a DSM diagnosis, I want you to discuss descriptively what you think are the psychological challenges facing your client, what you regard as the current life challenges facing your client, and the extent to which your client is currently able to meet those challenges.

B. Write a concise Treatment Plan (using the standardized format that we have studied) that includes both the work you have done with this client and any future objectives/goals.

#### **Part 2 (2 pages):**

A. Based on your review of the audio tape of one of your sessions with your role-play client, critically evaluate your effectiveness as a counselor during that session, i.e., your ability to be present and empathically engaged with your client, interventions you made that you believe were helpful, interventions you made that you believe were not helpful, any issues that arose during the session which you found particularly challenging, your overall evaluation of your effectiveness with the client in this specific session. Begin this section by contextualizing the session you are reviewing by providing me, as your reader, with an understanding of the context (i.e., a brief summary of what has been transpiring in your work with the client prior to the start of the session). In your critique of your work, give direct quotes from the audio tape to exemplify the points you are making.

In this discussion I expect you to assess both your strengths and weaknesses as a helper at this point in your professional development, and your plan for addressing, over time, what you judge to be areas in which you need growth, improvement, change or help.



## Grading

Grading will be based primarily upon the significance, thoroughness, accuracy, relatedness, logic and degree to which points made are effectively supported. Papers receiving an “A” grade will be outstanding in each area. Grammar and style will be taken into account when they detract from the presentation or understanding of the professional arguments made. Points/grade will be deducted from assignments that do not follow APA guidelines and/or exceed the page limit. Late assignments will not be accepted unless there is a reasonable excuse (eg. family emergency, illness with doctor’s note).

Self Reflection Paper	10 points
Mid Term Paper	20 points
Final Paper	30 points
Skill Development (Dyads/Interviews)	30 points
Class participation/Attendance)	10 points

In accordance with the George Mason University Grading Policy, the following grading scale will be followed:

100-97 = A; 96-93 = A-; 92-90 = B+; 89-85 = B; 84-80 = B-; 79-75 = C; 74-0 = F)

Honor Code: To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust and fairness among all members of George Mason University and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the members of George Mason University, have set forth the following code of honor. Any individual who is caught in the fact of cheating, attempting to cheat, plagiarizing, or stealing will be brought forth before the council of their peers. In the event that the individual is found guilty, he or she will be punished accordingly. For further information, please refer to the university catalog or website at [www.gmu.edu](http://www.gmu.edu)

### Weekly Course Outline:

Meetings Days	Weekly Readings to be completed before class
9/2/09	Introductions; Syllabus review; form counseling dyads/triads and peer supervision dyads.

9/9/09	Lukas chapters 1 & 2; Ivey chapter 8
9/16/09	Lukas chapter 8; Ivey chapter 3
9/23/09	Lukas chapter 9; Ivey chapter 4
9/30/09	Lukas chapter 10; Ivey chapter 5
10/7/09	Lukas chapter 11; Ivey chapter 6
10/14/09	Lukas chapter 12; Ivey chapter 7
10/21/09	Paper 2 due in class; Ivey chapter 8
10/28/09	Ivey chapters 10 & 11
11/4/09	Ivey chapters 9 & 12
11/11/09	Rubin Book Discussion;
11/18/09	Lukas chapter 13; Video case presentation
11/25/09	Video case presentation
12/2/09	Video case presentation
12/09/09	Class wrap Up; Paper 3 due in class.