UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Anxiety and Mood Disorders: Assessment and Intervention Techniques

2526-1-F5110P004

Learning area

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding
Classification of anxiety and mood disorders.
Second and third wave cognitive-behavioral models and methods for brief intervention.
Theoretical basis, technical aspects, effectiveness and fields of application of different strategies of intervention.
Applying knowledge and understanding

Promoting clinical competence
Correct use of the intervention techniques in the treatment of psychological distress in its different forms.

Independent judgement
Through the analysis of clinical cases, critical review of intervention protocols, and guided discussion of scientific articles, students develop the ability to independently assess the relevance and effectiveness of assessment tools and treatment techniques for anxiety and mood disorders. The course fosters critical thinking in integrating clinical data, theoretical knowledge, and evidence-based guidelines, and in formulating sound clinical hypotheses and treatment decisions, even in complex or uncertain situations. The examination methods — which include open-ended questions and the analysis of clinical vignettes — are designed to encourage independent judgement in the evaluation and planning of clinical interventions.

Communication skills
The course promotes the development of communication skills through in-class discussion of clinical cases, the

writing of diagnostic and therapeutic reports, and simulations of patient feedback sessions in both written and oral form. Special attention is given to the use of clinical language that is precise, ethical, and understandable, in line with international conventions and good psychological practice. The examination includes open-ended questions that require the ability to justify clinical decisions clearly, coherently, and with professional appropriateness.

Learning skills
The course provides theoretical and practical foundations that enable students to independently continue their clinical training, both in the area of anxiety and mood disorders and in other areas of psychopathology. Learning activities — including practical exercises, individual and group work, video-based case discussions, and clinical role-plays — encourage the development of an active and reflective study approach, useful both for advanced training (e.g., psychotherapy schools, PhD programs) and future professional practice.

Contents

The course aims to explore the diagnosis classification of major anxiety and mood disorders, and to present a review of evidence-based intervention models developed in recent years in the cognitive-behavioral and integrated ("third wave") models. The course is aimed at promoting the student's clinical skills and providing him/her with a set of intervention strategies to be flexibly applied to the treatment of psychological distress in its various expressions. A specific focus will be dedicated to the treatment of anxiety and depressive issues occurring in patients with neuropsychological problems and their relatives.

Detailed program

- Anxiety disorders and depression: classification.
- Rational emotional behavioral therapy - REBT (Ellis).
- Cognitive behavioral therapy - CBT (Beck).
- Metacognitive and mindfulness-based therapies.
- Anxiety and depression issues in patients with neuropsychological problems and their relatives.

Prerequisites

A good knowledge of the basis of Clinical Psychology and Psychopathology enables a more aware use of the course contents.

Teaching methods

Teaching (in Italian) will be predominantly lecturing in nature. In addition to classroom lectures, part of the teaching will take place through the discussion of scientific articles, case studies, and exercises and discussions on the course topics.
The material (slides and, when possible, scientific articles) is made available on the e-learning site of the course, so that it can also be used by non-attending students.

Assessment methods

The exam is written and consists of multiple-choice questions and one open-ended question. The final grade is based on the sum of the two components.
No mid-term assessments are scheduled.
During the course, optional attendance seminars will be offered, which will grant a bonus in the final exam.

Assessment of learning takes into account:

- mastery of theoretical and clinical content related to anxiety and mood disorders;
- the ability to select and apply appropriate assessment tools and intervention techniques;
- coherence in case formulation and treatment planning;
- critical interpretation of clinical data and intervention choices;
- clarity of expression and proper use of technical-clinical language.

Erasmus students may contact the professor to arrange the possibility of studying from English-language materials and/or taking the exam in English.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

The exam will focus, in addition to the slides and material presented in class and uploaded to the E-learning site, on the study of the following texts:
TEXTS TO BE STUDIED:

1. Sarracino, D., Ruggiero, G.M. (2025). Le basi della terapia cognitiva. 1. L’ABC e la terapia razionale emotiva comportamentale. Milano: Raffaello Cortina.
2. Beck, J. (2021). La terapia cognitivo-comportamentale (TERZA EDIZIONE, a cura di A. Montano). Roma: Astrolabio 2022. Capitoli 3, 6, 10, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18.
   FURTHER READING TEXTS:

- Clark., D.A., Beck., A.T. (2016). Il manuale dell'ansia e delle preoccupazioni. La soluzione cognitivo comportamentale. Verona: Positive Press 2011.
- Ellis, A. (1998b). Che ansia! Come controllarla prima che lei controlli te. Trento: Erickson 2013.
- Documento Finale della Consensus Conference sulle terapie psicologiche per ansia e depressione. Scaricabile da: https://www.iss.it/documents/20126/0/Consensus_1_2022_IT.pdf Allegato 4: pp. 52-64.

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING