

Adler Graduate School

Richfield, Minnesota

AGS Course 561

Evaluation Methodologies in Counseling and Psychotherapy

1. Course Designation and Identifier Information

- 1.1 Adler Graduate School
- 1.2 Course number 561
- 1.3 Evaluation Methodologies in Counseling and Psychotherapy
- 1.4 Three (3) credits
- 1.5 Prerequisites: previous coursework in clinical assessment, experience in therapeutic techniques

2. Course Description

The practice of psychotherapy has changed, and continues to change, since its inception in the late 19th century. The development of 3rd party payers for psychotherapy services has required practitioners to substantiate claims that previously had gone unchallenged. The process of learning how people change, both in and out of the therapeutic setting, has yielded information that is as often encouraging as it is unsettling. In this course we will examine the practice of psychotherapy, various ways outcomes can be assessed, key variables that appear to moderate therapeutic processes, which claims have substance and which do not. Students will be asked to consider what Wampold has called “The Great Psychotherapy Debate” from the perspectives of key stake holders in the therapeutic relationship.

3. Texts, Materials, and Resources (required and optional)

3.1 Required text:

Hubble, M.A., Dun, B.L., & Miller, S.D. (1999). *The Heart and Soul of Change: What Works in Therapy*. Washington, DC: American psychological Association

4. Learning Outcomes

Students in this course will:

- 4.1 Understand the history of modern psychotherapy and how measuring outcomes has become a primary focus in clinical practice (competencies met 1a, 5f);
- 4.2 Understand how and why ‘evidenced based practice’ came to be a force within psychotherapy, including its strengths and limitations. This includes the ability to appreciate the concerns and requirements of 3rd party payers and the impact these have on clinical practice (competencies met 1e);
- 4.3 Understand and articulate the reasons for measuring outcomes in psychotherapy, and why this has been adopted by the mental health community (competencies met 5b);
- 4.4 Understand and identify general types of outcome assessment procedures and most common methodologies used in creating of assessment instruments (competencies met 7b, g, h);

- 4.5 Understand, identify and articulate key findings from the research on the efficacy of psychotherapy, including current issues under debate (competencies met 8e);
- 4.6 Understand, identify and articulate which specific therapeutic interventions have empirical support for specific diagnoses, which are under investigation, which have been deemed as ineffective and which have not yet been studied (competencies met 5b, f);
- 4.7 Understand, identify, and articulate psychotherapy outcome issues related to culture, race, gender, language, age, sexual orientation, and physical abilities (competencies met 2 b, c);
- 4.8 Understand and articulate which variables in the therapeutic relationship have been identified in the literature as playing primary and secondary roles in creating successful change (competencies met 5a);
- 4.9 Understand and articulate the anti-evidence based position taken by some psychotherapeutic models, including the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments.

5. Course Outline

(Minor changes may be made to adjust to specific needs of a particular class as this course progresses)

Units 1 & 2

Historical context of psychotherapy: Psychoanalysis, cognitive and cognitive-behavioral, humanistic/existential, marriage and family therapy, psychiatry, Transtheoretical and biopsychosocial models. Approaches to case conceptualization, treatment, therapeutic relationship and outcomes. Exploitation of early reimbursement options by mental health professionals.

Third party payers, rising premiums and the effect on clinical practice.

Unit 3

Lessons from cognitive research, social psychology, and critical thinking skills: problems with anecdotal evidence, confirmation bias, attention, halo effect, contrast effect, the Fundamental Attribution Error, burnout and level of arousal, caseload composition and level of exposure to a particular diagnosis/condition. Other therapist factors in outcome measurement: stage/level of training, theoretical orientation; countertransference; cultural relativity and conditional validity; gender, racial, SES stereotypes

Units 4 & 5

Outcome measures: purpose of measurement (decision making, predictions/prognoses, forensic, treatment evaluation; continuous treatment planning); What to measure (general vs. specific, absolute vs. relative efficacy; how to measure it (self-report vs. standardized instruments; observations, semi-structured interview, collateral information, functional assessment), how much change is enough to substantiate a claim, descriptive vs. inferential data. Problems with internal logic of the methods and instruments

Units 6 & 7

Does it work for everyone? (psychotherapy outcome issues related to culture, race, gender, language, age, sexual orientation, physical abilities, and other differences between a therapist and a client, and between a mainstream theory and a non-mainstream client).

Unit 8

Process variables: Therapist variables, client variables, the therapeutic relationship, the 'art' and 'science' debate.

Unit 9

Debate

There will be no specific reading assignments for each class. However, students will need to be reading required textbooks and articles throughout the course in order to be able to successfully complete the course, including special project activities. At the beginning of each class, students will be encouraged to bring any questions that arise from any reading that they have completed.

