UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Practical Class: Hospital Psychology

2627-2-F5111P024

Learning area

Models and Techniques for assessing psychological functioning

Learning objectives

Knowledge and Understanding

- To acquire knowledge of the role, functions, organizational constraints, and challenges of the psychologist working in hospital settings.
- To understand the impact of illness on the individual and the family system.
- To acquire knowledge of relevant theoretical models.
- To become familiar with clinical guidelines, regulatory frameworks, and professional ethical principles in healthcare contexts.
- To understand the characteristics of effective and appropriate communication within the patient–professional relationship.

Applying Knowledge and Understanding

- To develop communication and relational competencies necessary for working with patients in healthcare settings, particularly in hospitals.
- To develop communication and relational skills that support effective collaboration within multidisciplinary healthcare teams.
- To apply clinical interviewing and assessment tools in hospital contexts.
- To analyze complex clinical cases by integrating individual, family, and institutional dimensions.
- To simulate psychological support interventions in critical situations (e.g., severe diagnosis, end-of-life care, bereavement).

- To use basic communication skills in managing difficult interviews and delivering bad news.

Making Judgements

- To critically evaluate hospital clinical cases, with attention to psychological needs, relational dynamics, and organizational constraints.
- To integrate different theoretical models in case formulation.
- To recognize ethical and deontological implications in clinical decision-making.
- To develop awareness of one's professional limits and emotional responses in clinical practice.

Communication Skills

- To use effective communication techniques with patients, family members, and multidisciplinary healthcare teams.
- To actively participate in clinical discussions within multidisciplinary teams.
- To present case formulations in a structured and comprehensible manner.

Learning Skills

- To develop reflective skills regarding clinical experience.
- To identify and use up-to-date clinical guidelines and scientific sources.
- To consolidate a method of continuous learning and professional development relevant to healthcare practice.
- To integrate feedback received during simulations and in-class supervision activities.

Contents

The laboratory addresses the role of the psychologist in hospital settings, including clinical and institutional functions, communication in healthcare contexts, clinical interviewing and assessment, and psychological support in situations involving severe illness, end-of-life care, and bereavement, with specific attention to the mental health of healthcare professionals.
Clinical case discussions, video materials, simulations, and guided class discussions are used as core teaching methods.

Detailed program

The Psychologist in the Hospital Setting

- Role, functions, and organizational constraints.
- Integration within the multidisciplinary team.
- Regulations, clinical guidelines, and professional ethics.
- Systemic analysis of the institutional context in which the psychologist operates.

Impact of Illness

- Diagnosis and its communication.
- Psychological symptomatology in hospital settings.
- Attachment theory as a theoretical framework for understanding responses to illness.

Relationship and Communication

- Basic communication skills.
- The doctor–patient relationship.
- Delivering bad news (the SPIKES protocol).
- Managing emotions during the clinical interview.

Clinical Interview, Assessment, and Case Management

- Challenges and constraints.
- Assessment in hospital settings (context, focus, tools).
- The clinical interview as a tool for assessment and case formulation.

The Family

- Roles, boundaries, and functions within the family system (systemic–family theoretical framework).
- The family facing parental illness.
- The family facing a child's illness.

End of Life and Bereavement

- Uncomplicated and complicated grief.
- Psychological support interventions.

Mental Health of Healthcare Professionals

- Work-related stress.
- Burnout.
- Vicarious traumatization / compassion fatigue.
- Clinical symptomatology (e.g., depression, anxiety, somatization disorders, etc.).

Prerequisites

Basic knowledge of **Clinical Psychology, Health Psychology**, and**Psychological Assessment (Psychodiagnostics)** is required.

Teaching methods

•**Lectures** (expository teaching): 4 hours

•**Interactive teaching** (discussions, simulations, group work, case analysis): 24 hours

Teaching is delivered entirely in person and includes:

- Viewing and analysis of clinical videos.
- Guided discussion of clinical cases.
- Simulations and role-playing activities.
- Individual and small-group work.
- Self-reflective activities and case-based reflection.

The course will be delivered in Italian.

Assessment methods

Students — working in small groups — will be required to submit a written assignment based on a clinical case presented during the course.

Assessment will take into account the following criteria:

- accuracy and depth of theoretical knowledge;
- ability to appropriately apply clinical models and tools;
- level of autonomy in case formulation and clinical judgment;
- quality of communication skills, both written and oral;
- ability to integrate feedback and demonstrate a reflective learning process.

Erasmus students may contact the professor to arrange the possibility of completing the assessment in English.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Recommended Readings:

Bara B.G. (2023). Il corpo malato. L'intervento psicologico. Raffaello Cortina Editore.

Clerici, C. A., & Veneroni, L. (2014). La psicologia clinica in ospedale: consulenza e modelli di intervento. Il mulino.

Ripamonti, C. (2015). Manuale di Psicologia della salute, prospettive cliniche, dinamiche e relazionali. Il mulino.

Additional teaching materials will be made available on the e-learning platform associated with the laboratory.

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | QUALITY EDUCATION | REDUCED INEQUALITIES