

pSOCIAL WORK RESEARCH METHODS

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course Number:	SW385R	Instructor:	Sanna Thompson, Ph.D.
Unique Number:	64280	E-mail:	SannaThompson@utexas.edu
Semester:	Spring 2014	Phone:	512-232-0604
Meeting Time:	Wednesday 2:30 – 5:15pm	Office:	SW 3.122C
Meeting Place:	SWB 2.122	Office Hours:	Monday 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm or by appointment

Standardized Course Description: This Foundation course is designed to help students gain an understanding of and appreciation for the use of research as a tool for professional evidence-based practice. Students are introduced to the concepts and skills underlying a systematic approach to social work research, including basic research terminology, the scientific method in social work, the value of research in social work, research ethics and the social work value base, problem formulation and conceptualization, measurement, research designs to evaluate programs and practice, sampling, alternative quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analytic techniques, and preparation and use of research reports. The emphasis in the course is on equipping students with the research knowledge and skills they'll need to engage in the evidence-based practice process at all levels of social work practice. As part of that process, they will learn how to critically appraise sources of scientific evidence and how the criteria for that appraisal will vary depending upon the purpose of the research.

Standardized Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Formulate answerable evidence-based practice research questions; **(PB22)**
2. Efficiently conduct advanced searches of electronic bibliographic databases and other sources to find evidence bearing on evidence-based practice research questions; **(PB22)**
3. Critically appraise sources of scientific evidence and explain how the criteria for that appraisal will vary depending upon the purpose of the research; **(PB22 & PB41)**
4. Discuss why research evidence needs to be integrated with practice expertise and idiosyncratic client preferences, circumstances and values in the evidence-based practice process; **(PB22)**
5. Design evaluations as part of evidence-based practice. **(PB21 & PB41)**
6. Explain how both qualitative and quantitative research processes apply in evidence-based practice; **(PB22 & PB41)**
7. Define basic qualitative and quantitative research concepts and describe the basic principles of causal inference, and their relationship to the various types of research designs; **(PB22 & PB41)**

8. Describe key concepts in measurement bearing on evidence-based practice, such as sources of measurement error, reliability and validity, and measurement equivalence across cultures. **(PB22 & PB41)**
9. Find measurement instruments applicable to evidence-based practice, sources of evidence bearing on the suitability of those instruments for specific practice scenarios, and critically appraise those sources from the standpoint of measurement principles and cultural sensitivity. **(PB22 & PB41)**
10. Describe the logic of probability sampling procedures, issues in the use of non-probability sampling procedures, how sampling issues bear on conducting evidence-based practice research at mezzo and macro levels of practice, and the implications of sampling for appraising and integrating sources of evidence in guiding practice decisions; **(PB22 & PB41)**
11. Describe how particular values and sensitivity to ethical issues influence the conducting of research; **(PB21, PB22 & PB41)**
12. Give examples of the issues that diversity (e.g., gender, ethnicity, culture, age, sexual orientation, race, class, and physical or mental ability) raises in the conduct of research and in appraising and utilizing research to guide practice decisions; **(PB21, PB22 & PB41)**
13. Critically appraise how social work commitment to equity and social justice influences and differentiates the social work research process. **(PB21)**

The School of Social Work has been continuously accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1952. In order to maintain our accreditation status, we engage in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE's Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Several required courses in our curriculum are part of this ongoing assessment, including this course. Below is a list of the specific Educational Policies (EP) and Practice Behaviors (PB) that are assessed in this course. The complete EPAS can be optioned from your Student Handbook.

EP2.1.6: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

PB21 Use practice experiences to inform scientific inquiry

Objectives 5, 11, 12, 13

Assignment: Papers #1 and #2, Single-Subject design activity

PB22 Use research evidence to inform practice

Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

Assignment: Paper #1, Group presentation, Data analysis lab activity

EP2.1.10d: Evaluation.

PB41 Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions

Objectives 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

Assignment: Papers #1 and #2, Exam

III. Teaching Methods

This course is designed to include a variety of teaching methodologies to achieve the expectation of student mastery of evidence-based advanced practice skill competencies as a practitioner-researcher. Learning activities will include readings, writing assignments, discussions, lectures, presentations, and in-class group and individual experiential activities.

IV. Required Text

Required:

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2014). Research Methods for Social Work, 8th ed. Pacific Grove, CA: Wadsworth, Inc. ISBN: 9781285173467

http://www.coursesmart.com/9781285173467?__professorview=false&__hdv=6.8

Use of Blackboard in Class

In this class the professor uses Blackboard—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu>—to distribute course materials and communicate online. Students can find support in using Blackboard at the ITS Help Desk by calling 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Please plan accordingly. **Readings are outlined in the course schedule**

V. Class Policies

1. Students are expected to attend class sessions and participate in an **interactive** framework between students and professor. Students are expected to **complete the readings prior to class**, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions. Failure to regularly attend classes and demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be considered in assigning the final grade. Students are to notify the professor if they are going to be absent. **Students are responsible for any material missed due to absences.**
2. Except in the case of extreme emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, **late assignments will not be accepted without penalty**. Students are expected to email all required assignments on the agreed upon due date to the professor. Assignments turned in after the NOON deadline will be considered late. If accepted, late assignments will be assessed point penalties at the rate of **5% each day the assignment is late**. If the due date is a problem, then the student should see the professor and negotiate another due date WELL in advance of the due date. Note that the professor will send a reply email when the paper is received; if you do not get a reply within 24 hours, contact the professor immediately. Email is great, but not ALWAYS reliable!
3. Student feedback is welcome. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback during office hours, by phone, by e-mail, and by appointment if they desire.
4. If students are concerned about their class performance, the professor is more than willing to work with students to help them find ways to improve their course grades prior to the end of the semester. **Final grades assigned in the course are not negotiable.**

VI. University Notices and Policies

The University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Professional Conduct in Class

The professor expects students to act like professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism.

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly

enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>).

Documented Disability Statement

Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Religious Holidays

By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to their e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

Safety

As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor’s instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you’re given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

GRADING SCALE

100 - 94 = A
93 - 90 = A-
89 - 87 = B+
86 - 84 = B
83 - 80 = B-
79 - 77 = C+
76 - 74 = C
73 - 70 = C-
69 - 67 = D+
66 - 64 = D
63 - 60 = D-
59 and below = F

A = 100 – 90 points Superior work: The assignment significantly exceeds expectations listed in the syllabus. Student exceeds what is required in the assignment and demonstrates a high level of in-depth critical thinking and analysis (i.e., writing is coherent, ideas synthesized and logical, discussion well developed).

B = 89 – 80 points Good Work: The assignment meets all the requirements and demonstrates evidence of in-depth critical thinking and analysis.

C = 79 – 70 points Average Work: The assignment meets the requirements or has minor gaps, but lacks evidence of in-depth critical thinking and analysis. Remember, a C- (73 points) or lower is noted as a course failure and will require re-taking the course.

D-failing = 69 and below Poor/failing Work: The assignment has important gaps, both in terms of not meeting the requirements and lacking in-depth critical thinking and analysis.

Grading of all written assignments will take into account the quality of the writing, as well as the content. The American Psychological Association (APA) 6th edition format must be used to format citations and references. Written material should be carefully proof read and errors (punctuation, typographical, spelling) corrected. Good writing requires an iterative process for quality to improve. It is strongly encouraged that you to read your paper several times and, if possible, have someone else proof read it. Graduate writing assistance is available.

Exams will include objective and short answer questions covering content from the text and class discussions. Exam will include multiple-choice, short answer, true/false and essay questions that cover all materials assigned and/or discussed in class this semester. Make up exams will be given for emergencies **only** and at the discretion of the instructor

VII. Course Requirements:

	<i><u>Due Date</u></i>	<i><u>Points</u></i>
Presentation -- EBP Review – Paper #1	Feb 26	10
Paper #1 -- EBP Review	Mar. 19	100
In-class graded activities		
Research questions for Paper #1	Feb. 5	10
Single subject in-class activity	Feb. 12	10
Qualitative analysis activity	April 9	10
Needs assessment/outcome evaluation activity	April 16	10
Mid-term Exam	Mar 5	50
Final Exam	April 30	50
Paper #2 -- Proposed study	May 7	150
Participation		20
Total		420

****EXTRA CREDIT *******

10 points

Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams

Students may complete the University of Texas “Human Participant Training” and submit a Certificate of Completion to the professor (**no later than Feb. 12th**). To complete the online training, go to the UT website HRPP training: <http://www.utexas.edu/research/rsc/training/index.php> Completing this training is worth **10 extra credit points** toward your final course grade.

