

Indiana University
School of Social Work

I
Summer 1991

S 400
S600
VanVoorhis

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH WOMEN

Dedicated to the memory of Bertha Pappenheim, an early survivor of sexual trauma and the most famous patient, Anna O., who despite psychiatric malpractice by those forefathers of psychiatry, went on to triumph over her childhood sexual abuse and become a foremother of our profession.

Course Description

The bio-psycho-social components of the contemporary female experience and the many ways women have adapted to survive oppression are examined. This includes study of the life experiences of lesbian women and women of color. Attention is given to the sociocultural definition of women and women's roles. Major theoretical perspectives about human behavior are reviewed to reveal their values and beliefs about the nature of women. Students review the experiences of women in their family of origin to better understand the functioning of women. Emphasis is given to the development of values and skills which foster sensitivity in social work practice with women. Both micro and macro interventions are explored with particular attention to ways that social workers can empower women.

Objectives

1. To understand the bio-psycho-social components of the contemporary female experience.
2. To understand developmental phases, issues, and transitions for women.
3. To understand the oppression of women and the many ways women have adapted to survive oppression.
4. To achieve an understanding of the life experiences and needs of lesbian women and women of color.
5. To examine major theoretical perspectives for their implicit and explicit messages about women and their application to the clinical treatment of women.
6. To develop values and skills which will foster sensitivity in social work practice with women.
7. To develop a range of micro - macro skills to intervene with and for women.
8. To examine the causes of and treatment for mental health problems which have a high frequency of diagnosis among women.

Course Requirements

1. Attending and participating in all class sessions is important because several class activities are planned for you to "learn by doing." While notes on lectures can be gotten from a classmate, no one can do experiential learning for you. Also, there is no way to make up this kind of learning at a later date. So the bottom line for this course—Be Here!
2. You need to complete the course readings prior to the session when they are assigned. In addition to completing the assigned readings, I want you to do two written exercises.

For the movie which is assigned, Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe, please select one of the female characters who fascinates you and prepare a 2-3 page assessment of the strengths which helped her to survive/cope with the obstacles/challenges which she experienced in her life.

For Backlash by Susan Faludi, I want you to keep a journal of your thoughts and feelings which occur as you read her book. As you read, some of you will probably think, "Aha, so that explains why so many women that I know...." You may respond to other parts with feelings of anger or sadness. Simply note the feeling and record what it is in the reading that you are responding to. Other times, something you read may lead you to remember some of your own experiences. Sometimes your reading may raise questions. If so, write them in your journal to be answered later. This journal of your thoughts and feelings is to be brought to class for discussion on May 27, 1992. At the end of our discussion, I will ask you to submit your journal for my review and comments.

3. Interview with a Woman of Color

You are to complete an interview with a woman of color to learn about her experience as a woman of color in a white society. Some questions to use in this interview will be developed in the first class session. You should prepare your remaining questions after reading both When and Where I Enter and "Black Women and the Politics of Skin Color and Hair." The purpose of this assignment is to increase your understanding of women of color so that you can be a social worker who sensitively responds to the particular needs of women clients who are not part of either the dominant racial or gender group. Please complete this interview prior to the class session that focuses on

women of color. Information gathered from this interview should be shared in that class. You should also submit a tape of your interview or a written description of the information gathered from the woman that you interviewed. Your tape or written report should also discuss how your understanding of black women was enhanced by this interview. You should also report what thoughts and feelings you had in reaction to what she said during the interview.

Due Date: June 3, 1992

4. Genogram of the Women in Your Family of Origin

You are to complete a genogram for the last three generations of women on your mother's side of the family. Gather as much descriptive information about your female relatives as you can and weave it into the genogram. While you may present your genogram in a format which you prefer, plan to include enough detail about each woman's life so that the reader has a full portrait of each woman. Also, please discuss themes which you see that recur and connect these 3 generations of women. By learning about your own female roots, this assignment will help you see the value of such work for female clients. Learning about the life stories of women in one's family, helps women to recognize their similarities with other women. Through this work, women clients can become better connected with women in their families and with all women, and thus begin the process of reclaiming the self. Although your genogram doesn't have to be submitted until the last class, please begin working on it as you read Dance of Anger. Be prepared to share some of the life stories about your female kin during the second class session when we will focus on Lerner's use of the genogram in her approach to working with women.

Due Date: June 10, 1992

Grading

Your course grade will be determined by the quality and quantity of your work.

To earn a C:

Requirements 1 and 2 are the minimum requirements for satisfactorily completing this course.

