Course Title: Working with Older People

**Aims and Objective**

This course is designed for students who want to work with older people as staff or volunteer at elderly care homes, community centers, hospital wards, assisted living situations, or care for older family members at home; as well as those who would like to further their studies in areas such as social work, counseling, expressive arts therapy, gerontology, cultural management, and have an interest in working with older people.

From this course, students will recognize and distinguish between different care principles, approaches, and methods, and how they affect the quality of life of the older people that are cared for. Students will gain skills and practice applying different communication, creative and expressive methods for working with older people, and learn to take into account differences in physical and cognitive abilities, and emotional needs when planning such activities. The final group project involves the students conducting a session either through a social service organization or in-class, in which students plan, organize, deliver and later, assess and reflect upon that session, using the methods, skills and knowledge learnt in the course.

**Intended Learning Outcomes of the Course**

On completion of the course, students should be able to

- IL01. assess and analyze different care principles and care approaches for working with older people;
- IL02. apply different communication, creative and expressive methods to improve the quality of life of older people;
- IL03. develop skills for working with older people, taking into account different physical and cognitive abilities, and emotional needs of them;
- IL04. gain practical experience in the planning, organizing, executing, and delivery of services;
- IL05. reflect upon one’s own practice and the practice of others for future improvement.

**Syllabus**

**Part 1**
Examining sociocultural issues and perspective regarding age / aging / ageism that could affect working with older people

**Part 2**
Introduction to different care principles and their connection to different practices of working with older people which include:

- a. person-centered approach – focusing on older people as individuals
- b. relationship approach – negotiating between independence and dependence
- c. group work
- d. how to take into account and work with people with different physical and cognitive abilities, and emotional needs

**Part 3**
Introduction to different methods of working and communicating with older people, such methods could include:

- a. communication skills and activities, such as:
  - conversation starters
- dealing with silence
- cultural taboos

b. creative work through expressive arts and their different potentials for working people with different physical and cognitive abilities and emotional needs, such as:
- singing and music making
- storytelling and drama
- movement and dance
- puppetry
- drawing

Part 4
Prevention care for those who work with older people
- issues relating to burnout
- care for the self for carers (caretakers)

Part 5*
Student-directed work in working with older people
a. students are divided into small groups, with each group planning and organizing a session in which they would work with older people using methods, skills and knowledge learnt from the course
b. conducting the session that each group has planned
- students would either do this in conjunction with a social services organization and deliver this as a service and work with older people, or, each group will conduct their session in class with other classmates participating and giving them feedback

*Experiential learning hours for this course will mainly come from:
Part 3: learning different methods to work with older people
Part 5: student-directed work in working with older people
with there being at least 12 hours of the 39 contact hours that students will be engaged in experiential learning activities for this course.

Assessment

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Assessment (Weighting)</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuous Assessment (100%)</strong></td>
<td>Class participation and In-class Exercises (20%)</td>
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<td>Individual resource kit + Reflection paper (40%)</td>
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<td>Group Project (25%)</td>
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<td>Reflection paper on group project (15%)</td>
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</tbody>
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Pre-requisite(s)

Nil

Required and Recommended Reading

Recommended readings:
5. Marshall, K. *Puppetry in Dementia Care: Connecting through Creativity and Joy* (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers)