

Supplemental Assignments that can be used to Help Students Learn Core Competencies:

Here are some additional assignments that link to the learning in the different chapters. Please note that there are several exercises already listed in each chapter that can be done as assignments to facilitate student learning of core competencies.

Active Listening and Empathy Exercise

(This assignment fits with the material covered in Chapters 5 and 6)

Instructions

Engage a class member in a 15 minute interview where the class member shares with you something that is important to them that happened in the past week. Your role is to actively listen to their story and encourage further reflection and to provide prompts to help the class member uncover more about the experience being shared. Summarize what you are learning and seek clarification of your assumptions throughout the process.

Reverse roles. You will now be the person sharing an experience.

Submission

Write up how you experienced being the interviewer and also how you felt as the interviewee. This reflection should be 1 to 2 double-spaced pages.

A Genogram Exercise

(This assignment can be added to the learning from Chapter 6 and 10)

Instructions

As a part of an effort to enhance your understanding of self, prepare a genogram of three generations of your own family.

You may draw the genogram or use a software program to create the graphic. Several word processing packages allow for creation of square, circles, triangles, and ways to draw lines to link them. You could also use one of the "family genogram" programs that are available commercially or as shareware. You may download a demonstration copy of such a program at: <http://www.genopro.com/>.

Submission

This assignment involves 3 components:

- 1) the actual genogram drawing, with relationship lines and a symbols key.
- 2) a brief synopsis of the key people you have included.
- 3) a summary reflection that highlights what you learned about your own family and the ways that your own experiences with family may influence your work with other families.

Behavioral Plan

(This assignment can be linked to Chapter 8 and 11)

Instructions

Identify a habit or area that you would like to change in your life. Often times you have tried to work on this habit or area with varying degrees of success. Using the material presented in Chapter 8 and the Common Elements video that addresses cognitive behavioral skills. Develop a behavioral plan that you will implement for one week that addresses this habit or area you wish to change. Implement the plan for 3 weeks.

Submission

Submit your plan and the success or challenges you faced implementing your behavioral plan. Describe any lessons learned about engaging in change efforts.

Learning more about Family Interventions

(This assignment links well with Chapter 10)

Instructions

View a family therapy video of a method you are interested in learning more about.

Submission

- Summarize the major skills used in this approach. (2 double-spaced pages)
- Discuss some of the potential strengths and challenges you see with using this approach in working with diverse family systems. (2 double-spaced pages)

Learning More about Facilitating Groups

(This assignment can be added to the learning from Chapter 10)

Instructions

Interview a Group Leader or Group Facilitator of a support group, psychoeducation group, intervention group or task group. If possible, also observe a group session. Discuss with the group leader/facilitator the following:

- Logistics (setting, membership, purpose, frequency, etc)
- Challenges in engagement and recruitment for the group
- Process (communication patterns, record keeping, power dynamic, group culture, roles)
- Skills needed to facilitate the group effectively

Submission

Write a summary of your interview and incorporate the take away messages that you will bring to your own work based on what you learned from this assignment. Three double-spaced pages.

SCREENING DEVICES

Overview

Screening devices are important tools that are regularly used by mental health service providers, irrespective of the discipline. Thus, it is essential that you have a good understanding of these tools, both in their delivery and interpretation. The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate competencies in searching for and selecting a screening device from the professional literature. For this assignment, you will specify a disorder and population of professional interest to you, and then use either PubMed or PsychInfo to locate an appropriate screening device.

Instructions

Specify a disorder and population of interest (e.g., depression among older adults). Then, log into PubMed or PsychInfo through the UM Library system. It is important that you log into the library system first, as this is the only way to access articles. Using various search terms and operators, locate a screening device related to your specified topic (i.e., disorder and population). You will likely have to test out a variety of search terms and operators before you will locate an appropriate screening device. After you have identified a screening device, prepare a short paper that contains the following information:

Provide a brief overview of the disorder and population -- e.g., characteristic features of the disorder, public significance, etc.

Provide a narrative of the instrument that you consider to be an appropriate screener for your specified disorder and population. Be sure that you write this as a narrative and not simply a set of bullet points. The narrative should include:

- Name of the screener;
- Format (e.g., written self-report, clinician interview);
- Length of the screener (e.g., number of items, approximate time of administration);
- Representative items from the screener;
- How the screener is scored and interpreted
- Psychometric properties of the screener (i.e., reliability and validity)
- Any other information you think is important to communicate about the screener
- APA references from where you found the screener and supporting information

Submission

Submit your short paper and a separate document that contains the screening device. The screening device should be formatted as a standalone document that can be used for practice.

RSS Feeds

Overview

As outlined in the final chapter on *Lifelong Learning*, RSS feeds are a useful way to remain current with the literature. It is a way of subscribing to information and making it easily accessible. RSS is by no means a perfect technology, but it does provide a very efficient method of obtaining information. In this assignment, you will be subscribing to RSS feeds to social work journals and other journals in your area of interest.

Instructions

1. Watch the video on RSS feeds to obtain further information on how to set up and use this form of technology.
2. Create a list of social work and other professional journals in your area of interest. You should create a list of 10 journals, recognizing that some journals may not have an RSS feed available.
3. Set up an account with an RSS aggregator, as described in the accompanying video.
4. Search for the homepage of the journals and determine whether an RSS feed is available. If so, subscribe to the RSS feed with your aggregator.

It is important to note that not all journals have RSS feeds, and sometimes the link may not be functional. Additionally, you will not have complete access to the journal article through your RSS aggregator. The RSS feeds typically provide only access to the article abstracts. However, article abstracts can be very helpful for remaining aware of new research, as they provide important summaries of the articles.

Submission

Use your RSS reader for one week. At the end of the week, prepare a short write-up (approximately 1/2 page) that describes the type of research you were exposed to. Feel free to make modifications to your subscription list, removing journals that you didn't find useful and adding new ones. Finally, take a *screen shot* of your RSS subscription list and submit this with your write-up.