**PSYC 461 – DL1/DL9**

**Spanish Emotional Support Call Line**

**George Mason University Center for Psychological Services**

**Spring 2023**

Instructor: Thomas Deakin

E-mail: [tdeakin](mailto:tdeakin)@gmu.edu

Office Hours: By appointment, Online via videoconference

**Weekly Seminar:**

Wednesday 1:30-2:45pm OR Thursday 1:30-2:45pm, synchronous online format

This course will be offered online-only. Students will meet with course instructor via videoconference for seminar. The link to the videoconference will be emailed out to students by the instructor prior to the first day of class.

**Course Objective:**

This 3-credit, online course will provide undergraduate students with the opportunity to learn basic therapeutic skills and support the Spanish-speaking community. Students will learn how to build rapport, provide emotional support, and assess varied needs of individuals in distress. Students will apply skills learned in the course by answering the calls of Spanish-speaking callers in need of assistance.

This course meets the professional development requirement. Below is a tentative schedule for the semester. The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus and its content. Any changes will be announced in class and via email.

**Course Professionalism:**

Although the course is held online, this course is associated with George Mason University’s Center for Psychological Services, a community-based mental health facility. Undergraduate students engaged in courses associated with the Center are expected to present themselves in a professional manner while answering phone calls for the Center’s Emotional Support Line.

**Course Responsibilities:**

Complete approximately 9 hours of course work per week (3 credit course).

**17 Hours of Initial Basic Helping Skills Education**

Students are required to complete 17 hours of online and live-videoconference trainings that provide education about basic helping skills. Students complete the first 11 hours of education online at their own pace. Links to trainings are below:

* Online Training 1: **John's Hopkins Psychological First Aid Program (6 hours)**
  + <https://www.coursera.org/learn/psychological-first-aid>
  + *Verifying Training Completion*: Please take screenshots of the 'progress circle' that shows up at the end of each module. Add these screenshots to a word document with your name and send it along to me after you have completed both trainings. You do not have to pay for the course and do not need to take the quizzes for a score (although you are free to take them for practice!)
* Online Training 2 (**NCTSN's Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR) Training (5 hours)**:
  + <https://learn.nctsn.org/enrol/index.php?id=535>
  + *Verifying Training Completion*:Please email me the certificate provided at the end of the training alongside the word document detailed above.

Students must also attend 6 hours of videoconference training with the course instructor prior to the class. During these initial meetings, students will learn about the Spanish Emotional Support Line and receive advanced education about basic helping skills that build upon content from online trainings. Students will learn skills to provide validation and emotional support. Students will complete group exercises focused on application of helping skills (e.g., role plays) in order to demonstrate proficiency in emotional support.

**84 Hours of Phone Line Shifts**

Students are required to complete at least 6-hours of on-call phone shifts per week. We intend to have the phone line open Monday-Sunday 8am-8pm, but hours will depend on student availability. Students sign up for shifts online, allowing students to flexibly schedule shifts that work well with their personal schedules. Phone shifts are typically scheduled in three 2-hour shifts per week. Students should be in close proximity to their phone and computer with the ability to access a private space during phone shifts. During shifts, students are “on-call” and are expected to answer the phone when it rings. Phone shift responsibilities include:

* Answering phone calls
* Returning voicemails
* Returning text messages
* Documenting phone calls on a data tracking sheet
* Establishing contact with the next person on-shift at the end of your shift
* Consulting with the course instructor if questions or issues about the phone call arise or a mandated report of abuse or neglect needs to be made
* In the case of a mandated report of child abuse or neglect, making such a report with supervisory support
* In the case of a suicidal caller, completing a warm handoff to National Crisis Line

**14 Hours of Seminar**

Students attend the required seminar for 1 hour and 15mins per week during the semester. The class will meet Wednesday OR Thursday 1:30-2:45pm. Students select one course time for the semester. Seminar content will include:

