## **Social and Relational Work in Child Protection**

## Prof. Francesca Corradini; Prof. Maria Luisa Raineri; Prof. Valentina Calcaterra; Prof Elena Cabiati

## Module I: Models and methods of Relational social work (*Prof. Maria Luisa Raineri*)

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course consists in four modules: the *Models and methods of Relational social work* model is introductory and aims to present the overall conceptual framework in which to subsequently place the content of the other two models (*Assessment and relational investigation in child protection* and *Planning of shared practices in child protection*) which are more specific or applied. The applied part of the module is integrated by two workshops (*Social workers and lawyers: dialogic pathways for a possible collaboration* and *Managerial competences in personal services*) whose purpose is to guide students in the development of links between abstract concepts and practical/operational requirements of Social work, in particular those arising from their own possible field work experience (in the internship included in the degree curriculum and/or in previous placements or professional and volunteering activities).

The purpose of the model is that participants acquire the competences required to develop Social work according to relational methodology, through highly structured and systemic relational guidance functions, understanding their specificities and the links with some of the most advanced approaches and themes of contemporary social work: in particular, the critical anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory social work and the participation of users and caregivers.

*Intended learning outcomes*

At the end of the course, students will be able to point out the distinctive features of highly structured and systemic relational guidance practices, as well as to analyse them vis-à-vis real-world cases. Students will be able to identify possible oppressive dynamics occurring in relationships between social workers and users, and indicate how relational facilitation is a way to combat them.

***COURSE CONTENT***

1. Participation of service users and of caregivers in the international debate and the links with Relational social work.

1.1. The conceptions of participation in Social work according to the service-led, needs-led and users-led approaches.

1.2. Participation subjects: users, clients, prosumers, caregivers. In-depth study on the particular position of young caregivers: an interpretation according to the relational paradigm.

1.3. Participating in what? The various spheres of participation of users and caregivers.

1.4. Degree of participation: intensity (Hart’s ladder, Arnstein’s ladder revised for child protection); individual and systemic significance; different degrees of relationship.

1.5. From models to the field: the ideas of social workers on the participation of children, adolescents and families in social services for minors and participation “traps”.

2. Facilitate participation in a Relational social work perspective

2.1. Slightly structured and highly structured relational guidance: strengths and weaknesses.

2.2. Relational guidance at systemic level in the definition of services policies; analysis of guidelines and regulations from a relational perspective.

3. Anti-oppressive social work at international level and the links with Relational social work.

3.1. Discrimination, power, oppression in the context of Social work for child protection: introductory overview and conceptual developments.

3.2. Analysis of some forms of discrimination according to N. Thompson’s PCS model: economic status, gender, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, age (ageism), illness or disability (*disabilism*) discrimination.

3.3. The basic principles to combat discrimination and oppression on the basis of the relational social work paradigm.

3.4. Focus: the building of written reports from a relational and anti-oppressive perspective.

***READING LIST***

N. Thompson, Anti-discriminatory practice: Equality, diversity and social justice. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2016/2020

J. Warren, Service User and Carer Participation in Social Work. SAGE, London, 2007

I. Weiss Gal-L. Levin-M. Krumer‐Nevo, Applying critical social work in direct practice with families, Child & Family Social Work, 2014, 19(1), 55-64.

M.L. Raineri-V. Calcaterra, Per un social work anti-oppressivo. Riconoscere e contrastare le discriminazioni nel lavoro sui casi, “Lavoro Sociale”, vol. 17, no. 4, 2017, pp. 95-112.

M.L. Raineri-C. Landi, “Non scrivere riguardo a me, senza di me”: un progetto pilota sulla scrittura partecipativa delle relazioni psico-sociali, Translated from: “Don’t write about me without me”. A study on an Italian pilot program in participatory report writing. Oral presentation, 9th European Conference for Social Work Research, Louven - Belgio, 10-12 Aprile 2019. (this text will be available for students on the lecturer’s Blackboard page).

M.L. Raineri et al., Compliance o reciprocità? Come gli operatori sociali concepiscono la partecipazione, in V. Calcaterra e M.L. Raineri (edited by) (2021), Tra partecipazione e controllo. Contributi di ricerca sul coinvolgimento di bambini e famiglie nei servizi di tutela minorile, Trento, Erickson, pp. 17-54.

M.L. Raineri, Il lavoro sociale anti-oppressivo nella tutela dei minori. Considerazioni introduttive nella prospettiva del Relational Social Work, “Lavoro Sociale”, being published.

Handouts from lectures and texts of classroom exercises, available on the lecturer’s blackboard page.

Other optional articles for further in-depth study will be indicated during the course on the lecturer’s blackboard page.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The module provides for frontal lessons and brief individual or small group exercises.

 In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching and assessment will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students. (risulta due volte, anche nella sezione Avvertenze)

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

In this module, students will be assessed on the content of lectures, the reading list indicated in the programme, the content of the practical activities (which will be available on Blackboard).

Students will be assessed with a written exam which will consist in a paper based on an title chosen between two or more options, or on (8-10) open-ended questions, mainly on brief analyses of operational situations. The exam will last about 120 minutes. Students will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria: relevance of answers; adequacy of content; completeness and structuring of expressed concepts; presentation clarity and correct grammatical, syntactical and lexical accuracy. The Module will be marked out of thirty.

Students will be given a single overall mark for the course. The three Models of the Course will have the same weight in the overall assessment. In order to pass the final exam, students must obtain a “pass” after attending each of the two Workshops. Otherwise, before taking the exam students must contact the lecturer to agree on a suitable way for catching up.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

*Prerequisites*

The module’s content closely follows up on the “Fundamentals of relational methodology” course (Prof. Folgheraiter). Hence, in order to be able to follow the lectures and workshops successfully, students must have attended that course and have acquired an adequate proficiency in the related reading list.

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching and assessment will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.

Module II: *Assessment and relational investigation in child protection* (Prof. Francesca Corradini)

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The module aims to focus on the theme of parenting competences, providing an overview of the assessment’s fundamental elements, of the main contexts and ethical implications which social workers have to face Specifically, the issue will be addressed according to the *Relational Social Work Method*, through the presentation of international research and of possible tools for interpreting situations. There will be a focus on the assessment of coercive contexts, particularly regarding psycho-social investigation.

*Intended learning outcomes*

At the end of the course, students will be aware of the main content and pathways connected with the assessment of parenting competences; will have learnt about the various types of assessments related to the different professional contexts; will be able to distinguish and apply assessment tools according to the relational method; will have acquired the main elements of social investigation from a relational perspective.

***COURSE CONTENT***

– Content and steps of parenting competences assessment.

– Protection and family support models; how the assessment is influenced by context.

– Assessment of parenting competences; ethical aspects and key clusters.

– Social assessment and diagnosis: how to carry out the assessment according to the relational approach.

– What does undergoing an assessment mean? Presentation of international research.

– Professional assessment: a possible typology.

– Assessment tools: assessment indicators, scales and grids.

– Assessment in coercive contexts: psycho-social investigation according to the *Relational Social Work Method*.

***READING LIST***

F. Corradini, L’assessment nel servizio sociale. Metodi relazionali di valutazione e indagine sociale con i minori e le famiglie, Erickson, Trento, 2018.

B. Segatto-A. Dal ben-S. Giacomin, The use of discretion in decision-making by social workers at Child Protection services in Italy, European Journal of Social Work, 2020, online first, pp.1-11.

J.C. Dumbrill, Parental experience of child protection intervention: A qualitative study, Child Abuse and neglect, 2006, 30(1), pp. 27-37.

Lectures notes and texts of classroom exercises, available on the lecturer’s Blackboard page.

Other optional reading for further in-depth study will be indicated during the course and posted on the lecturer’s Blackboard page.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The module provides for frontal lessons and brief small group exercises.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The final assessment for this Module will cover the content of lectures, the reading list indicated in the programme, and the materials published on the lecturer’s Blackboard page.

Students will take a written exam in which they will have to answer some open-ended questions on the subject matter, particularly on operational aspects and practice of the Relational Social Work Method. Students will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria: acquisition of content, ability to apply content in operational contexts; presentation clarity and accuracy. The Module will be marked out of 30.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching and assessment will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

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Module III: *Planning of shared practices in child protection* (Prof. Valentina Calcaterra)

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The module aims to focus on the main structured forms of planning Social work interventions in child protection in a participatory and relationally oriented manner, both in the context of personal life situations and at collective level. Specifically, work practices listed in the programme will be presented and discussed, focusing for each of the practices on the operational methodology, purposely structured to promote reciprocity and participation in the planning of interventions, the facilitation functions of social workers’ interventions and the organisational conditions for their fielding, linked to the welfare system.