6. Special Project Time (SPT)

Special Project Time (SPT) allows students the opportunity to integrate course materials. SPT is meant to be a self-contained, 30 hour experience, requiring no more than 30 hours to complete. SPT generally focuses on either (a) an experiential exercise paired with an integrative writing component or (b) a research exercise and a short integrative writing component.

An integrative, SPT experience can be based on an individual project or a group project. Once again, the individual or group completes an experiential or a research oriented exercise, followed by a short integrative writing assignment. This should all be planned within the context of a 30 hour student expectation.

SPT experiences may be constructed in such a way that they pertain to students' unique degree plans. For example, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist students, Licensed Professional Counselor students, and Licensed School Counselor students might construct a SPT experience unique to their chosen disciplines. This is done in consultation with the course instructor.

7. Writing Guidelines including APA Format

All written assignments in courses at the Adler Graduate School must be in APA format unless specifically noted by the course instructor (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition), 2009, American Psychological Association).

8. Assessment/Evaluation Procedures

8.1 Special Project Time

At the beginning of the course, students will be presented with a complex clinical case. Students will work on the case during the five weeks of class – reading classic and contemporary research, obtaining peer and expert consultations, and creating a case conceptualization based on the group task. This will count toward their special project time. Students will present their position during the class and will debate and defend their position, like they would do when practicing and advocating on behalf of their actual clients. Topics and tasks for small groups will be assigned at the beginning of the course. Topics will include (but will not be limited by)

different theoretical perspectives on diagnosis and different models of therapeutic change; types of process and outcome assessment; empirically supported treatment strategies for different diagnoses; components of successful change, including therapist and client factors; variables of culture, gender and age in treatment planning and assessment of therapeutic outcome. The culmination of the SPT will be a psychotherapy debate during one of the final classes. The debate time is not counted toward the SPT requirements.

- 8.2 All students will complete 4 short response papers to a list of questions that tap into the current issues presented in class. All students must answer question #1, and then they may select any other 2 questions from the question list. These response papers should be 3-4 pages each. They are intended to give the student an opportunity to integrate the course material so they can establish a supported personal position on 3 of the key issues identified in class. The student's position needs to be supported by academic references and written in APA format and with scholarly writing style. Only complete work will be accepted as meeting the deadline, and it is not permissible to turn in 'drafts'. Be sure to thoroughly proof read and edit your work. If this is an area of growth for you, you are welcome to enlist the help of a professional editor. They are not permitted to write any of the content for you.
- 8.3 Students will complete take-home exam
- 8.4 Late work: Students may request an extension, and regardless of circumstance, it will be granted. Unless there are extreme circumstances, the student will only be eligible for a highest grade of a B if taking an extension. If you feel your circumstances warrant an exception, you need to contact your instructor as soon as reasonably possible after you become aware of the situation. (These exceptions are generally considered to be a sudden, serious illness of yourself or a close family member.) You will be asked to submit the work you have completed at the time of requesting an exception to the extension grading policy. If work is submitted after the extension expires, it will be up to the instructor whether to accept the work for a highest possible grade of a C, or if Adler's policy of retaking the class will take precedence.
- 8.5 Revision of work: If students are not happy with their grade on the written papers, they will have one opportunity to revise and resubmit them. You will need to incorporate all of your instructor's feedback and assure that your work has been thoroughly proof read and edited before a higher grade will be possible on a revision. Adler's policy is that revisions must be submitted to your instructor within 30 days. Your instructor is not obligated to review work submitted past the 30 day policy.

8.6

561 Question List

Note: All students must answer question #1. You may then choose any 2 questions from the remaining choices. Answer each question in 3-4 pages (APA format) where you support (from the literature) your position. The intention of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to integrate the material from class with your current level of experience and professional development.

These should be written in scholarly form (3rd person, with references and with objective arguments). Good scholarly writing emphasizes the synthesis of concepts from others, your own views and the cited paraphrasing of others' ideas. You will likely need to use sources in addition to the ones offered in class to answer these questions.