Course Schedule

Class 1 **Introduction to the course:**
Jan. 15 **Assignments and expectations**

Class 2 **Basic Concepts of Social Science Research**
Jan. 22 Purpose and importance of research
 Generation of knowledge
 Role of Social Workers in research
 Reading: Chap 1, 24

*******Identify dyads for completing Paper #1*******

Class 3 **Evidence-based practice**
Jan. 29 Steps and rationale
 Reading: Chap 2

Class 4 **Problem formulation, Conceptualization, Theory**
Feb. 5 Research process & problem formulation
 Theory guiding research and practice
 Reading: Chapter 3, 7

*******Dyads create and turn in Research Questions for Paper #1 (10 pts possible)*******

Class 5 **Single-Case designs**
Feb. 12 Practice Evaluation
Reading: Chap 13

*****Groups create Single-Subject Design study- due end of class (10 pts possible)*****

*****Extra Credit Human Subjects Training certificate due by today*****

Class 6 **Group designs**
Feb. 19 Pre-experimental
 Quasi-experimental
 Experimental
Reading: Chap 11, 12

*****dyads develop design for Paper #2 - proposed study*****

Class 7 **Dyads Presentation of Paper #1 (8-10 minutes each dyad)**
Feb. 26

Class 8 **MID-TERM Exam (chapters 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 12, 13)**
March 5

March 12 **SPRING BREAK ☺**

Class 9
March 19 **Sampling theory**
 Probability/non-probability
 Sampling errors
 Non-sampling errors
Reading: Chap 15

*****Paper #1 Due by 12:00 noon - emailed to instructor*****

*****dyads develop sampling strategy/recruitment for Paper #2 – proposed study*****

March 26

Class 10

Measurement

- Measurement functions
- Variables – level of measurement (pg 479-481)
- Measurement error
- Validity & reliability
- Instruments and Scales
- Data collection methods

Reading: Chap 9

*******dyads develop measures for Paper #2 - proposed study*******

Class 11

April 2

Quantitative Data and Analysis

- Quantitative Analysis
- Descriptive statistics
- Measures of association
- Inferential statistics

Reading: 4, 21, 22, 23

******dyads develop ideas for what analyses would be possible Paper #2 - proposed study*******

Class 12

April 9

Qualitative Data and Analysis

- Qualitative approaches

Reading: Chap 8, 18, 19, 20

*******groups write-up of coding example - due end of class (10 pts possible)*******

Class 13

April 16

Program Evaluation

- Program level evaluations
- Implementation issues
- Internal & external validity
- Qualitative Analysis

Reading: Chap 14

******groups develop needs assessment/outcome evaluation - due end of class (10 pts possible)******

Class 14
April 23 **Research Approaches and Ethics**

Critique/myths of research approaches

Ethical and political issues

Human subjects' issues

Diversity issues

Reading: Chap 5, 6

*****dyads develop informed consent process for Paper #2 - proposed study*****

*******Review for exam*******

Class 15
April 30 **FINAL EXAM (chapters 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23)**

Class 16
No Class
May 7 **Paper #2 due -- emailed to professor by 6:00pm – NO CLASS**

Evidence-Based Practice Review
Paper #1
2-person Paper
100 points

(Due by email to instructor by Mar. 19 before NOON)
(Typically at least 10 double-spaced pages, not counting reference list)

For this paper, two students are required to team up to conduct a comprehensive literature review. The literature review needs to focus on the question “**Which interventions are the most effective in addressing the chosen problem, as measured by specific outcomes?**” Since both group members will receive the same points based on the grade of the paper, it is very important for them to work together. Each dyad must attach a paragraph at the end of the paper that describes the work each person did to produce the paper. In case the work load was questionably unbalanced, the instructor may assign a lower grade to the individual.

The paper should reflect appropriate implementation of all Steps of the Evidence-Based Practice process (as described in class and in the text on evidence-based practice). The answer you formulate should be based the best scientific evidence for answering the EBP question. (Information discussed in the text and in class will be used to identify what is meant by the “best” evidence that fits a particular client, problem, or situation.) There are no specific numbers of studies that you need to review; however, because this is a team project, your literature search is expected to be very thorough.

The paper must include the following components, which are used as the **Major Headings**:

- **Target problem**
- **EBP question**
- **Search strategies**
- **Intervention options**
- **Chosen Intervention:** For the final section, choose one of the interventions you think would be best in treating the problem area. Provide rationale as to why this intervention was chosen, did it have the best evidence, and why that evidence was superior to other possible choices that you found in your literature search (including why the chosen intervention would be feasible to implement and a good fit in light of the characteristics of the client problem or situation you have described).

TARGET PROBLEM (25 points):

Begin the paper with an overview of the target problem related to social work practice to which the rest of your EBP paper will apply. Use literature to support your ideas concerning the definition of the problem, severity of the problem, prevalence of the problem, and the population to whom the problem applies. Be comprehensive in your review of the problem area and the population effected by this problem. You can’t cite “too much” nor “too often.” Remember, ideas from others must be recognized as such; if you don’t cite and recognize the authors of ideas, it is plagiarism.

