

PSY 2603 - Systems/ Family Therapy

I. Course Information

Course: PSY 2603 - Systems/ Family Therapy

Semester Credit Hours: 1.5

Course CRN and Section: 23121 - D01

Semester and Year: Fall 2021

Course Start and End Dates: 10/18/2021 - 12/12/2021 Building and Room: Maltz Psychology Center - 2044

II. Instructor Information

Professor: Emily Jean Georgia Salivar

Email: esalivar@nova.edu

III. Class Schedule and Location

Day	Date	Time	Location	Building/Room
M	10/18/2021 -	1:00 PM - 3:50	Ft Lauderdale/Davie	Maltz Psychology
	12/06/2021	PM	Campus	Center-2044

IV. Course Description

This course will cover systems theory with emphasis on applications to marital and family therapy. General systems theory, and conceptualizations from such schools as the Bowenian, Structural, and Strategic will be considered.

V. Course Objectives / Learning Outcomes

- 1) Understand the systems and family theory
- 2) Learn techniques of family therapy

Competency to be acquired in the course: Trainees demonstrate competence in evidence-based interventions consistent with the scope of Health Service Psychology. At the end of this course students will be expected to demonstrate competence in:

1. The ability to apply the relevant research literature to clinical decision making.

VI. Materials and Resources

Book Url: NSU Book Store

Section Required Texts and Material:

TA: Brandi Weatherington bw969@mynsu.nova.edu Zoom link: https://nova.zoom.us/j/9769770497

Reading guide: https://nsufl.libguides.com/c.php?g=708089&p=5029902

- 1. Sexton, T. L., & Lebow, J. (Eds.). (2016). *Handbook of family therapy*. New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- 2. Gurman, A. S., Lebow, J. L., & Snyder, D. K. (Eds.). (2015). *Clinical handbook of couple therapy*. New York, NY: Guilford Publications.
- 3. MCGOLDRICK GENOGRAMS: ASSESSMENT+INTERVENTION, 4TH 2020

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EDITION by Norton. ISBN-9780393714043.

- 4. Bengston, V. L. (2001). Beyond the nuclear family: The increasing importance of multigenerational bonds. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63(1), 1-61
- 5. Story, L. B., Karney, B. R., Lawrence, E., & Bradbury, T. N. (2004). Interpersonal mediators in the intergenerational transmission of marital dysfunction. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *18*(3), 519-529. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1037/0893-3200.18.3.519
- 6. Klever, P. (2004). The multigenerational transmission of nuclear family processes and symptoms. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 32(4), 337-351. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1080/01926180490454962
- 7. Weiss, E. L., Coll, J. E., Gerbauer, J., Smiley, K., & Carillo, E. (2010). The military genogram: A solution-focused approach for resiliency building in service members and their families. *The Family Journal*, 18(4), 395-
 - 406.doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1177/1066480710378479
- 8. Yznaga, S. d. (2008). Using the genogram to facilitate the intercultural competence of Mexican immigrants. *The Family Journal*, 16(2), 159-165. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1177/1066480707313801
- 9. Miller, R. B., Anderson, S., & Keals, D. K. (2004). Is Bowen theory valid? A review of basic research. *Journal of marital and family therapy*, 30(4), 453-466.doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1111/j.1752-0606.2004.tb01255.x
- 10. Rosen, K. H., Bartle-Haring, S. & Stith, S. M. (2001). Using Bowen theory to enhance understanding of the intergenerational transmission of dating violence. *Journal of Family Issues*, 22(1), 124-142.doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1177/019251301022001006
- 11. Wycoff, S., & Cameron, S. C. (2000). The garcia family: Using a structural systems approach with an alcohol-dependent family. *The Family Journal*, 8(1), 47-57. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1177/1066480700081007
- 12. Negash, S., & Morgan, M. L. (2016). A family affair: Examining the impact of parental infidelity on children using a structural family therapy framework. Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal, 38(2), 198-209. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1007/s10591-015-9364-4
- 13. Mitrani, V. B., Lewis, J. E., Feaster, D. J., Czaja, S. J., Eisdorfer, C., Schulz, R., & Szapocznik, J. (2006). The role of family functioning in the stress process of dementia caregivers: A structural family framework. *The Gerontologist*, 46(1), 97-105. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1093/geront/46.1.97
- 14. Santisteban, D. A., Coatsworth, J. D., Perez-Vidal, A., Kurtines, W. M., Schwartz, S. J., LaPerriere, A., & Szapocznik, J. (2003). Efficacy of brief strategic family therapy in modifying Hispanic adolescent behavior problems and substance use. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *17*(1), 121. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1037/0893-3200.17.1.121
- 15. Lund, T., Eron, J., & Dagirmanjian, S. (2016). Narrative solutions: Using preferred view of self to motivate individual and family change. *Family process*, 55(4), 724-741.doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1111/famp.12207
- Cohn, A. S. (2014). Romeo and Julius: A narrative therapy intervention for sexual-minority couples. *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*, 25(1), 73-77. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1080/08975353.2014.8816
- 17. Gan, C., & Ballantyne, M. (2016). Brain injury family intervention for adolescents: A solution-focused approach. *Neuro Rehabilitation*, *38*(3), 231-241. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.3233/NRE-1601315
- 18. Smock Jordan, S., & Turns, B. (2016). Utilizing solution-focused brief therapy with families living with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*, 27(3), 155-170. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1080/08975353.2016.1199766
- 19. Fischer, M. S., Baucom, D. H., & Cohen, M. J. (2016). Cognitive-behavioral couple therapies: Review of the evidence for the treatment of relationship distress, psychopathology, and chronic health conditions. *Family Process*, 55(3), 423-442. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1111/famp.12227
- 20. Baucom, D. H., Kirby, J. S., Fischer, M. S., Baucom, B. R., Hamer, R., & Bulik, C. M. (2017).

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- Findings from a couple-based open trial for adult anorexia nervosa. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 31(5), 584-591. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1037/fam0000273
- Chapman, A. L., & Dehle, C. (2002). Bridging theory and practice: A comparative analysis of integrative behavioral couple therapy and cognitive behavioral couple therapy. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 9(2), 150-163. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1016/S1077-7229(02)80008-6
- 22. Christensen, A., Atkins, D. C., Berns, S., Wheeler, J., Baucom, D. H., & Simpson, L. E. (2004). Traditional versus integrative behavioral couple therapy for significantly and chronically distressed married couples. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 72(2), 176-191. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1037/0022-006X.72.2.176
- 23. Baucom, K. J. W., Sevier, M., Eldridge, K. A., Doss, B. D., & Christensen, A. (2011). Observed communication in couples two years after integrative and traditional behavioral couple therapy: Outcome and link with five-year follow-up. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 79(5), 565-576. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1037/a0025121
- 24. Doss, B. D., Benson, L. A., Georgia, E. J., & Christensen, A. (2013). Translation of integrative behavioral couple therapy to a web-based intervention. *Family Process*, 52(1), 139-153. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1111/famp.12020
- 25. Vanhee, G., Lemmens, G. M. D., Moors, A., Hinnekens, C., & Verhofstadt, L. L. (2018). EFT-C's understanding of couple distress: An overview of evidence from couple and emotion research. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 40, S24-S44. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1111/1467-6427.12128
- 26. Allan, R., & Johnson, S. M. (2017). Conceptual and application issues: Emotionally focused therapy with gay male couples. *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 16(4), 286-305. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1080/15332691.2016.1238
- 27. Vatcher, C., & Bogo, M. (2001). The feminist/emotionally focused therapy practice model: An integrated approach for couple therapy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 27(1), 69-83. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1111/j.1752-0606.2001.tb01140.x

VII. Course Schedule and Topic Outline

Course Schedule:

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
10/18/2021	Introductions - Seating Chart - Course / Syllabus review Family Systems History Genograms	1.Sexton Ch 1-2 2.Gurman Ch 1 3.McGoldrick Ch 1-2, 4 Genogram Video	
10/25/2021	Family Development Multigenerational Transmissions Multiculturalism	Sexton Ch 3, 5 Pick 2: 4.Bengston, 2001 5.Story et al 2004 6.Klever 2004 7.Weiss et al 2010 8.Yznaga 2008	Reaction Paper Extra Credit (3 pts): Meca Map

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11/01/2021	Classical Schools: Bowenian Structural Brief Strategic	Gurman Ch. 9, 12, 13 Bowen Pick 1 9.Miller et al 2004 10.Rosen et al 2001 Structural Pick 1 11.Wycoff, 2000 12.Negash, 2016 13.Mitrani, 2006 Strategic 14.Santisteban et al 2003 Bowen Video Structural Video 1 Structural Video 2 Strategic Video	Reaction Paper In class case conceptualization #1
11/08/2021	Social Constructionist: Narrative Couple Therapy Solution-Focused Couple Therapy	Gurman Ch. 10-11 15.Lund et al 2016 16.Cohn 2014 17.Gan 2016 18.Smock Jordan 2016 Solution-Focused Video Pick 1 (Adult) (Child) Narrative Video Pick 1 Video 1 Video 2	Reaction Paper In class case conceptualization #2
11/15/2021	Behavioral Cognitive-Behavioral Couple Therapy	Gurman Ch. 2 19.Fischer et al 2016 20.Baucom D. H. et al 2017 21.Chapman et al 2002 CBCT Video	Reaction Paper In class case conceptualization #3
11/22/2021	Behavioral Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy	Gurman Ch. 3 22.Christensen et al 2004 23.Baucom et al 2011 24.Doss et al 2013 IBCT Video Pick 1 Video 1 Video 2	Reaction Paper In class case conceptualization #4

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11/29/2021	Humanistic-Existential Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy	Gurman Ch. 4 Pick 2: 25. Vanhee et al 2018 26. Allan et al 2017 27. Vatcher et al 2001 28. Dalton et al 2013 EFT Video	Reaction Paper In class case conceptualization #5
12/06/2021	No Class		Competency Paper

VIII. Assessments

To assess the competency associated with relating research literature to clinical decision making, students will submit a paper that articulates a family systems conceptualization and application of a family –based intervention /plan of action while utilizing information acquired in class and a comprehensive review of peer reviewed publications in Family Systems journals pertaining to the treatment of the assessed condition.

1. Attendance, Professionalism, Participation

(Total = 21 points [3 pts x 7 class times])

A strong and active commitment to the didactic material, self-exploration, and experiential activities is expected for this course. The instructor will lecture on some material, but emphasis will be given to class discussions and class application of assigned readings. Please make sure you have read the assigned readings for the class, and that you come to class prepared to discuss, apply, and critique them. You are expected to be in class on time and stay until class is dismissed.

You will receive **3 points from the instructor for each class** during which your attendance and attitude meet the criteria below:

Attendance: Your attendance, participation, and professional behavior will be evaluated throughout the semester and will be reflected in your grade for "Attendance/Participation/Professionalism." Consistent attendance and participation is required. Your interaction and engagement in the class is essential to you as an individual, but also the success of the course. Your thoughtful participation will be evidenced by a willingness to respond to discussions and to ask questions that reflect solid thinking. You will receive one (1) points towards your professional behavior grade for each class in which you arrive on-time, are present throughout the entire class, participate in class, and meet the professional behavior guidelines. All classes will begin on time and the time allotted for breaks during class must be followed. You will receive zero (0) point towards your professional behavior grade for any class period in which you either arrive late or leave class early.

Class Contribution

Contribution goes beyond simply attending class, and includes demonstrating knowledge of the reading content via contributing to class discussion, questions, etc.

