University of Northern Colorado  
College of Natural and Health Sciences  
School of Human Sciences – Gerontology Program – Fall 2015  
Gerontology 630: Intervention Strategies and Groupwork with Older Adults

Location: McKee 0140  
Day: Mondays 1:00-3:45pm  
Instructor: Joyce Weil, Ph.D., M.P.H.  
Email: joyce.weil@unco.edu

Office: Gunter 1280  
Mailbox: Gunter 1250  
Phone: (970) 351-1583  
Office hours: Tues.1-2pm & Wed. 4-5:30pm & by appointment.

Required Texts:


Recommended but not required:  

Required texts are available at the UNC bookstore and online.

Course Description:
Analyze major intervention strategies and group techniques for use with older adults. Emphasizes working with older persons in community and in assisted/skilled care settings. Included field visits and application of techniques.

Course Competencies and Objectives:
As a result of active participation in this class, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of appropriate interventions for various subgroups of the aging population.
- Understand the tenets of ethical practice in the provision of intervention for older adults.
- Understand the current foundations, policies, legislation, and future trends impacting the practice of counseling and intervention for older adults.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to plan, implement, and manage counseling interventions in public, private, nonprofit, and proprietary settings.
- Identify and evaluate the continuum of care in relation to program models of intervention, to recognize service gaps, and to advocate effectively for the intervention needs of aging persons in the community.
- Analyze and apply intervention strategies and techniques used with aging adults.
- Identify theory and methods appropriate for empirical investigation of mental health and aging, and demonstrate knowledge of current research findings concerning intervention with older adults.
- Demonstrate an integrated understanding of intervention with older adults, through writing, presentation, and interaction with academic peers.
Evaluation of Student Work

Class participation (and in-class journaling) 100 points
Presentation of assessment instruments (2@50pts) 100 points
Proposal for literature review paper 25 points
Literature review paper 100 points
Literature review presentation 25 points
Group or interview project and discussion 150 points
Mid-course Exam 100 points
Total: 600 points

Grades will be assigned as follows:
A = 540-600
B = 480-539
C = 420-479
D = 360-419
F = <360

Course Policies

Honor Code
All members of the University of Northern Colorado community are entrusted with the responsibility to uphold and promote five fundamental values: Honesty, Trust, Respect, Fairness, and Responsibility. These core elements foster an atmosphere, inside and outside of the classroom, which serves as a foundation and guides the UNC community’s academic, professional, and personal growth. Endorsement of these core elements by students, faculty, staff, administration, and trustees strengthens the integrity and value of our academic climate. UNC’s policies and recommendations for academic misconduct will be followed. It is the student’s responsibility to know these policies.

Disability Access
Students who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Access Center (970) 351-2289 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Course Format:
Topics listed on the syllabus will be addressed through lecture, discussion of related readings, guest speakers, and visual media. Students will also participate in professional development exercises during class that will serve to provide a deeper knowledge of the self as a care provider, and greater empathy and understanding of the older adults we serve. In addition, students will select an intervention assessment instrument to share with the class, write a scholarly review of literature on a topic concerning late life issues relevant to counseling and intervention, observe or conduct counseling techniques in an applied setting and analyze the experience in writing, and complete one written examination.

Required Assignments and Class Activities

1. Class Participation/In-Class Journaling – (100 points for course) Students should come to class each week prepared to discuss all assigned readings. Readings for each week consist of the required textbook assignments, relevant journal articles, and book chapters (posted on Blackboard). Your grade for this activity will depend on your attending class sessions and participating in discussion, and in various activities (such as case-management exercises) that we will do during the semester.
In addition, during each class, time will be set aside so that you may journal your self-reflections about how topics discussed in the class affect your knowledge about/experiences with working with older people. I will provide some questions about each topic to guide your reflection.

2. Presentation of Assessment Instruments (Two @ 50 points each):
Each student will be responsible for presenting two assessment instruments used with older adults. The purpose of this assignment is to find and critique relevant assessment methods, and to share and discuss these issues with fellow classmates.

- The first instrument will be due on September 14 and should be an example of an overall assessment of the daily functioning of older adults, used either in informal community settings or in institutional settings.
- The second assessment will be due on October 5, and should be an example of an assessment on a topic relevant to this course in which you are particularly interested (i.e., substance abuse, depression, elder abuse, social support adequacy, etc.).
- Students will prepare a brief outline of each instrument, explaining what it was created to measure, what elements the measure contains (e.g., survey questions, exercises to perform, etc), a brief overview of any relevant literature on use, and the strengths and weaknesses of the instrument.
- Please attach the outline to a copy of the assessment instrument, and bring enough copies for each class member. Each assessment instrument presentation will be held as a roundtable discussion with all class members.
- The UNC library has a database you might find useful for finding assessment instruments: [UNC Library Page ➔ Articles and More ➔ All Databases ➔ H ➔ Health & Psychosocial Instruments](#)

3. Review of Literature Paper (100 points):
Each student will write a scholarly paper, reviewing the literature either on a specific issue for older adults (such as depression, other specific mental health issues, substance abuse, stress, etc.) or a particular type of therapy (or therapeutic group approach), or a review of care management techniques/issues in the field today.

Your topic should not be so narrow as to limit the amount of research and conceptual information you can find, but not so wide that you can’t cover the topic literature in 8-10 pages. For example, if you choose to write about elders and depression, you might want to narrow your focus to either community dwelling or institutionalized populations of elders, and/or situational or biochemical depression.

The paper should begin with an introduction to your topic, including the reason a review of literature on this topic is important at this time. The body of the review should include sections on all relevant areas of research that emerge in your literature search. If there are areas that you think are missing from the literature, be sure to point out these gaps in your conclusion. The conclusion to your paper should include a summary of the findings about your topic, your suggestions for future research, and your own conclusion, based on your knowledge of the literature, about the current state of your topic.

The paper should be formatted APA style (6th edition), including section headings, citations in text, an abstract, spacing, and references. The completed, final literature review is due December 7.

**Proposal (25 points):**
Each student will turn in a one-page proposal for the literature review, by October 12. The proposal should include a description of your topic, the reason the topic is important, two or three paragraphs of information with citations from the literature, and a general indication of the availability of literature on your topic. If there is a topic that you very much want to write about but you can find very little literature, please see me.
4. **Literature Review paper conference (25 points):**

Students will prepare a short summary of their work to present verbally to the class, as well as providing each student with an abstract and reference page for their paper in a round-table format. This session will be held as a seminar, and students will be expected to discuss their work in relation to the context of each other’s presentations and to intervention strategy issues we’ve covered in class. The conference will be held on **November 30**.

5. **Conduct/Observe a Group or Interview two Care/Case managers (150 points):**

Students have the choice to either plan and conduct a group in a community or a long-term care setting (for example, a reminiscence group), to observe/participate in an existing group already taking place in an applied intervention setting, or conduct an in-depth interview with two care managers, one who works with elders either in a formal institutional, and one in a community setting. Any choice will include a written report and a presentation to the class, reporting on aspects of the group experience.

   a. **Conducting a Group:** Students may work alone or in pairs to conduct a non-clinical group, in order to experience the application of techniques learned in the classroom. Examples of non-clinical groups would be reminiscence, reading groups, or arts and craft groups. After contacting and selecting the group site, the group should be planned so that at least one group session is held. Guidelines for group planning can be found in your texts, and in your coursework.

   b. **Observing a Group:** Students may work alone or in pairs to observe any type of intervention group for older adults. Students will locate and observe (with group leader and members approval) a fully functioning group comprised of older adults. You must observe at least two consecutive group sessions.

   c. **Interview of Care/Case Managers:** Students will work on their own to find and interview two care/case managers who work with older adults. One must work in an institutional setting (can be a social worker working extensively with older adults), and one must be working on behalf of elders living independently in the community (can be non-profit or private-care management). You must plan a formal interview and have your survey or interview format approved by the instructor before proceeding. Please do not re-interview care/case managers you have spoken with for another course.

**Report Information for each option:**

**Written report for group work:** (each student must write his or her own report, even if conducting or observing the group together).

- Describe how the group was planned, and for whom – or the type of group observed
  - Goals and objectives for the group
  - How were members recruited; how were activities chosen?
  - If you observed a group, was it an ongoing group, open to anyone, closed membership, etc.?
  - Were there problems recruiting participants? If so, how were these problems resolved?

- Describe and discuss how the group proceeded
  - If observing a group, describe the leadership (peers or professionals, educational background, experience in facilitating groups)
  - Without breaking confidentiality, describe group participants (age, sex, personality characteristics, and observable physical or mental health issues). Include a description of how the group accommodated disability.
  - What aspects were successful, and which were not as successful?
  - Were there changes made along the way?
- How did participants respond to the group experience?

- Describe and discuss strengths and weaknesses of the group
  - If needed, what changes would you make next time?

- Conclude with a general overview of your thoughts regarding the group experience
  - What did you learn about working with older adults from this experience?
  - Describe what aspects of conducting a group you enjoyed, and what aspects you did not enjoy

Written report for interview:
Locate two practitioners to be interview about their experiences and expertise in care/case management (one in an institutional setting and one in a community-based setting) with older adults

- Inform them that this is for a graduate class in gerontology, and give them my contact information in case they wish to speak to me first
- Assure them that their name will not be used in the final report nor in class discussion (although I must know your interviewees' names and where they work)
- Set up an interview time convenient to you and the interviewee. If you need to set up more than one meeting with either, that's fine (they should not be interviewed together)

- Plan an interview format
- Students who choose the interview project will arrange to meet with the professor first for guidelines of the interview format. In general:
  - Prepare a written interview to use as a guide for your meeting.
  - The interview can be completely structured or semi-structured. Usually, a semi-structured interview yields better information.
  - The interview content should include questions about: specific aspects of the work the person does, the training and experience they've had in the field, barriers they see in the ability to provide care, positive and negative aspects of their careers, a personal philosophy they have about care management, and their views of the direction care management should take in the future.
  - Your final report should include: an introduction defining case/care management, a description of the types of case/care managers you interviewed, a summary of each interview (with full interviews placed in an appendix), a comparison/contrast of responsibilities, activities and barriers between institutional and community-based care/case managers, a summary of rewarding/difficult aspects of the work, and a conclusion describing your own perspective of the interview experience and what you have learned about care/case management by doing this project.

Presentation for all report types: Students will present and discuss their reports about their chosen option in a round-table session on November 2.

6. Mid-course Exam (100 points):
There will be one brief exam, to be turned in in class on October 19. The exam questions will be given out at least one week before the due date and allow you to apply the concepts, theories and techniques of the class to several case studies and scenarios.
**Important Dates to Remember:**

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<td>First Assessment Instrument Presentation</td>
<td>September 14</td>
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<td>Second Assessment Instrument Presentation</td>
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<td>Literature Review Proposal</td>
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<td>Mid-course Exam</td>
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<td>Group/Interview Project Report with Presentation</td>
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<td>In-Class Literature Review Conference</td>
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Schedule of Course Topics and Readings

Required readings are listed on the following pages. Class discussions will proceed on the assumption that all materials have been read before class meetings. Journal articles for this course can be found online via the Michener library’s website. Materials posted on Blackboard are noted.

Week 1: August 24th
Introduction to the Course
Background on Older Persons Today, the Current State of Aging, and our Roles

Readings:
McInnis-Dittrich, Chapters 1 & 2 (for a review of trends in aging)


Week 2: August 31st
Psychological Adjustment to Older Age
The Biopsychosocial Approach of Intervention with Older Persons
An Introduction to the Use of Assessment Tools in a Care-Management Approach

Site Visit and Guest Presentation: Madeleine Jacobs, Activities Director, Grace Pointe. Meet at Grace Point, 1919 68th Avenue, Greeley, CO, 80634

Readings:
McInnis-Dittrich, Chapters 3 & 4
Conn. et al., Chapter 2


Radloff, L.S. The Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale: http://cesd-r.com/
Week 3: September 14th (post-labor day)
Case Management: Using Strength-Based and Empowerment Models with Older Adults
(Including working with caregivers and other informal sources of support)
Access of Older Adults to Mental Health Services
Due: First assessment instrument student presentations