*Intended learning outcomes*

At the end of the course, students will have acquired the different forms of structured facilitation for the participation of children/adolescents, family members and citizens in the shared planning of interventions in child protection; they will understand the operational differences of such practices and application contexts; will we aware of the social workers’ responsibilities during the start-up phase and for the facilitation of such participatory practices for the planning of welfare interventions.

***COURSE CONTENT***

* Independent professional advocacy in the context of Child protection.
* Participatory planning of foster care projects.
* Family Group Conferences and possible application contexts.
* Dialogues on the future of case studies and for the development of communities.

***READING LIST***

V. Calcaterra, L'affido partecipato, Erickson, Trento, 2014.

V. Calcaterra, Il portavoce del minore. Manuale operativo per l’advocacy professionale, Erickson, Trento, 2014.

T.E. Arnkil-J. Seikkula, Metodi dialogici nel lavoro di rete, Erickson, Trento, 2013.

F. Maci, Come facilitare una Family Group Conference. Manuale operativo per le Riunioni di famiglia, Erickson, Trento, 2017.

Handouts from lectures and texts of classroom exercises, available on the lecturer’s Blackboard page.

Other optional reading for further in-depth study will be indicated during the course and posted on the lecturer’s Blackboard page.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The module provides for frontal lessons and brief small group exercises***.***

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The final assessment for this Module will cover the content of lectures, the reading list indicated in the programme, and the materials published on the lecturer’s Blackboard page.

Students will have to take a written exam consisting in the writing of reflections on a theoretical/practical topic. Students will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria: coherence of contentS in relation to the themes presented in class and described in the Module’s reading list; ability to describe theoretical concepts and also explaining their operational implications; presentation clarity and accuracy. The Module will be marked out of 30.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

*Prerequisites*

The programme is closely correlated with the themes presented in Module I, hence students are advised to attend the latter in order to fully understand the content of lectures.

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching and assessment will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

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## Module IV:*Cross-cultural social work* (Prof.ssa Elena Cabiati)

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The module focuses on cross-cultural Social work, that is Social work with persons, groups and communities belonging to ethnic minorities. The course aims to help students develop the sensitivity, knowledge, competences and abilities required to direct help action which respect to cultural differences. One of the objectives of the course is to stimulate critical thinking on the mechanisms and dynamics (often unintentional) which may produce or strengthen discriminatory dynamics, which are incompatible with the purposes of social work. Particular attention will be given to the needs and experiences of children, adolescents and families in the child protection system.

At the end of the course, students will have acquired the key elements of cross-cultural Social work, as well as the strategies which are useful for exercising an anti-discriminatory operational practice.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The following themes and concepts will be covered, both theoretically and methodologically, by the module:

1. Otherness and culture in social work

2. The historical roots of cross-cultural social work

3. Ethnocentrism and Cultural relativism: approaches and crucial operational styles for social work

4. The relational approach in cross-cultural social work

5. Language barriers and collaboration with linguistic-cultural mediators

6. Service culture, inclusion and exclusion mechanisms

7. The relationship between culture and violence in social work practice

8. Psycho-social investigation with migrant families

9. The cross-cultural variable in foster care and community reception paths

10. Assistance for unaccompanied foreign minors

***READING LIST***

The module’s reference text is the following: E. Cabiati, (2020). Intercultura e social work. Teoria e metodo per le relazioni di aiuto. Erickson, Trento.

During lectures optional further in-depth reading will be recommended to students.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lessons, practical activities and small group discussions.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will take a written exam. The exam consists in seven open-ended questions (depending on the accuracy and completeness of the answer to each question, 0, 0.25, 0.5, 0.75., 1 point will be given for each answer). An important final assessment criteria will take into account students’ ability to link theoretical concepts and practical/operational requirements.

In this Module, students will be marked out of thirty and this mark will contribute to their overall mark for the Social and relational work in child protection course.

 ***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

 *Prerequisites*

No prerequisites are required in order to attend this module.

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching and assessment will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.