

SS5840: DEMENTIA CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLING FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Dementia Care and Mental Health Counselling for Older People

Subject Code

SS - Social and Behavioural Sciences

Course Number

5840

Academic Unit

Social and Behavioural Sciences (SS)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

Other Languages

Other Languages for Medium of Instruction

English, supplemented by Cantonese/Putonghua in live demonstration, skills rehearsal, and role-play exercises as situation requires

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to deepen students' professional knowledge, skills and values in working with older adults with cognitive impairment and mental health problems and their family caregivers; and to critically evaluate the current issues and develop appropriate intervention strategies related to health and social care for older adults with cognitive impairment and mental health problems in the context of Hong Kong. Various intervention approaches in working with older adults with cognitive impairment and mental health problems and their family caregivers will be discussed, such as narrative therapy, grief counselling, life review, cognitive stimulation therapy, validation therapy, etc. In addition, this course provides students with experiential learning activities to enhance learning and application of intervention approaches and skills. In particular, by working with older adults on their life stories, students learn how to help older adults improve their self-esteem and alleviate their emotional distress.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 DEC-A2 DEC-A3 app.)			
1	Explain the characteristics and needs of older people with cognitive impairment and mental health problems as well as their family caregivers from various theoretical perspectives.	20	x	x	
2	Analyse and apply appropriate intervention approaches in assessing and working with older people experiencing with cognitive impairment and mental health problems and their caregivers	40		x	x
3	Demonstrate assessment and intervention skills in working with older people experiencing with cognitive impairment and mental health problems and their caregivers	20	x	x	
4	Reflect critically on the policy issues and services related to cognitive impairment and mental health problems of older people and their caregivers in local context.	20	x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	Lectures will introduce the key concepts and issues in relation to cognitive impairment and mental health problems in older people, and provide skills for working with them.	1, 2, 4	
2	Experiential learning	Experiential learning activities such as life story work, online intervention, etc., will be arranged to facilitate students' learning	1, 2	
3	Group presentation	Students are divided into groups and work on a topic in relation to cognitive impairment and mental health problems in older people and to do a presentation of their work to the class	2, 3, 4	
4	Case Study	Videos of clinical case studies of cognitive impairment and mental health problems in older people will be discussed in class to facilitate students' learning of skills in assessing and working with older people with cognitive impairment and mental health problems.	1, 2, 4	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Life Story Work	1, 2, 3	30	Each group of students is required to conduct life story work with an older adult aged 60 or above throughout his/her life. The life story work is usually in the form of album consisting of photos. The use of AI allows students to produce creative and beautiful albums with written remarks.	Yes
2	Presentation & Role Play	1, 2, 3, 4	30	-	No
3	Term Paper	1, 2, 4	40	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Additional Information for ATs**Assessment Details****AT1: Life Story Work (30%)**

Students are required to divide up into several groups. Each group is required to conduct life story work with an older adult aged 60 or above throughout his/her life. The goal is to create a life story for an older adult to facilitate their life review, boost their self-esteem and/or alleviate their emotional distress.

AT2: Presentation & Role Play (30%)

Students are required to divide up into several groups. Each group is responsible for the presentation on working with an older adult with cognitive impairment and mental health problems. Role play is employed to demonstrate students' understanding and application of an intervention approach to work with an older adult with cognitive impairment and/or mental health problem.

AT3: Term Paper (40%)

Each student is required to submit a term paper of approximately 2,500 words on the critical evaluation of an intervention approach learnt in this course working with older adults with cognitive impairment and/or mental health problem.

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Life Story Work (Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Application of key concepts, knowledge and skills for a case study
Demonstrate intervention skill(s) in working with a case study

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent understanding of the key concepts and knowledge of the intervention approach;

Excellent application of concepts & knowledge for a case study;

Excellent intervention skill(s)

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good understanding of the key concepts and knowledge of the intervention approach;

Good application of concepts & knowledge for a case study;

Good intervention skill(s)

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Adequate understanding of the key concepts and knowledge of the intervention approach;

Adequate application of concepts & knowledge for a case study;

Adequate intervention skill(s)

Marginal

(D) Marginal understanding of the key concepts and knowledge of the intervention approach;

Marginal application of concepts & knowledge for a case study;

Marginal intervention skill(s)

Failure

(F) Poor understanding of the key concepts and knowledge of the intervention approach;

Poor application of concepts & knowledge for a case study;

Poor intervention skill(s)

Assessment Task

2. Presentation & Role Play (Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Application of key concepts in understanding the clinical features of a case study

Application of selected intervention approach in assessing and formulating intervention plan a case study

Demonstrate intervention skill(s) in working with a case study

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent understanding of the chosen mental disorder of the case study;

Excellent application of concepts & findings to a case study;

Excellent intervention skill(s)

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good understanding of the chosen mental disorder of the case study;

Good application of concepts & findings to a case study;

Good intervention skill(s)

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Adequate understanding of the chosen mental disorder of the case study;

Adequate application of concepts & findings to a case study;

Adequate intervention skill(s)

