

Family Therapy

Instructor: Frani Pollack, Ph.D.

Course Description

This course reviews contemporary theories of family therapy within a historical perspective. Approaches reviewed include narrative, psychoeducation, structural, strategic, intergenerational, cognitive behavioral, and psychodynamic models. The use of case studies, critical discussions, and role plays will be used to deepen students understanding of different models. The course will also include an understanding of family developmental stages, economic strains, cultural differences, and larger systemic influences. Throughout the course we will be viewing and discussing videos of well known family therapists in addition to segments of contemporary films depicting family interactions.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Learning the history of systems theory and family work.
2. Learning the integration of theory into clinical applications with clients: through case discussions and didactic lecture.
3. Achieving competency in the practice of systemic therapies with couples, families and individual clients: through role plays and case overviews.
4. Learning to differentiate between content vs. process and how therapeutic impact differs depending on whether or not the focus is on content vs. process. Learning to increase interventions that focus on the process of relational dynamics: through didactic lecture and case discussion.
5. Learning to differentiate the principles proposed by models of marriage and family therapy from the process of change. Utilizing the process of change to influence the relational system and learning how to increase influence in the therapeutic encounter: through case discussion.
6. Learning to differentiate between the depth of differing therapeutic interventions and learning how to choose the appropriate level of depth for therapeutic work depending on the issues raised and the individual's family history and psychiatric functioning. Learning how to deepen the therapeutic focus and engage clients on deeper levels of their experience – be it emotional, cognitive or experiential: through case discussion and video viewing.
7. Learning to integrate the exploration of self in the development of competency as a systemic therapist leading to personal growth along with professional growth. This takes place in supervision and in response to course papers requiring personal exploration: through class discussion and written assignments.
8. Students should gain competency in therapeutic skills that are general to therapy and in therapeutic skills specific to systemic practice: through case discussion and class role plays.