* Discussion of calls
* Review of any administrative issues
* We will discuss different topics related to provision of basic helping and crisis stabilization, such as validation techniques, processes for mandated reporting of child abuse or neglect, and responding to suicidal callers.
* Practical application of helping skills (e.g., completion of role plays)
* Assignment of skill practice and reading assignments

**Course Materials:**

All students must have access to a computer and smartphone that they can use to attend seminar (i.e., log into a videoconferencing platform), complete and submit course assignments, and complete phone line shifts. Students are also required to download the Telzio application, the platform used for answering the Spanish Emotional Support Line phone calls, to the smartphone that they will use when on phone shifts.

**Course Requirements & Grading:**

All students must complete the preliminary course requirements. All students are expected to attend the weekly seminar, as well as all individually assigned hours on the support line. Grades will be assigned based on professionalism, reliability, participation in the weekly seminar, phone shifts, and class assignments. Grades will be determined using the following rubric:

* **Phone Line Shifts: Not completing all hours on the phone line will impact your class grade. For every shift missed without an excused absence or without timely accommodation, a student will receive the following penalties:**
  + **1st missed shift: one third of a letter grade.**
  + **2nd missed shift: an additional 2/3 of a letter grade and will have to meet with course instructor to discuss remediation plan.**
  + **If a student misses three shifts, they will lose one additional full letter grade on top of what has already been deducted and will again have to meet with course instructor.**
  + **If the student misses more than three shifts, they fail the course and are removed from the phone shift schedule.**
  + ***If you miss a total of four on-call shifts (demonstrated by texting both I and the individual on shift before you - this includes being more than 15 minutes late to a shift), you will fail the course and be removed from the phone shift schedule.*** *Please note that turning yourself ‘on’ in the on-call queue is not sufficient, if you do not communicate with the person on call before you it will count as a strike as there is no other way to determine if you are on call or not.*
* Seminar Attendance/Participation
  + **Attendance Policy:** Active participation in seminar is required for critical updates and lessons. As such, students in the course should not miss seminar. Unexcused absences will suffer the same penalties as you would for missing a shift (i.**e. one third of a letter grade for 1st unexcused absence, additional 2/3 thirds of a letter grade and meeting for 2nd unexcused absence, etc).**
* **Task Completion** 
  + **Timely and competent completion of all tasks and assignments is expected. If assignments are not completed appropriately, you will face the following penalties (**(**i**.**e. one third of a letter grade deduction for 1st missed/incomplete assignment, additional full letter grade deduction and meeting for 2nd (and any subsequent) missed/incomplete assignments**
    - **You will be given a 1 week grace period on all assignments. All assignments delivered within 1 week of the original deadline will be considered complete without any penalty. Work will not be accepted after that 1 week grace period unless exceptional circumstances warrant such an extension.**
* **IMPORTANT: PENALTIES ARE CUMULATIVE**

**Details and guidelines of each assignment will be announced in class.**

**Official Communications via GMU E-mail:**

Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

**Honor Code:** The Honor Code of George Mason University deals specifically with cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Students should be familiar with the code and connected policies, set out at http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies. This course will be conducted in accordance with those policies. The instructor reserves the right to enter a failing grade for any student found guilty of an honor code violation.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All accommodations must be arranged through that office, and must be initiated immediately, prior to any anticipated need.

**Psychological Services**

Life is stressful and we all need a little support sometimes. Students are encouraged to contact Counseling & Psychological Services ([caps.gmu.edu](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%25253a%25252f%25252fcaps.gmu.edu&sa=d&sntz=1&usg=afqjcng8hzd8gngrdj5qoletmi4fz7v_wa)) for assistance with any kind of psychological/life problem or crisis situation. I can help with referrals for students with particular counseling needs, so please feel free to talk with me for help with anything.

**Class Cancellation Policy:** Students are encouraged to sign up for the Mason Alert service to remain up to date on university closings. Any class cancellations beyond those necessitated by university-wide closings will be announced via e-mail at least 12 hours prior to the next scheduled class. Make-up classes will be scheduled according to announced university policy, or on an ad hoc basis (if needed).

**Add/Drop Deadlines:**

* Last day to add: Monday, January 30
* Last day to Drop with 100% Tuition Refund: Monday, Feb 6
* Last Day to Drop with 50% Refund: Monday, Feb 13

**Tentative Class Schedule (instructor reserves the right to change):** Dates below are for the Wednesday section. Thursday section will follow the same tentative syllabus but meeting dates will be the following day (i.e. First day of Thursday section is January 26th).

| **Date** | **Class Activity** | **Assignment/Reading Due** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| January 4 | 1st Videoconference Training 6-8PM: Introduction to the Line and Review of Basic Support Skills |  |
| January 11 | 2nd Videoconference Training 6-8PM | * Review call outline * Listen to audio tape of a complete emotional support call (25 min) attached above   + Take notes on what the volunteer did well and what the volunteer needs to work on |
| January 18 | 3rd Videoconference Training 6-8PM | * Complete the Emotional Support Skills Practice Sheet attached above * Practice 2-3 role plays with peers, friends, or family members. You can ask someone to tell you about something that's been bothering them. I'd recommend you don't have friends/family "act", as it usually ends up getting silly! 🙂 |
| January 25 | First Day of Seminar (Getting to know each other, Introduction to Course, Continue Role-Play Practice) |  |
| February 1 | Managing Suicidal Callers/Signing up for Telzio | * Online Trainings Due * Practice 2-3 role plays with peers, friends, or family members (IDEALLY IN SPANISH) * Review Suicide Callers Procedure |
| February 8 | Mandated Reporting of Abuse and Neglect | * Download Telzio and complete test calls (**Role-Play #2)** * Set up your on-call folder(s). When you're on call and out and about you want to have access to all the important materials you need. Print out relevant documents and add them to a physical on call folder. * Review Google Drive – look at demographics page, contact info * Sign up for on-call shifts (if approved) * CPS Abuse Reading |
| February 15 | Call Supervision/General Discussion/Catch-up/Check-in with students/Learn Coping Skills/Review Previous Call Examples | * Practice Assessment on Line Protocols * Review Examples of Previous Calls & Follow-up * Review the Coping Skills outline and associated worksheets (worksheets can be found in the compressed file labeled 'skills'). |
| February 22 | Call Supervision/General Discussion/Catch-up/Check-in with students/Learn Coping Skills/Review Previous Call Examples | * Any remaining items from previous week |
| March 1 | Full Practice Calls | * Prepare for Full Practice Calls |
| March 8 | Full Practice Calls | * Prepare for Full Practice Calls |
| **SPRING BREAK** |  |  |
| AT THIS POINT, I WILL ASSESS WHERE WE ARE AS A CLASS. BELOW ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THINGS THAT WE COULD DO IF WE ARE ALL FEELING COMFORTABLE WITH OUR ABILITY TO PROVIDE EXCELLENT SUPPORT ON THE LINE. I WILL ASSESS CLASS PREFERENCE AND PROCEED ACCORDINGLY WITH TOPICS BELOW (AS WELL AS ANY OTHER TOPIC OF INTEREST) | | |
| March 22 | Psychological Support Skills/Coping Skills | * Practice any coping strategies or techniques that we need more work with |
| March 29 | Self-Care | * Practice deep breathing daily for 5 minutes * Read Self-Care tip sheet |
| April 5 | Managing Difficult Callers/Behavior Limit Setting | * Practice using Coping Skills when needed |
| April 12 | Supporting Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence | * IPV Reading |
| April 19 | Sexual Violence Part 1 | * Practice Pleasant Activities (3X) * Sexual Violence Reading |
| April 26 | Sexual Violence Part 2 |  |
| May 3 | Wrap up and Celebration! | * Practice TIP skill when distressed (2X) |