Readings:
- McInnis-Dittrich, Chapter 1 (pp. 7-8: “Using the strengths-based perspective in working with older adults”) & 12
- Conn. et al., Chapter 19


Week 4: September 21st
Differential Assessment and Diagnosis of Cognitive and Emotional Problems in Older Adults:
Depression, Dementia, or Delirium?
Guest speaker: Lory Clukey, PhD, PsyD, CNS, RN, Associate Professor, UNC, will speak about differential diagnoses and care transitions

Readings:
- McInnis-Dittrich, Chapter 5
- Conn. et al., Chapters 3, 4 & 5


Week 5: September 28th
Interventions for Depression, Anxiety, and Dementia in Older Adults
Guest speaker: Corny Deitz, Peer Counselor, North Range Behavioral Health’s Peer Counseling for Older Adults

Readings:
- McInnis-Dittrich, Chapter 6 (pp. 143-153; 170-178)


**Week 6: October 5th**  
Introduction to Group Methods of Intervention for Older Adults  
Focus on Reminiscence Strategies and Life Review  
**Due:** Second assessment instrument student presentations  
**Guest speaker and exercises:** Mary Borg, autobiography group facilitator, *Writing Your Life: An Easy-to-Follow Guide to Writing an Autobiography*

**Readings:**  
McInnis-Dittrich, Chapter 6 (pp. 153-160; 162-170)


Burnside, I., & Schmidt, M. G. (1994). History and overview of group work (pp. 24-38). *Working with older adults: Group process and techniques.* Boston: Jones and Bartlett. (posted on Blackboard)

Burnside, I., & Schmidt, M. G. (1994). Leadership and co-leadership issues (pp. 92-105). *Working with older adults: Group process and techniques.* Boston: Jones and Bartlett. (posted on Blackboard)

**Week 7: October 12th**  
Complementary/Alternative Interventions  
Related Intervention Ethics by Setting (such as community or residential long-term care)  
**Due:** Literature Review Proposal

**Readings:**  
McInnis-Dittrich, Chapter, 7  
Conn et al., Chapter 20


Week 8: October 19th
Groupwork options in Community Settings
Due: Mid-Course Exam
Site Visit and Guest Presentation: Mindy Rickard, The Bridge’s Administrator, and Director Recreation Therapy, Eileen Smith. Meet at The Bridge, 4750 25th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Readings:
McInnis-Dittrich, (Review pp. 163-170)


Erwin, K. T. (2013). *Group techniques for aging adults: Putting geriatric skills enhancement into practice*. Routledge (selection from: Stages of elder groups, Designing groups for diverse elder populations, Group leadership, and Group modalities for social skills; posted on Blackboard)

Week 9: October 26th
Groupwork options in Residential and Institutional Settings
Interventions with Alzheimer’s disease and other Dementias
Site Visit and Guest Presentation: John Stewart, NHA/Guide, The Green House, Homes at Mirasol, 490 Mirasol Drive, Loveland, CO 80537

Readings:
Conn et al., Chapters 15, 16 & 17


Week 10: November 2nd
Interventions for Substance Abuse and Elder Abuse/Neglect
Traditional Therapies and Psychopharmacology
Due: Group/Interview Experience Written Report and Discussion of Group/Interview experiences

Readings:
- McInnis-Dittrich, Chapter 8
- Conn et al, Chapters 9, 11 & 12


Week 11: November 9th
Spirituality and Mind-Body Practices

Readings:
- McInnis-Dittrich, Chapter, 10


Week 12: November 16th
End-of-Life Interventions
Guest speaker: Sue Sabas, Director of Support Services, Hospice of Northern Colorado Member of Hospice Team (TBD), Hospice of Northern Colorado

Readings:
- McInnis-Dittrich, Chapter 11


Week 13: November 23rd
Aging in Place and Home and Community-Based, Person-Centered and Directed Care
Guest speaker: Senor Center Programs Director, from one of the first senior centers in the Navajo Nation.

Readings:
McInnis-Dittrich, Chapter 13


Week 14: November 30th: Due: In-Class Conference/Individual Presentations of Literature Reviews

Week 15: December 7th (final): Due: Literature Review Paper