Course:  BEHAVIORAL COUPLE THERAPY (18:821:562:01, #28510), Room A341
Instructor:  Shalonda Kelly Ph.D., Room A207 (O) 445-2000 x132, skelly@rci.rutgers.edu
Semester:  Fall 2007, Wednesdays 2:00-4:45pm

COURSE GOALS: To teach the theoretical foundations and clinical applications of behavioral couple therapy. By the end of the semester, students should have some knowledge of:

1) Trends in marriage in the United States
2) Normative couple behavior
3) Components of the theoretical bases of behavioral couples therapy and enhanced forms of behavioral marital therapy, as well as data relevant to these concepts, which includes models such as behavioral couples therapy (BCT), an adaptation model of relationship functioning, and Integrative Behavioral Couples Therapy (IBCT)
4) Procedures for assessing distressed couples, and data relevant to these procedures, including a) interviewing, b) self-report measures, c) structured observational systems, and d) procedures for ongoing monitoring of treatment
5) Behavioral couples interventions and data supporting their use, including a) enhancement of positive exchanges, b) communication training, c) problem solving-training, d) cognitive and affective interventions, and e) acceptance techniques.
6) Empirical and clinical knowledge about relationships in same sex couples and couples from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds
7) Ethical issues in couples therapy
8) The empirical base for behavioral couples therapy

BCT skills that students should have begun to acquire by the end of the semester include:

1) Setting the stage for therapy
2) Initial interviewing
3) Selecting and using appropriate assessment procedures
4) Treatment planning and contracting
5) Implementation of behavioral interventions such as reciprocity enhancement, communication training, and problem-solving
6) Implementation of cognitive and affective interventions, such as reframing, assisting with affect regulation and expression

COURSE FORMAT: The class will generally be split into two or three roughly equal portions. The first portion of the class will be used for didactic presentations, discussion of the readings, identification of major concepts and issues, clarifying issues, etc. Students should participate actively, question, and play with the ideas and materials that we discuss. Where indicated on the syllabus, the second portion of the class will consist of student-led discussions (SLD), and case presentations. Group discussion/supervision of your cases is also appropriate at this time. For most sessions, the third portion of the class will typically involve an active learning task, such as application of the readings to a case, role-playing, viewing videotapes, or case discussions. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss their cases as they become relevant to the issues discussed in class.

REQUIRED TEXTS/READINGS FOR THE COURSE:


2. Assigned Readings: They are available from Dr. Kelly on CD.
COURSE OUTLINE

1. **September 5**  
   **Introduction To Course & “Normal” Couple Relationships**  
   **READ:** Nothing - First Day of Class  
   **RECOMMENDED:** 1) E & B, Chapter 1 – Introduction  
   Discriminating among marital outcomes over 13 years. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 66*, 613-626.
   
   **Understanding Couples and Cognitive-Behavioral Theory**

2. **September 12**  
   **Overview Of The Basic Cognitive-Behavioral Model And Its Empirical Foundations**  
   **READ:** 1-2) E & B, Chapters 2 & 3 (behavioral, cognitive, and emotional factors)  

3. **September 19**  
   **Enhancements To The Basic Model**  
   **STUDENT-LED DISCUSSION - RACE, CULTURE, & ETHNICITY**  
   **READ:** 1-3) E & B, Chapters 4, 5 & 6 (individual, interpersonal, and adaptation model contributions)  

   **Interview, Assessment, and Case Formulation**

4. **September 26**  
   **Assessment, Part I - Getting To Know A Couple**  
   **STUDENT-LED DISCUSSION – GENDER**  
   **READ:** 1) E & B, Chapter 7 (assessment)  

4) Informed Consent Sheet, oral history interview, and Marital assessment outline handouts

**RECOMMENDED:**  

5. **October 3**  
**Assessment, Part II – Basic Instruments**

**STUDENT LED-DISCUSSION – SEXUAL CONCERNS**

**READ:**  

4) Glance over and bring to class the two page dyadic adjustment and areas of change scales and the marital problem inventory.

**RECOMMENDED:**  

6. **October 10**  
**Assessment, Part III – Specialized Instruments And Integration/Case Formulation**

**STUDENT-LED DISCUSSION – SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

**READ:**  
1) E & B, Chapter 8 (conducting couples therapy)  

4) Conflict Tactics Scales II

**RECOMMENDED:**  
Cultural Research, 38, 407-432.

**Cognitive-Behavioral (& Affective) Interventions**

7. **October 17** Behavioral Interventions I - Basics

**STUDENT-LED DISCUSSION – PARENTHOOD**

READ: 1) E & B, Chapter 9 (behavioral interventions)


8. **October 24** Behavioral Interventions II – Communication/PREP

4) Glance over and bring to class the communication handouts.

9. **October 31** Behavioral Interventions III – Problem-Solving/PREP

**STUDENT CASE PRESENTATION:** ______________


4) Glance over and bring to class the communication handouts and the problem solving handouts.
10. November 7  Cognitive and Affective Interventions I

STUDENT CASE PRESENTATION: ____________________

READ: 1) E & B, Chapter 10 (cognitive interventions)


11. November 14  Cognitive and Affective Interventions II

STUDENT CASE PRESENTATION: ____________________

READ: 1) E & B, Chapter 11 (emotion-focused interventions)


12. November 21  Broad Behavioral Patterns & Individual Problems

STUDENT CASE PRESENTATION: ____________________

READ: 1-2) E & B, Chapters 12 and 13 (interventions for couple patterns and individual factors)


STUDENT-LED DISCUSSION – INTERVENTION OR SPECIAL TOPIC TBA

READ: 1) E & B, Chapter 14 (interventions for environmental demands)


Special Issues Pertaining to Couples


STUDENT-LED DISCUSSION – INTERVENTION OR SPECIAL TOPIC TBA

READ: 1) E & B, Chapter 14 (interventions for environmental demands)


Special Issues Pertaining to Couples
Unpublished manuscript, Piscataway, NJ. (module to manual for couple treatment of drug
abuse/dependence, by Epstein, E. E., & McCrady, B. S., Center for Alcohol Studies, Rutgers U.).

