

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

CONF 795: INTERVIEWING SKILLS –A NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE (1:0:0)

Spring 2010

Friday February 5, 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Saturday February 6, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Location to be specified (either O, Truland or PofV)

Instructor: Carlos Sluzki, MD, Professor, ICAR (csluzki@gmu.edu)

This is an elective one credit course for graduate students interested in building interviewing skills, essential in both fieldwork and research contexts.

No specific course pre-requisites are required.

Description:

This course aims at increasing the students' interviewing skills, based on the assumption that interviews are not only "data gathering" but transformative. For that purposes, the interview process will be deconstructed into components and each component will be analyzed and exemplified, with special emphasis on acquiring skills that would facilitate, in practice, to introduce narrative changes toward the construction of better-formed stories.

Objectives:

At the end of the course the student will be able to

- (a) identify the different components of a narrative
- (b) describe and analyze the different components of an interview
- (c) conduct transformative interviews
- (d) generate circular questions
- (e) generate reframings
- (f) formulate externalizations
- (g) anchor changes.

Lesson Plan:

The Saturday class will include the following themes:

- WHAT IS A STORY? (a narrative perspective)
- WHERE DO STORIES LIVE? (a networks perspective)

- THEMATIC ATTRACTORS: WHAT ARE STORIES USUALLY ABOUT?
- THE NATURAL HISTORY OF AN INTERVIEW
 - THE CONTRACT: ROLES, BOUNDARIES, GOALS
 - ACTIVE LISTENING AS A STANCE –“CURIOSITY”
 - DESTABILIZATION OF STORIES AS A TECHNOLOGY
 - FAVORING ALTERNATIVE STORIES (re-historing)
 - ANCHORING A “better formed” STORY
- ARE THERE STORIES THAT ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS? THE TRAITS OF A BETTER FORMED STORY

- In addition, specific interviewing / intervention skills that will be discussed and practiced include:
 - CIRCULAR QUESTIONING
 - REFRAMING AND RELABELING
 - EXTERNALIZATIONS

References:

(STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO COME TO THE CLASS HAVING READ HANSEN, 2003 AND AT LEAST ONE OF THE OTHER ARTICLES/CHAPTERS IN THIS LIST. MOST OF THESE REFERENCES CAN BE FOUND IN e-LIBRARIES [SUCH AS ALADIN]. IF UNABLE TO OBTAIN ANY, PLEASE INFORM THE INSTRUCTOR, AND HE WILL E-MAIL THE REQUESTED ARTICLE OR A SUITABLE SUBSTITUTE)

Cecchin, G (1987). Hypothesizing, circularity, neutrality revisited: An invitation to curiosity. Family Process, 26 (4): 405–413.

Cronen VE & Pearce WB (1985). Toward an explanation of how the Milan Method works: An invitation to a systemic epistemology and the evolution of family systems. In D. Campbell & R. Draper (Eds.), *Applications of systemic family therapy: The Milan approach* (pp. 69-84). London: Grune & Stratton.

Gadlin, H & Ouelette P A (1986/1987). Mediation Milanese: An application of systemic family therapy to family mediation. Mediation Quarterly, 14/15, 101-118.

Fleuridas C, Nelson TS & Rosenthal DM (1986): The evolution of circular questions: Training family therapists. J Mar Fam Therapy, 12(2):113-127

Hansen, T. (2003) The narrative approach to mediation. Mediation.com 9/2003. May be found in http://www.adr.gov/approach_mediation.pdf

Penn P. (1982): Circular questioning. Family Process, 21(3):267-280

Penn, P (1985): Feed-forward: Future Questions, Future Maps. Family Process, 24 (3), 299–310.

Sluzki, C.E.(1998): Strange attractors and the transformation of narratives in therapy. Chapter in Hoyt, M.F., Ed.: The Handbook of Constructive Therapies. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass. (in www.Sluzki.com)

Tomm, K (1985). Circular interviewing: A multifaceted clinical tool. In D. Campbell & R. Draper (Eds.), Applications of systemic family therapy: The Milan approach (pp. 33-45). London: Grune & Station.

Tomm, K (1987) Interventive Interviewing: Part I. Strategizing as a Fourth Guideline for the Therapist. Family Process, 26(1): 3-13

Tomm, K (1987): Interventive Interviewing: Part II. Reflexive Questioning as a Means to Enable Self-Healing. Family Process, 26 (2): 167-183

Tomm, K (1988): Interventive Interviewing: Part III. Intending to Ask Lineal, Circular, Strategic, or Reflexive Questions? Family Process, 27(1): 1-15

Teaching Strategies: will include lectures and discussion, and students' simulated interviews as practice. *Students are expected to come to the class having read Hansen's paper and one of the other references of his/her choice.* Students are expected to carry on an assignment and write a short essay that will reflect issues discussed in the course.

Grades will be based on (a) showing proficiency of readings assigned (*see parenthesis after "REFERENCES"; also please bring to class a one page note per paper read discussing your take of it*); (b) participation at class, and (c) satisfactory completion of an assignment, consisting in an interview conducted by the student and transcribed, and subsequently analyzed according to parameters discussed in class. The assignment should be send by e-mail to the Instructor within ten days after completion of the seminar. Feedback will be send within 72 hours, and a final text will be expected within a week of reception of the feedback. Assignment will be evaluated by quality of the interview and analysis, tracking of themes, cogent reasoning, and sound use of references.

Academic Honesty: George Mason University operates under an honor system, which is published in the University Catalog and deals specifically with cheating, attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Please familiarize yourself with the honor code, especially the statement on plagiarism (<http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html>). Violation of this code may have severe consequences in the student's

academic standing. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor. Essays/monographs may be randomly scanned with plagiarism-detecting software.

Students with Disabilities: All students with questions or concerns about this class are encouraged to set up a time to meet with the professor, preferably during the first 2 weeks of the semester. Any student with a documented disability or other condition that may affect academic performance should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 211; 993-2474; www.gmu.edu/student/ods) to determine the accommodations you might need.

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