1. *(All students must answer this question.) Given what you have learned about the issue of measuring outcomes in mental health treatment, what is your position on this issue? Do you support the measurement of outcomes? Why or why not? Do you support some measures and not others? Which ones do you or do you not support, and how did you arrive at this conclusion? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the side opposing your view?*
2. *How might a therapist maximize the therapeutic relationship given what is known about the role it plays in creating measurable change?*
3. *Discuss the role of Adlerian psychology in the context of research and outcomes in psychotherapy. How has the practice of Adlerian psychotherapy responded to the mental health community's adoption of evidence-based practice? Do you feel this is an adequate response? Why or why not?*
4. *What are the legal and ethical implications of using a psychotherapeutic method without outcomes measures or evidence to support its use?*
5. *Given that the current research on psychotherapy suggests that most therapeutic gain is obtained in the first 6 or 7 sessions, and that many people improve significantly without formal intervention, what justification would you use to support the recommendation that a client attend therapy for 20 or more sessions?*
6. *With much of the discussion on therapeutic outcome focusing on theories, modalities, and a role of a therapist, clients' factors may be easily overlooked. Do clients' factors matter? Why or why not? Discuss clients' factors in therapy outcome.*
7. *Research shows that therapeutic alliance is a major ingredient of success in psychotherapy. Discuss the differences in role of an individual therapist compared to a group therapist in creating/maintaining therapeutic alliance.*
8. *Identify and discuss variables that may impact quality of therapeutic outcome in cross-lingual therapeutic environment*
9. *Identify and discuss best predictors of treatment outcome for individuals diagnosed with substance abuse disorders*
10. *It is believed that more than 70 percent of positive therapeutic outcome may be attributable to extra-therapeutic variables. Discuss extra-therapeutic variables in psychotherapy outcome and the role of a therapist (if any) in affecting these variables.*
11. *Discuss relationships between age of a client and therapy outcome*
12. *Discuss therapeutic variables that may interact with race, ethnicity, and culture in influencing therapeutic outcome*

8.7 Grading

Assignments	Date Due	Maximum Points
Special Project (Debate)		30 pts
Take home exam		30 pts
Papers	3 weeks after last class	total 40 (10pts per paper)

Grades

Grades are assigned according to a classical strategy (i.e., A, B, C, R)

A – 90-100 points; B – 80-89 points; C – 70-79 points; R – Non-performance related to either attendance or failure to complete assignments within 45 days after last class session.

Submission instructions

Please submit your paper via e-mail or regular mail (either to AGS mailing address or the instructor's office address). If mailed, it must be postmarked by the due date assigned in class.

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9. Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. When a student is unable to attend class, it is a courtesy to notify the course instructor in advance using either e-mail or phone.

10. Participation Disclaimer

Active participation in class discussions/exercises/demonstrations is encouraged. As with other AGS courses, in this course, individual students must determine for themselves the level of disclosure/intimacy that is appropriate for them.

Whenever confidential information/material is used in any AGS course, students and faculty members are expected to observe AGS policy concerning the handling of confidential information/material. Full descriptions of these policies are readily available.

11. Academic Integrity Policy

Honesty and trust among students and between students and faculty are essential for a strong, functioning academic community. Consequently, students are expected to do their own work on all academic assignments, tests, projects, and research/term papers. Academic dishonesty, whether cheating, plagiarism, or some other form of dishonest conduct may result in failure for the work involved. Academic dishonesty could also result in failure for the course and, in the event of a second incident of

academic dishonesty, suspension from the Adler Graduate School . Here are examples of academic dishonesty:

- Cheating - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit.
- Fabrication - Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- Facilitating academic dishonesty - Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of academic integrity.
- Plagiarism - The deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgment.

12. Internet/On-Line Activity

On-line components Adler Graduate School classes provide an opportunity for open and insightful dialogue. As in face-to-face discussions, there are differences in opinions concerning topics discussed. We view these differences as welcomed attribute of a good scholarly discussion. Respect for differences will also be viewed as a sign of scholarly debate.

Following are guidelines governing on-line discussions:

- Never post content that is known to be illegal. Never post potentially harassing, threatening, or embarrassing statements, as well as statements that that might be potentially offensive and seen as disrespectful in any way.
- Faculty members monitor discussion and intervene when requested or as deemed necessary.
- On-line communication presents a significant level of ambiguity, as verbal content of communication is not well supported by its non-verbal (including contextual) components. If a student feels threatened or offended by a statement made by another student during on-line portion of a class, please address the issue immediately with the other student(s) to clarify their position and your reaction. If this does not work, contact your class instructor so actions can be taken if necessary.
- During on-line discussion, follow the same rules concerning protection of confidential information as you would follow in face-to-face discussion.

13. Nondiscrimination Clause

The Adler Graduate School is an equal opportunity educator and employer. The Adler Graduate School does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, or physical disability in the employment of faculty or staff, the admission or treatment of students, or in the operation of its educational programs and activities. The institution is committed to providing equal education and employment opportunities in accordance with all applicable State and federal laws.

14. Learning Accommodations (including students with disabilities)

If a student in this course has a documented learning disability, he or she should tell the instructor during the first week of class. The instructor needs to know on the front end so that he or she can work with the student. The Adler Graduate School is committed to helping all students be successful, as best as can be reasonably accommodated. Documenting a learning disability occurs at the student's expense. When documented appropriately, the Adler Graduate School makes all reasonable accommodations.

15. Instructor Contact Information

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