

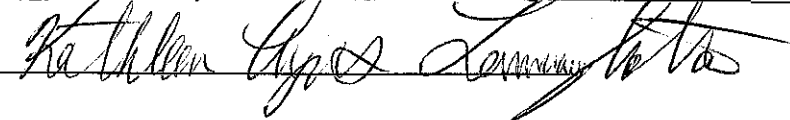
Proposal for Change in Class Size

Discipline: Chemical Dependency Counseling

Course: CDC 255 Field Practicum

Recommended Change: From 26 To 15

Name of author of proposal: Kathleen Ayers Lanzillotta, CDC Program Coordinator

Signature of author of proposal: 

I. Rationale for the change:

The Chemical Dependency Counseling program is requesting to reduce the number of students for the CDC 255 Field Practicum or Cooperative Education in Chemical Dependency course maximum enrollment to from 26 to 15. The classroom lecture component of the course is run for 1hr 50mins per week.

The class size for this course has a direct impact on the student's ability to effectively achieve the following course learning outcomes:

- Discuss the clinical problems that they are encountering and work out ways of resolving these problems through a group case conference process with fellow classmates and instructor
- Summarize and comment on their daily in-clinic experience through a journal or diary which will be kept for the entire placement time

This classroom session is conducted like a group supervision session for direct care counselors working in an OASAS licensed treatment setting. Students sit in a circle and the instructor facilitates group interactions. The group supervision process provides opportunity for feedback from peers which enhances the learning experience for students. This type of classroom setting creates a dynamic that mirrors the group counseling process and gives a sense of connectedness and recognition for students that they are not alone with their issues and concerns. By conducting the course in this manner it affords students the opportunity for an open and honest self-exploration process which strengthens their growth in the profession as chemical dependency counselors. The class provides students with critical feedback from the instructor and peers and allows each student to openly share feedback they are also receiving from their field site supervisors. In order to most effectively achieve these learning outcomes, the size of the class/group is very important. If the group is larger than 15, the group process can break down and the benefits associated with personal introspection are diminished. If the group is larger than 15, the class can become a more didactic presentation where students must raise their hand to be recognized and the group supervision process breaks down.

II Summarize the appropriate published research which supports a change in the current class size. Attach a copy of the research to this form.

Research in both the process of group supervision and group counseling all say the optimal group size does not exceed 15 people.

According to David J Powell, one of the leading authorities on clinical supervision in alcohol and drug abuse counseling, “group supervision is defined as a format in which a supervisor oversees a trainee’s professional development in a group of supervisee peers. The recommended group size is four to six persons, which allows for frequent case presentations by each group member. If the group is much larger and if one clinician presents a case at each session, it will be two to three months between presentations for each counselor, too infrequent to provide consistent growth opportunities. With four to six counselors, each counselor can present a case every other month – an ideal situation, especially when combined with individual supervision sessions. (Powell p.161)”

Additionally, there are many different publications that identifies optimal group counseling sizes: Practice Guidelines for Group Psychotherapy, The American Group Psychotherapy Association, Science to Service Task Force 2007 report on page 9 indicates, “Generally seven to ten participants”

The American Psychological Association website indicates, “Group therapy involves one or more psychologists who lead a group of roughly five to 15 patients.”

The SAMHSA Treatment Improvement Protocol TIP 41 Substance Abuse Treatment and Group Therapy states, “Fixed membership groups are relatively small (not more than 15 members)”(SAMHSA p.60)

The publication, Effective Group Counseling, ERIC/CASS Digest indicates, “The ideal group size of eight to 12 allows members an opportunity to express themselves without forming into subgroups.

According to the NYSOASAS standards and Medicaid reimbursement standards for group counseling in an OASAS licensed treatment setting, 15 is the maximum number of people allowed to be in a group session.

Powell, D. J., & Brodsky, A. (1998). *Clinical supervision in alcohol and drug abuse counseling: principles, models, methods*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass .

The American Psychological Association <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/group-therapy.aspx>
Ericdigests.org. (n.d.). Retrieved October 19, 2017, from
<https://www.ericdigests.org/1994/group.htm>

Substance abuse treatment: group therapy. (2015). Rockville, MD: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment.

New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services p. 5 (O)

<https://www.oasas.ny.gov/regs/documents/Part822GeneralServiceStandardsforChemicalDependenceOutpatientandOpioidTreatmentPrograms.pdf>

- III. Provide maximum class sized limitations for similar courses at similar institutions. Attach a copy of the documentation to support this data.

This recommendation to change the CDC 255 class size to 15 is consistent with the External Reviewer recommendations made by Sandra I. Valente, Ph.D, LADC, LPC, CCS, MAC, Coordinator, Drug and Alcohol Recovery Counselor Program and Professor of Psychology, Naugatuck Valley Community College, Naugatuck, CT. during the CDC Program self-study exit interview in May 2017. Dr. Valente's program at Naugatuck Community College prepares students to sit for the same National Credentialing Examination as taken by our SCCC CDC program students. She specifically recommended that our CDC program would benefit from a specific course in group counseling. Upon further consideration of this recommendation the CDC faculty agreed that our CDC 246 Advanced Counseling and CDC 255 Field Practicum course are the most appropriate courses to integrate this recommendation.

This proposal to reduce the class size to 15 allows the instructor to use the class group supervision sessions to mimic a true "group counseling" experience. Instructors will have a concrete opportunity to portray group counseling strategies and techniques with the class when the class size matches the established standard for group counseling.

- IV. Explain the impact on other courses in the discipline/program.

This proposal will not impact other courses in the discipline.

- V. Indicate the impact on staffing.

This proposal will not impact staffing. The CDC program has 1 full time Coordinator, Kathleen Ayers Lanzillotta who is also the Department Chair and one full time Assistant Professor, Susan Smoller. The program offers 2 sections of the CDC 255 class in both the Fall and Spring semesters and the sections are covered by the two full timers or adjunct faculty as needed. Historically the course was only offered in the Spring semester. We have expanded the course offering to both semesters and it appears to meet the needs of the number of students enrolled in the courses. We might consider creating a summer section of the course in the future as many CDC students leave this course to take at the end before graduation.

- VI. What is the fiscal impact of the change?

No fiscal impact

- VII. Mention any physical constraints which would affect this change.

No physical constraints. The standard classroom setting meets the needs of this recommendation

- VIII. What would be the total number of students per faculty member?

15-1 for this course. Course instructors work closely with field site supervisors where each student is working approximately 18 hours per week during the semester.