

FAMILY-CENTERED INTERDISCIPLINARY PRACTICE

Professor: Carol MacKinnon-Lewis, Ph.D.

Hello, I'm Dr. Carol MacKinnon-Lewis. I will be your instructor in this class entitled Family-centered Interdisciplinary Practice. I'm really excited about the semester. I think we're going to have fun together and I think you're going to learn a lot.

I want to tell you a little bit about myself. I'm a professor in the Department of Child and Family Studies. My work has been in the area of social-emotional development of children. I've primarily concentrated on studying children within the context of their families, looking at parent-child relationships, sibling relationships, and how that affects their development.

In the last 10 years I've put a lot of emphasis on how their socialization in the family transcends that context into the school context. So I have done a lot of work on peer relationships, and in the last few years I've really concentrated on bullying and how that affects kids' social emotional development.

This class is laid out in a way that is really consistent with my teaching style. And interestingly enough, it's consistent with the philosophy of class. I'm very student-centered. I feel like that you need to have an active role in your own learning, which is really consistent with a family-centered approach, that the families have a very active role as a partner in their own treatment.

There's a philosophy that's associated with family-centered care. And it really is from the perspective of working with families as genuine partners. It's a very different perspective than what we held traditionally, where we think of the professional coming to the table, they're the expert, and the work was expert-driven as opposed to family-driven.

This family-driven approach is based on four core principles. And those principles and that philosophy, they're going to be infused throughout the semester in our classes. You will hear and see hints of it throughout.

This class is one of the classes we've been teaching for about seven years. Of course, we've revised it along the way. But what we found is that students actually learn more from each other than they do from the instructor.

Each week you will have a narrated PowerPoint. But that is only to facilitate and to guide the discussion. There will be questions that you will address. You will respond to your classmates' postings. And the feedback that I've gotten over the last few years is this is by far the most critical part of this class.

As I said, you can imagine when people are coming from different backgrounds, from different agencies, different organizations, with a different set of experiences, you're going to learn things

that you've never had an opportunity to be exposed to. And that's where the real learning takes place.

In closing, I really look forward to the semester. I look forward to getting to know you better. I look forward to us learning from each other. I fully expect to learn as much from you as you do from me. And I hope that you walk away after 15 weeks and feel that this was time well-spent and that it prepares you for your own professional development in a way that you would not have been able to do had you not taken this class.