<u>Professional attitude:</u> Professional development is a broad and often vaguely defined concept that is intrinsic to your functioning as a competent mental health provider. For the purpose of this course I expect the following professional attitudes:

- · Accountability: measured through taking responsibility for actions, and adhering to deadlines listed below on the tentative course schedule
- · Collegiality: measured by providing, accepting, and applying feedback
- ·Diversity: measured through awareness, sensitivity, and fair treatment of all people regardless of demographic characteristics
- · Honesty: measured through adherence to NSU's honor code
- · Openness: measured by receptiveness to new material and experiences
- · Respect: measured by appropriate dress, punctuality, and maintaining confidentiality
- · Responsibility to Learn: measured by attending class prepared and active class participation
- ·Striving for self-improvement: measured through active learning and self-instruction

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2. In class Case Conceptualization

(Total = 25 points [5pts each X 5 activities])

On the dates listed above, you will meet in small groups to work together on a case conceptualization using the corresponding theoretical orientation from that day's lecture. Using the "breakout rooms" functionality on zoom, you will discuss together, and then return to the main room to present. The instructor and TA will take turns joining various break out rooms to observe and assess participation from all students. You will receive 3 points for your participation in this class activity for a total of 18 possible points across the six in class activities occurring in the semester.

3. Reaction Papers (Canvas)

(Total = 24 [4pts each X 6 papers])

You are expected to write a reaction related to the assigned reading(s) prior to class. These reaction responses will be used in class to support our discussions and should be thoughtful critiques of clinical, theoretical, and/or methodologies issues, considerations for applications, and/or questions that may still need to be answered on a given topic. To earn credit, these reactions should touch on each assigned reading and should not be a summary or rephrasing of the material. They should be brief, but complete. It is suggested that reaction papers be no more than 1 page single spaced. These should be posted to Canvas no later than 9pm the day before class.

4. Competency Paper (Canvas)

(Total = 30 points [15X2])

Based upon a case vignette, student will articulate a family systems conceptualization and application of a family—based intervention/plan of action. Student will utilize information acquired in class (lectures, readings, and discussions) and a comprehensive review of peer reviewed publications in Family Systems journals pertaining to the treatment of the assessed condition. Since families are complex, several approaches to family therapy might be possible and the decision process, treatment of choice, sequence of treatment, etc. must be justified based on the literature. The paper will include the case conceptualization, the integration of family systems theory and relevant research, treatment plan and references. The final paper should be no more than 10 pages (not including title page and references) and submitted via Canvas by the due date.

IX. Grading Criteria

Grade	Points or Percentage Earned	Quality Points
A	93-100	4.00
A-	90-92	3.75
B+	88-89	3.50
В	83-87	3.00
B-	80-82	2.75
C+	78-79	2.50
С	73-77	2.00
C-	70-72	1.75
F	Below 70	0.00

Grading Scale:

Points

Attendance = 21 points

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Case Conceptualization = 25 points
Reaction Paper = 24 points
Competency Paper = 30 points
Total = 100 points

X. Course Policies

Course Remediation: In order to demonstrate successful acquisition of the competencies linked to this course (demonstrate the ability to apply the relevant research literature to clinical decision making), students must obtain a score of 80% or better on the rubric assessing this competency. Failure to obtain this minimal level of achievement will require one remediation attempt with the instructor of this course as described in the rubric. If a student fails to attain the competency at the end of the specified period determined by the instructor, the Director of Academic Affairs, in consultation with the faculty member for the course, will establish a remediation plan in writing for a second attempt at remediation. If a student does not attain the required competency/competencies by the specified end of the second remediation period, the student will be referred to a joint meeting with the Director of Clinical Training and the Director of Academic Affairs for evaluation of suitability to continue matriculation in the program and the directors will make a recommendation to the department chair.

