

Child Life and Community Health

Rationale

Life course and child development are influenced by experiences. Stress and trauma have significant impacts on learning and developmental outcomes. Hospitalization and illness can be a frightening and stressful experience for children, youth and families. Understanding how to minimize stress and promote optimal development are important skills for child and youth care practitioners in the field and are required for child life specialists. With the prevalence of chronic illnesses increasing (asthma and allergies, diabetes, obesity) it is likely most CYC practitioners will encounter children who need supportive interventions in this regard.

Course description

This special topics course is the foundation to Child Life practice, Child and Youth Care work in hospital settings. The course covers:

- reactions of children and adolescents to hospitalization and illness
- providing emotional support to parents and families
- therapeutic play & relationships
- preparation for medical encounters
- pain management
- advocacy & working as part of a health care team
- transition to home and school re-entry
- grief, loss and bereavement issues

If you are interested in understanding the effects of hospitalization and illness on children, youth and their families and want to be able to support them during difficult times, this course will provide you with the theoretical knowledge to support your skill development.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, the student will:

- Be able to describe the effects of hospitalization and illness on

- children, youth and their families.
- Be able to articulate the role and function of child life specialists and related community health providers.
- Have knowledge of the various types of child life interventions.
- Be aware of the child life programs in Canada and how they link with community programs
- Have information on key child life resources and professional associations.

Requirements:

Students are expected to actively participate in online discussions, complete (1) midpoint examination, and (2) written assignments.

Participation & contribution to course discussions 10%

Midterm examination 30%

Child Life Assessment & plan 30%

Child Life or Community Health Special Project 30%

Readings:

Currently students are required to purchase the following:

Thompson, Richard H. (2009) *The Handbook of Child Life: A Guide for Pediatric Psychosocial Care*.

Gaynard, L. et al (1990) *Care of Children in Hospitals: A Clinical Practice Manual from the ACCH Child Life Research Project*

Additional readings are provided online by the instructor from a variety of journals & sources

Other information:

There are ten (10) units for this course. Each unit is standardized in terms of how the information and expectations are presented. At the beginning of each unit you will see a set of learning objectives, followed by activities and exercises for you to complete. The following screens present you with the actual materials you will learn in the unit along with step-by-step directions to help you integrate this new knowledge into your work environment or student experience. Assignment #1 and many of the activities are based on case study examples to enrich and contextualize your learning.

The Units are as follows:

- Unit 1: Introduction to Child Life and Course Overview
- Unit 2: Theoretical Orientation & Summary of Research
- Unit 3: Application: Assessment & Planning
- Unit 4: Interventions: Relationships, Families & Boundary Issues
- Unit 5: Interventions: Cultural Competence, Use of Appropriate Language
- Unit 6: Interventions: Play
- Unit 7: Interventions: Preparation & Pain Management
- Unit 8: Exam: An Integration of Child Life Theory, Application & Intervention
- Unit 9: Structure & Organization of Child Life Programs, Interdisciplinary Practice
- Unit 10: Transitions: School Re-entry, Hospice Care, Bereavement & Loss