Marginal

(D) Marginal understanding of the chosen mental disorder of the case study;

Marginal application of concepts & findings to a case study;

Marginal intervention skill(s)

Failure

(F) Poor understanding of the chosen mental disorder of the case study;

Poor application of concepts & findings to a case study;

Poor intervention skill(s)

Assessment Task

3. Term Paper (Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Demonstrate an ability in applying theoretical concepts to assess and work with mental health problems

In the analysis and application, there is strong evidence of original and reflective thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent organisation and quality of material & Excellent analysis

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good organisation and quality of material & Good analysis

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Adequate organisation and quality of material & Adequate analysis

Marginal

(D) Marginal organisation and quality of material & Marginal analysis

Failure

(F) Poor organisation and quality of material & Poor analysis

Assessment Task

1. Life Story Work (Applicable to students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Application of key concepts, knowledge and skills for a case study
Demonstrate intervention skill(s) in working with a case study

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent understanding of the key concepts and knowledge of the intervention approach;
Excellent application of concepts & knowledge for a case study;

Excellent intervention skill(s)

Good

(B+, B) Good understanding of the key concepts and knowledge of the intervention approach;

Good application of concepts & knowledge for a case study;

Good intervention skill(s)

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Adequate understanding of the key concepts and knowledge of the intervention approach;

Adequate application of concepts & knowledge for a case study;

Adequate intervention skill(s)

Failure

(F) Poor understanding of the key concepts and knowledge of the intervention approach;

Poor application of concepts & knowledge for a case study;

Poor intervention skill(s)

Assessment Task

2. Presentation & Role Play (Applicable to students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Application of key concepts in understanding the clinical features of a case study

Application of selected intervention approach in assessing and formulating intervention plan a case study

Demonstrate intervention skill(s) in working with a case study

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent understanding of the chosen mental disorder of the case study;

Excellent application of concepts & findings to a case study;

Excellent intervention skill(s)

Good

(B+, B) Good understanding of the chosen mental disorder of the case study;

Good application of concepts & findings to a case study;

Good intervention skill(s)

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Adequate understanding of the chosen mental disorder of the case study;

Adequate application of concepts & findings to a case study;

Adequate intervention skill(s)

Failure

(F) Poor understanding of the chosen mental disorder of the case study;

Poor application of concepts & findings to a case study;

Poor intervention skill(s)

Assessment Task

3. Term Paper (Applicable to students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Demonstrate an ability in applying theoretical concepts to assess and work with mental health problems

In the analysis and application, there is strong evidence of original and reflective thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent organisation and quality of material & Excellent analysis

Good

(B+, B) Good organisation and quality of material & Good analysis

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Adequate organisation and quality of material & Adequate analysis

Failure

(F) Poor organisation and quality of material & Poor analysis

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

1.1 Understanding the biological and psychosocial issues of older adults with cognitive impairment and mental health problem

Symptoms and needs of cognitive impairment and mental illnesses; biological, psychological and social factors relevant to cognitive impairment and mental health problems in older adults.

1.2 Intervention approaches in cognitive impairment and mental health problem

Introducing various intervention approaches in working with older adults with cognitive impairment and mental health problems such as: narrative therapy, grief counselling, life review and reminiscence therapy, cognitive stimulation therapy, prevention of elderly abuse, etc.

1.3 Promotion of mental health in older people

Mental health promotion approaches in older adults, such as active aging and body-mind-spirit approach.

1.4 Ethical and legal issues in mental illness

Elderly abuse, Stress of family caregivers.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Youdin, R. (2014). Clinical gerontological social work practice. Springer Publishing.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Chan, I. K. N. (ed.) (2019). Innovation Impact: The foundation of community-based end-of-life care in Hong Kong. The Jockey Club End-of-Life Community Care Project.
2	Chonody, J. M., & Teater, B. (2018). Social work practice with older adults: An actively aging framework for practice. SAGE
3	Jackson, G. A. & Tolson, D. (2019). Textbook of dementia care: An integrated approach. Routledge
4	Keady, K., & Watts, S. (2011). Mental health and later life: Delivering an holistic model for practice. Routledge.
5	Lee, M. Y., Ng, S. M., Leung, P. Y. P., Chan, C. L. W., & Leung, P. (2009). Integrative Body-Mind-Spirit Social Work: An Empirically Based Approach to Assessment and Treatment. Oxford University Press.
6	Machin, L. (2014). Working with loss and grief: A theoretical and practical approach (2nd edition). SAGE.
7	McInnis-Dittrich, K. (2020). Social work with older adults: A biopsychosocial approach to assessment and intervention (5th edition). Pearson Education.
8	Scourfield, P. (2023). Social work practice with people with dementia. Routledge.
9	Vijaya Prasad, B., & Akbar, S. (Eds.). (2018). Handbook of research on geriatric health, treatment, and care. IGI Publishing/IGI Global.
10	Worden, W. (2018). Grief counseling and grief therapy-- A handbook for the mental health practitioner (5th edition). Springer Publishing Company.