Course Roster: This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you go by a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Using correct gender pronouns is important to me, so you are encouraged to share your pronouns with me and correct me if a mistake is made. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Course Expectations: I am committed to the principle of universal learning and to creating a course that is inclusive in its design. This means that our classroom, our virtual spaces, and our interactions be as inclusive as possible for students from all backgrounds and perspectives. Mutual respect, civility, and the ability to listen to others are crucial. If you encounter barriers, please let me know immediately so we can determine if there is a adjustment that can be made. I am happy to consider creative solutions as long as they do not compromise the intent of the assessment or learning activity. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

XI. University Policies

Academic Integrity: The University is an academic community and expects its students to manifest a commitment to academic integrity through rigid observance of standards for academic honesty. The following acts violate the academic honesty standards:

- 1. Cheating—intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
- 2. Fabrication—intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- 3. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty—intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of this code.
- 4. Plagiarism—the adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, or statements of another person as one's own without proper acknowledgement.

Instructor's Statement: The instructor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus schedule as necessary to meet the needs of this particular class. Changes will be communicated with students in a timely manner. It is your responsibility to keep informed about discussion topics and assignments. If in doubt, check with your instructor. Please remember to retain your syllabi after completion of the program; as it may be required in the future for certification and/or licensure purposes.

Personal Counseling: If you find that issues such as personal problems, career indecision, and time management difficulties are adversely impacting your successful progress at NSU, please contact the

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NSU Henderson Student Counseling Services at (954) 262-7050 or (954) 424-6911 for assistance. All NSU students are provided ten sessions at no charge.

Tutoring: Writing support is available through NSU's tutoring services. The tutor can assist with brainstorming and research, APA style, grammar, structuring, and formatting of papers. For more information, please call (954) 262-8350 or visit the tutoring website at http://nova.edu/tutoring-testing/tutoring-services/.

Disability Services: Candidates seeking accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the Office of Student Disability Services prior to the commencement of classes to discuss their needs. To obtain more information from the Office of Student Disability Services, please call (954) 262-7185, email disabilityservices@nova.edu, or visit their website at http://nova.edu/disabilityservices.

NSU'S Veterans Resource Center (VRC): links veterans with university and community resources, as well as provides a welcoming environment for student-veterans to meet, relax, and gather. The VRC is located on the second floor of the Rosenthal Building in Room 218. The room is open from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., seven days a week. For more information about NSU's Veterans Resource Center, please contact Kelsey De Santis NSU's Veterans Resource Center Coordinator email kd835@nova.edu or vrc@nova.edu, call (954) 262-FLAG (3524), or visit nova.edu/veterans.

Cellular Phone Policy: The university recognizes the growing trend regarding student possession of cellular phones and electronic devices with video, camera, or voice recording capabilities. In support of each individual's reasonable expectation of privacy, the copyright and intellectual property laws, the use of these cellular phone features by NSU students must be in conjunction with express consent. Students are forbidden to video, use camera or voice recordings without the express consent of the subject(s) being photographed or recorded.

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XII. Appendix/Appendices

PSY 2602: Systems and Family Therapy Paper
Intervention Competency: Demonstrate the ability to apply the relevant research literature to clinical decision making

clinical decision	Met		Partially Met		Not Met		Score
	5	4	3	2	1	0	(0-5)
1.Relevance of Concepts: Student describes family systems theory and its relevance for the clinical population	Student clearly accurately des systems and fa concepts that a the treatment of (e.g. interperson complementaric causality, feedly triangles, family rules, process/contensecond order of morphostasis a morphogenesis of family systems is highlighexplored in det	cribes general amily systems are relevant to of this case onal context, ity, circular back loops, y structure, at, first and change, and a). Relevance ms to the otted and	Students dem only limited or understanding concepts and to this case. It systems concapparent but the relevance to the transparent of the explored in the expl	r basic g of systems their relation Family epts their this case is			
2. Literature Review: Reference selection demonstrates understanding of family systems research literature The literature review cites relevant research, recognizes bias within the literature, and presents this literature in a well- organized, concise manner. All critical literature that applied to the case was noted and explained in detail.		The literature review cites some but not all relevant research. There was minimum recognition of bias or critical inquiry. Key references or work that was relevant to the case was left out or incompletely explained. Alternately, the aforementioned things were done, but were not well organized or explained. Articles were not family systems based, and student was unable to identify central family systems concepts in the articles.		ems student to tral ems			

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	Met		Partially Met		Not Met		Score
	5	4	3	2	1	0	(0-5)
3.Evaluation and Application: Students shows critical evaluation of research body and its application to the chosen vignette and clinical condition in the decision making process	Student shows critical evaluat carefully integrapher the body knowledge accelass. The liter not only descriptes arch, but edetail its applical clinical decision intervention in	ion skills, rating into the of quired in rature review bes relevant explores in ation to n-making and	Demonstrates skill in selecting evaluating far research to mainformation not however, the insufficient less attention paid family systems are applied in treatment of the Concepts maindescribed in displaced in disp	ng and mily systems neet need. re is an vel of to how the as concepts the his case. y be letail but the nical ing is not	Student simply repeats information without question, dismisses evidence without justification, does not distinguish between fact and opinion, does not appropriately cite, or citations are inappropriate/ not related to the topic. General absence of any application of family concept to clinical decisionmaking in this case.		
Total Score (Max = 15; 12 needed to pass competency)							

Assignment: Based upon a case vignette, student will articulate a family systems conceptualization and application of a family –based intervention /plan of action. Student will utilize information acquired in class (lectures, readings, and discussions) and a comprehensive review of peer reviewed publications in Family Systems journals pertaining to the treatment of the assessed condition. Since families are complex, several approaches to family therapy might be possible and the decision process, treatment of choice, sequence of treatment, etc. must be justified based on the literature. The paper will include the case conceptualization, the integration of family systems theory and relevant research, treatment plan and references. The final paper should be no more than 10 pages (not including title page and references).

A TOTAL SCORE of "12" IS REQUIRED TO PASS THIS COMPETENCY. Scores lower than 12 (average=4), require remediation before the

end of the semester. Remediation should ensure that the student achieves a score a score of 12 or better. Please use the rubric above to guide your remediation efforts.

FEEDBACK FOR STUDENT/INSTRUCTIONS FOR REMEDIATION (PLEASE INCLUDE A CLEAR STATEMENT OF HOW THE STUDENT WILL REMEDIATE DEFICIENCIES AND IN WHAT AREA(S).

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faculty signature	date	student signature	date

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Vignette for Competency Paper

Julia is a 29 year old woman. She is the youngest of six siblings born in Colombia. The family immigrated to the United States just after Julia was born. She has a large extended family and most of them live in South Florida. She describes her family as "very affectionate, loud, and loving."

Andrew is a 30 year old man. He has one younger brother. While he identifies himself as an "Irish American," his family has been in the United States for more than four generations. His father and brother work as prison guards. He describe a lack of emotion and affection in his family-of-origin, in fact, he noted that there was a disdain for it. Andrew describes this approach to emotion as the "O'Bryan curse." He states that he liked the emotional closeness in Julia's family .They met eleven years ago when they were both working in the same grocery store. They were instantly attracted to each other. They were married within six months after meeting and now have two daughters, Samantha, 10,and Carly, 8. They describe their children as having "regular" problems and state that Julia is the primary disciplinarian. Julia stays at home to care for the home and the children, but works part-time jobs on occasion to bring in extra money. Andrew is a manager at a national grocery store chain and recently accepted a promotion which meant he would have to commute three hours per day.

Their presenting issue in therapy is that Julia "is always the last to know," about meaningful things in Andrew's life. This includes 1) the recent promotion, 2) a gambling habit, 3) a ten-year friendship with a male friend who Julia did not like, and 4) anonymous internet "chatting" that was sexual in nature. They say their relationship is "on the brink."

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