To earn a B:

Requirements 1, 2, and 3 must be completed.

To earn an A:

All 4 requirements must be completed.

Course Outline

Girls are "Sugar 'n' Spice 'n' Everything Nice"....

Through individual exercises and activities in small clusters, you will reflect on the messages which were sent to girls in your family of origin and childhood world. Officially, these are known as socialization messages about appropriate female behavior. You will also assess how much those messages are a part of who you are now and how they influence your present behavior—including your work with clients. This session will conclude with the film: "Making Points." Based on a Girls Club of America national study of adolescent girls, this movie shows what current girls' attitudes are toward females and female roles.

Read:

"Women and Power," by Jean Baker Miller in Women, Power, and Therapy, Marjorie Braude, editor. New York: Haworth Press, 1988.

Theoretical Perspectives and Social Work Practice with Women

We will examine the explicit and/or implicit messages about women which are expressed by the three major theoretical perspectives about human behavior - psychoanalytic, behavioral, and humanistic. We will discuss each theory's values and beliefs about the nature of women, and the philosophy of treatment which results from those values and beliefs. We will contrast these traditional approaches of treatment to a feminist philosophy of treatment. These traditional treatment modalities will also be examined for their appropriateness in social work intervention with women. You will have an opportunity to develop a framework for a feminist approach to social work practice.

Read:

"An Integration of Feminist and Psychoanalytic Theory," by Charlotte Prozan in Women, Power, and Therapy, Marjorie Braude, editor. New York: Haworth Press, 1988.

"Defining Feminist Social Work," by Barbara Collins, Social Work, May-June 1986, pp. 214-219.

Suggested Reading:

"Reflections on Gender and Psychotherapy," by Alexandra Kaplan in Women, Power, and Therapy, Marjorie Braude, editor. New York: Haworth Press, 1988.

"Gender Based Countertransference of Female Therapists in the Psychotherapy of Women," in Women, Power, and Therapy, Marjorie Braude, editor. New York: Haworth Press, 1988.

A New Approach to Women and Therapy by Miriam Greenspan. New York: McGraw-Hill. 1983.

In a Different Voice. Carol Gilligan. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 1982.

Therapy With Women by Susan Sturdivant. New York: Springer. 1980.

Understanding Women by Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach

"Reanalyzing Anna: A Century After the Talking Cure" by Paul Robinson in Psychology Today, June 1984, pp. 8-9.

Empowering Women -- Reclaiming the Self

In tandem with challenging the societal institutions that keep women in a subordinate position, social workers must aid individual women to reclaim the self. This session will examine how you can help women clients to learn about the experiences of their female family members and connect with the family of womankind. We will discuss how you can facilitate women's groups to share their life stories and learn how they are similar to and different from other women. As Harriet Lerner says, such sharing "allows us to go beyond the myths that are generated by the dominant group culture, transmitted through the family, and internalized by the self." (p. 223) We will discuss the practice skills needed to aid women to stop blaming oneself, begin to define oneself, and thereby reclaim the self that was sacrificed through the years of trying to be a "good girl." You can share what you learned from working on your genogram about women in your family. We will also discuss the use of such genograms in practice and see how it is used in the film, "Love and Work: One Woman's Study of Her Family of Origin."

Read:

The Dance of Anger by Harriet Goldhor Lerner.

"Women and Power," by Jean Baker Miller in Women, Power, and Therapy, Marjorie Braude, editor. New York: Haworth Press. 1988.

Empowering Women--Challenging Societal Sexism

This session will examine how women can positively express power. In her book, Toward a New Psychology of Women, Jean Baker Miller said, "Women need the power to advance their own development, but they do not 'need' the power to limit the development of others" (p. 118). We will focus on the patterns of our "stuck society" that perpetuate so many of the conditions and problems that diminish the power of women. We will examine institutional sexism and its effect on social service agencies and social work practitioners. We will discuss ways that social workers can (1) pursue change in the societal institutions that keep women in a

subordinate position; (2) use the power of institutions on behalf of women, rather than against them; (3) promote competence and independence in women clients; (4) create agencies and programs that recognize and respond to women's needs; (5) build "old-girl" support networks and group solidarity among women; and (5) teach women to use power positively for self, family, neighborhood, workplace, and world. In sum, we will discuss societal changes needed to recognize women as adults with strengths, talents, and multiple areas of competence.

Read:

Backlash by Susan Faludi

Suggested Reading:

Women's Reality by Anne Wilson Schaef.

From Women, Power, and Therapy:

"Arenas of Power," pp. 135-138.

