

## Requirements for the Focal Paper – MHS 4408

### General description

From the syllabus: “An important assignment will be a paper, critically examining and explicating issues relevant to a selected behavioral healthcare practice; progress and final product will be shared with other students through a peer review process.” To do this, there is a sequence:

- Develop and submit a paper topic
- Receive feedback from me on the topic and be assigned to a Peer Review Group
- Develop and submit an outline to CANVAS and to your Peer Review Group
- Provide feedback on the outlines of three members of your Peer Review Group
- Develop and submit a first draft of your paper to CANVAS and to your Peer Review Group
- Provide feedback on the first drafts of three members of your Peer Review Group
- (Optional) Submit an improved draft of your paper to your Peer Review Group
- Submit the final draft of your paper to CANVAS

Paper topic: The term “behavioral healthcare practice” may be understood broadly. It could include not only specific interventions but also more general features or issues related to service contexts, activities, providers, and consumers. The topic will be one of your choice, subject to review. Take this opportunity to explore a topic that is of particular interest to you. Take particular care to select a topic that is **specific enough** to be covered thoroughly in 8 to 10 pages. I will give you feedback on your paper topic and used it topic to assign you to a Peer Review Group

Outlines: You are expected to develop an outline of your paper, and turn it in both to canvas and to your Peer Review Group. Use the outline to help you together your thoughts about how you want to present the material. An example of an excellent outline is available here: [Click here to download and review a sample outline.](#)

Peer review: All papers will undergo peer review: students are expected to share preliminary versions of their outlines and papers with a group selected in advance for similar interests, if possible, and groups will provide constructive criticism to improve the overall quality of the papers submitted. Specific instructions for peer review will be made available on the date that the Peer Review Groups are created. It will be on CANVAS as M6 Reading 2 - Instructions for Peer Review.

Students will develop their own material without active collaboration with others, other than through peer review.

### Important dates

|     |        |                                                                                                              |
|-----|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mon | Mar 9  | Submit provisional paper title & brief description (your topic may still change after this) M6 Assignment 1: |
| Wed | Mar 11 | Receive feedback on topic. Peer review groups will be assigned by me in CANVAS                               |

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|              |        |                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mon          | Mar 30 | Outline due online, also posted in Peer Review Group's discussion page. This is M6 Assignment 2.                                             |
| Wed          | Apr 1  | Brief comments due on outlines of three Peer Review Group members (I will assigned which three members you will review)                      |
| Wed          | Apr 8  | Full first draft of paper due online, and posted in Peer Review Group's discussion page. This is M6 Assignment 3.                            |
| Apr 8-Apr 13 |        | Window for on-line peer review of first draft                                                                                                |
| Mon          | Apr 13 | Peer Review comments due online for draft papers of three group members                                                                      |
| Mon          | Apr 30 | More polished draft posted in group's discussion page (Optional)                                                                             |
| Mon          | Apr 27 | Last date to submit paper; all material handed in electronically. Earlier submission is permitted but not required. This is M6 Assignment 4. |

### Originality

The paper is to be your own original work. If you have done some preparation collaboratively, you are encouraged to draw on each other's' work, e.g., by referring to conclusions or findings from other papers from your collaborators that support your own work. You are also expected to gain from the constructive criticism and other helpful input from other students in your peer review group. However, the bulk of your paper should reflect your own thinking, based on research that you have done.

Your paper should also be original work in the sense of reflecting work done explicitly for this course. It is all right to continue working in a general area about which you have written previously, but this paper should be fresh work. If you are developing further a topic about which you have written before, you must append a brief description of how this paper differs from previous work. In this context, copying material from your own previous original work will be considered plagiarism.

Papers will be submitted through the plagiarism-checking feature on Canvas, Turnitin. Preliminary information about the hazards of plagiarism and sources of additional information were provided on the first day and are available in the slides from that day. Additional information will also be provided.

### Length

Paper: 8-10 pages, double-spaced, maximum 12 point font, 1-inch margins, plus references, plus a brief abstract. Papers longer than 10 pages will be accepted without penalty; papers with the main body of the text shorter than 8 pages will lose credit. A partial page does not count as a full page. Neither the title page nor the abstract page counts toward the page length.

### Citations

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Citations should support assertions. At least 7 total, with at least 5 of these from peer-reviewed literature (journals), but others from authoritative sources as appropriate (including web-based material from demonstrably credible sites). A standard reference format should be used, APA, AMA, or ICMJE (see [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform\\_requirements.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html))

### Criteria

Content relevant to the concerns of the course; rationale & purpose clear

Clarity, organization, coherence, style, mechanics

Accuracy/validity: evidence/support provided for assertions

Evidence of critical thinking (e.g., see a quotation from the first class: “ask appropriate questions, gather relevant information, efficiently and creatively sort through this information, and come to reliable and trustworthy conclusions...”; or for more see <http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/defining-critical-thinking/766>)

Citations: of necessary quality and quantity to support assertions; appropriate; credible

### Other information

See other documents that may help you to develop your paper.

- Defining critical thinking
- Sources of help for writing papers