2) Bowman, P. J. (1992). Coping with provider role strain: Adaptive cultural resources
(Eds.), African American psychology: Theory, research, and practice (pp. 135-154). Newbury

14. December 5  Couple Problems II – Infidelity, Violence & Separation
STUDENT CASE PRESENTATION: ___________________
CASE WRITE-UPS DUE, Course Feedback Forms Handed Out
intimate partner violence: A cognitive behavioral approach. Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy:
An International Quarterly, 20, 393-410.
RECOMMENDED:  1) Cascardi, M., O'Leary, K. D., Lawrence, E. E., & Schlee, K. A.
(1995). Characteristics of women physically abused by their spouses and who seek treatment
couple therapy. In A. S. Gurman & N. S. Jacobson (Eds.), Clinical handbook of couple therapy (pp.
Do subtypes of maritally violent men continue to differ over time? Journal of Consulting and
Clinical Psychology, 71, 728-740.
partner violence: An introduction for couple therapists. In A. S. Gurman & N. S. Jacobson (Eds.),

15. December 12 Evaluation of Enhanced BCT & Future Directions
Course Wrap-up/Oral Feedback
CLASS DEBATE
A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology,
73, 6-14.
2) REPEAT SNYDER 2006 PDF FROM WEEK #2
the therapeutic alliance, hope, and diversity. Cognitive and Behavioral Practice, 12, 102-112.
4) Byrne, M., Carr, A., & Clark, M. (2004). The efficacy of behavioral couples therapy and
emotionally focused therapy for couple distress. Contemporary Family Therapy, 26, 361-387.
RECOMMENDED: 1) E & B, Chapter 15
generalization of behavioral marital therapy and enhanced behavioral marital therapy. Journal of
Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 61, 51-60.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance and full participation in all class sessions: 15% of grade

Participation involving the readings, questions, and applications of the readings are strongly encouraged. Please contact Dr. Kelly BEFORE each class session that you miss. If you miss more than two classes, make-up work will be negotiated. As this course emphasizes active learning, ALL students must also volunteer for three role-plays over the course of the term. (Required of enrolled students and auditors [ALL students])

2. Student-led class discussions (2): 20% of grade

For each discussion, the student will review one article on a special topic germane to cognitive-behavioral couple therapy. Articles with the designation (SLD) above are available from the instructor for this purpose, but they are not mandatory. The student will do a brief presentation on the material and then engage the class in a discussion of students’ reactions to and application of this material to cognitive-behavioral couple therapy. To assist in preparing to lead this discussion, it is suggested that presenters compose reactions related to the readings. They can be in the form of questions, concerns/criticisms, reflections, or an active learning task for the group. They should reveal your thoughts on how to deal with/think about/address (i.e. APPLY) the material, to couples therapy and they should be designed to facilitate discussion. Discussion dates will be chosen on the first day of class. Discussions should be 30-minutes for one presenter and one hour for two (should you choose to do them together) Students auditing the class do not need to lead discussions. My dates are: __________________ My topics are: __________________

3. Present couple therapy case in class (1 hour total): 25% of grade

Each student will present one case. Case presentations will be spaced through the second half of the semester, so the focus of each presentation will be somewhat different. Please distribute a written case summary before your presentation. The case summary should include identifying information, presenting problems, and relationship history. Start with this information to orient your peers to the couple’s background. The case presentation should take 30 minutes TOTAL, and should present one interesting aspect of the case or a session, rather than a comprehensive presentation of the couple. The case presentation could include any of the following: 1) assessment procedures you used and your rationale for selecting these, 2) case formulation and theoretical basis, 3) a specific treatment intervention used, your rationale for selecting the intervention, and the success or failure of the intervention, 4) objective data about the progress of treatment, or 5) special topics related to the case and how you deal with them (e.g. SLD topics, infidelity, etc.). You should also present a current problem or question about the treatment, and use the second 30 minutes for group discussion/feedback/peer supervision. Case presentations should include a videotape or audiotape of your couple, and should be brief enough to allow plenty of time to discuss and problem solve as a class. For those who have difficulties obtaining cases, other application arrangements will be made (see Dr. Kelly in this event). My Presentation is Due On: __________________ (Required of ALL students)

4. Paper presentation of your case (DUE ON DECEMBER 5): 30% of grade

Your paper should be a formal presentation of your couple case. The paper must include: 1) identifying information, 2) presenting problems, 3) relationship history, 4) assessment procedures you used and your rationale for selecting these, 5) case formulation and theoretical bases for the
6. Class “debate”: 10% of grade

The last class will be devoted to a quasi-debate about the advantages and limitations of behavioral couples therapy, related to BOTH empirical findings and therapist and client concerns. During the first class we will divide into two “debating teams” – one team to identify the limitations and weaknesses of behavioral couples therapy, and the other to identify its strengths and advantages. Throughout the semester, as you read, see your couple, sit in class, interact with an intimate other, or think about relationships, jot down ideas that related to the debate. Each debating team should meet once before the last class to pool your ideas and plan your debating strategy. The debate format will include opening arguments and rebuttals, interspersed with good food and drink.