"A Woman's Experience," by Marjorie Braude, pp. 139-144.

"New Models," pp. 283-286.

"Ten Years in the "Our Bodies, Ourselves" Collective," by Judy Norsigian and Wendy Coppedge Sanford, ppl. 287-292.

"Getting There and Hanging In: The Story of WCREC, A Women's Services Collective," by Jackie Yeomans. pp. 293-304.

"Women's Health Care: An Innovative Model," by Karen Johnson, pp. 305-312.

"Mental Health: The Elizabeth Stone House Alternative," by Ann Beckert, pp. 323-332.

"The Women's Clinic: A Viable Psychiatric Clinic in the Canadian Context," by Elaine Borins, pp. 333-340.

From Women and Mental Health by Carol Mowbray, Susan Ianir and Marilyn Hulce. New York: The Haworth Press, 1984:

Section 5: Innovative Mental Health Treatment Alternatives for Women: The Evidence

"A Stress Management Training Program for Low Income Women," by Debbie Marciniak pp. 163-168.

"A Community College Approach to Meeting the Needs of Women," by Mary Laing, pp. 169-174.

"Prevention of Mental Health Problems for Women in the Workplace," pp. 185-192.

"Advancing Innovative Mental Health Programs for Women," pp. 175-184.

From Women, Power, and Change, edited by Ann Weick and Susan Vandiver, Washington, D.C.: National Association of Social Workers, Inc., 1982:

"Toward a Feminist Model for Planning for and with Women," by Cheryl Ellsworth, Nancy Hooyman, Ruth Ann Ruff, Sue Bailey Stam, and Joan Hudyma Tucker, pp. 146-157.

"Issues of Power in Social Work Practice," by Ann Weick, pp. 173-185.

"Beyond Advocacy," by Betty Sancier, pp. 186-196.

"Issues for Women in a 'Women's' Profession," by Carol H. Meyer, pp. 197-205.

"Social Work Values and Skills to Empower Women," by Barbara Bryant Solomon, pp. 206-214.

Social Work with Women of Color

Information gained from your interviews with women of color will be used to discuss and understand their life experiences, issues, and problems. There will be discussion of the dual oppression of women of color and the many ways which they use to survive oppression. We will discuss the sensitivity which all social workers, particularly white social workers, need to work with women of color. Bring the assignment that you completed with a minority woman to class and share what you learned from this interview in our class discussion.

Read:

When and Where I Enter... The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America. Paula Giddings. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc. 1984. pp. 183-197 and 259-357

"Black Women and the Politics of Skin Color and Hair," by Margo Okazawa-Rey, Tracy Robinson, & Janie Victoria Ward in Women, Power, and Therapy, Marjorie Braude, editor. New York: The Haworth Press, 1988.

Suggested Reading:

"Black Women: The Resilient Victims," by Barbara White in Women, Power, and Change by Ann Weick and Susan Vandiver (eds.). Washington, D.C.: National Association of Social Workers, 1982.

Female Sexuality

Lonnie Barbach's For Yourself, will provide the foundation for this session on women's sexuality. A small group activity will heighten your awareness about your values and attitudes about female sexuality. There will be class discussion of some areas of sexual concern which female clients raise with a therapist, including difficulties achieving orgasm, not enjoying sex, and sexual fantasies. Attention will also be given to ways that you can ethically and sensitively respond to a client who is sexually attracted to you.

Read:

For Yourself by Lonnie Barbach.

"Sexual Exploitation of Clients by Therapists," by Gary Schoener, Jeanette Milgram, and John Gonsiorek in Women and Mental Health: New Directions for Change by Carol Mowbray, Susan Lanier and Marilyn Hulee. New York: Haworth Press, 1984.

Social Work with Lesbian Women

We will discuss the stages of lesbian identity formation and the "coming out" process. Following the film, "Pink Triangles," we will discuss homophobia and heterosexism and their effects on the lives of lesbian women. The oppression of lesbian women and some ways that lesbian women cope with oppression will also be discussed. We will examine some of the issues and problems which lesbian women bring into treatment. We will discuss the sensitivity which all social workers, particularly non-lesbian social workers, need when working with lesbian clients. Information about community resources for lesbian women in Indianapolis will also be presented.

Read:

Side by Side. by Isabel Miller

Suggested Reading:

Fried Green Tomatoes at The Whistle Stop Cafe by Fannie Flagg.

"The Role of "Coming Out" by the Lesbians in the Physician-Patient Relationship," by Susan Johnson and Susan Guenther in Women, Power, and Therapy, Marjorie Braude, editor. New York: Haworth Press. 1988.

Rubyfruit Jungle by Rita Mae Brown.

"Social Work Practice with Lesbians" by Joan Cummerton in Women, Power, and Change by Ann Weick and Susan Vandiver. Washington, D.C.: National Association of Social Workers, 1982.

"Social Work with Lesbian Couples" by Natalie Jane Woodman in Women, Power, and Change by Ann Weick and Susan Vandiver. Washington, D.C.: National Association of Social Workers, 1982.

Women and Mental Health: Needs, Problems, and Concerns

We will examine the ways women are viewed in the mental health system. This session will increase your sensitivity to the stereotypes about women which exist in the mental health field. This session will also examine cultural images of women and how those influence the mental health labeling of women, particularly those disorders which are frequently diagnosed in women. This includes sexual trauma, depression, eating disorders, hysteria, and agoraphobia. There will be discussion of both the underlying causal factors in these conditions and interventions--both micro and macro--which can be helpful to women.

Read:

"The Name Game: Psychiatry, Misogyny, and Taxonomy," by Paula J. Caplan in Women, Power, and Therapy, Marjorie Braude, editor. New York: Haworth Press. 1988.

"Women, Depression and the Global Folie: A New Framework for Therapists," by Gretchen Grinnell in Women, Power, and Therapy, Marjorie Braude, editor. New York: Haworth Press. 1988.

"For Counselors," in The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse, by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis. New York: Harper & Row, 1988, pp. 345-353.

"Female Alcoholism and Affiliation Needs," by Marjorie Moyar, in Women, Power, and Therapy, edited by Marjorie Braude, New York: The Haworth Press, 1988, pp. 313-322.

"Cognitive/Behavior Therapy for Agoraphobic Women: Toward Utilizing Psychodynamic Understanding to Address Family Belief Systems and Enhance Behavior Change," by Iris Goldstein Fodor in Women, Power, and Therapy, Marjorie Braude, editor. New York: Haworth Press. 1988.

Suggested Reading:

From Women and Mental Health: New Directions for Change, edited by Carol Mowbray, Susan Lanir, and Marilyn Hulce. New York: The Haworth Press. 1984:

Section 1: Sex Differences in Women's Mental Health Problems and Their Causes: The Evidence

"Prevalent Disorders of Women: Attempts Toward a Different Understanding and Treatment," by Teresa Bernardez, pp. 17-28.

"Women's Mental Health Issues: Moving Forward With Awareness and Program Alternatives," by Jean Baker Miller, pp. 29-36.

Section 2: Sexist Treatment in the Mental Health System: The Evidence

"A Social Perspective on Women's Mental Health Problems," by Barrie Thorne, pp. 45-50.

"Women in Inpatient Facilities: Impressions and Reflections," by Eileen Thompson, pp. 51-56.

"Women and Mental Health: A Community Viewpoint," by Rosalie Novara, pp. 57-63.

"The Killing Ground: Police Powers and Psychiatry," by Kelli Quinn, pp. 71-77.

Section 3: Diagnoses Applied to Women: The Evidence

"Example: Anorexia Nervosa," and "Case Study: Anorexia Nervosa: A Girl and Her Father," by Elliot D. Luby and Morris Weiss, pp. 79-90.

"Example: Agoraphobia," and "Case Study: Agoraphobia," by Robert Pohl, pp. 91-98.

"Example: Hysteria," and "Case Study: Hysteria," by Susan Lanir, pp. 99-108.

"Summary and Recommendations: Eliminating Sexist Treatment," pp. 109-120. "Conclusions," pp. 193-196.

Section 4: Women and Their Physicians: The Evidence

"The Case for or Against Diagnostic and Therapeutic Sexism," by Ruth B. Hoppe, pp. 129-136.

"Case Study: Women and the Health Care System - Patients or Victims?" by Carol T. Mowbray, pp. 137-140.

"Summary and Recommendations: Medical Treatment and Medication Practices," pp. 141-148.

"Redefining Concepts of Mental Health," by Janice Wood Wetzel in Women, Power, and Change by Ann Weick and Susan Vandiver (ed). Washington, D.C.: National Association of Social Workers, Inc., 1982.

"Depression in Women: Explanations and Prevention," by Janice De Lange in Woman, Power, and Change by Ann Weick and Susan Vandiver (ed). Washington, D.C.: National Association of Social Workers, Inc., 1982.

FINALE!

Review of what has been accomplished.
Evaluation of the course.