A few examples of problems might be: abusive parents (prevention or treatment), traumatized children or adults, war veterans with PTSD, welfare reform, community development, family preservation, substance abuse, homelessness, depression among nursing home residents, preventing hospitalization among individuals with chronic brain disorders, coping with death and dying, marital problems, runaways, school dropout, HIV/AIDS prevention, caregiver burden, and many more – these are just some illustrations to help you consider what you may want to choose. **Important** – these are NOT just clinical examples, but can be developed from a more macro perspective. For instance,

regarding abusive parents, an agency administrator may need to decide what programs to implement in her agency. Likewise, a community organizer might need to choose a community development strategy that has the best chance to succeed.

EBP QUESTION (5 points):

The question should be a modified version of the following:

When comparing intervention X and Intervention Y, to what extent does each demonstrate effectiveness in changing client's _____ (outcomes) among those with _____ (problem)?

OR

Among _____ (population) (age ?-?) with _____ (problem), what _____ (outcomes) are most influenced by intervention X or intervention Y?

The level of practice interventions for this section can be micro or macro, but must be specific enough to be testable.

SEARCH STRATEGIES (10 points)

Describe the process of how you went about searching the literature. For example, what databases did you use, what keywords did you use, what types of search strategies (top-down and/or bottom-up) and internet search engines, websites, abstracts, etc.

INTERVENTION OPTIONS (25 points for each intervention or 50 points total for section)

Describe two interventions you have found effective in reducing or ameliorating the problem area you've chosen. The 2 interventions that you select should emerge from a review of recently published outcome studies and systematic reviews (if any). Make sure they address the effectiveness of the interventions that have been tested in the past for your selected problem area and focus on your population of interest. The interventions you select should have the best scientific evidence supporting their effectiveness for the practice problem in question. Be sure to address the major methodological strengths and/or weaknesses of the key studies you review. Show that you can distinguish those studies that are sufficiently sound methodologically to guide practice from those whose methodological weaknesses imply the need for more rigorous research before evidence-based practice implications are warranted..

This is the largest section of the paper and must include a wide variety of literature to support the use of these 2 Evidence-Based Practice Interventions. This section is not simply a summarization of a few studies; the literature must be synthesized as it relates to issues or subtopics in your proposed study. Use of subheadings increases readability and thus are required in this section; at least provide a subheading for each of the two interventions.

Important – Do **Not** just select an intervention plan in advance and then restrict your literature review exclusively to that intervention. Instead, review recent outcome studies on whatever interventions have been tested for your selected problem, and then select and describe the chosen interventions based on that review. This is meant to be a more 'real-life' strategy for finding an appropriate EBP for a particular client problem, rather than assignment to find a well-researched intervention and then determining the problem that it aims to address. This assignment is meant to help you learn the process of researching EBPs to meet client needs.

INTERVENTION OF CHOICE (10 points)

Summarize and justify your choice of which intervention you find strongest in terms of evidence you have found in your review of the literature. Remember to set this choice not only in the

context of literature reviewed, but the problem area you are focused on. Include the score you think this literature would get from the “Scientific Rating Scale” (given out in class) and discuss the rationale for providing the score and describe how that score might have assisted you in choosing the specific intervention.

DIVISION OF LABOR

Summarize in a BRIEF paragraph the work each person in your dyad contributed to the paper. Make it clear what the role of each was in developing the ideas, searching literature and writing the paper.

WRITING: style, presentation of material, clarity, APA formatting, number of references, etc. (5 points)

***PRESENTATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE REVIEW PAPER (due February 26)
(10 points)***

Each dyad will present their work during a 10-minute presentation. The presentation should focus mainly on the interventions the dyad identified, rather than a great deal of time spent on describing the literature review of the problem area. Creative means of presenting your review of two EBP interventions is highly encouraged. For example, some students role play an intervention after describing the findings concerning its use; others have presented the basic information in the form of a “Jeopardy” game with candy for the winners, others have used powerpoint with media clips to demonstrate interventions, etc. etc. etc. At the very least, develop powerpoint slides and DO NOT read your paper. This presentation is meant to provide your classmates with options they might use when confronted in practice with the client problem you describe. Presentations, therefore, need to be informative and useful to others.

Make sure that you share the stage and don’t let one person do all the talking. Graded the same for both presenters, but grade will reflect equality of contribution during presentation.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL GUIDELINES
PAPER # 2
2-person Project
150 Points

(Due by email to instructor by May 7th before 6:00 pm)
(Papers typically average 15-20 double-spaced pages, not counting reference list)

****PLEASE USE ALL THE FOLLOWING HEADINGS FOR THIS PAPER****

- I. Introduction**
 - a. Target Problem**
 - b. EBP question**
- II. Theoretical Framework**
- III. Review of Literature on Intervention Options**
- IV. Research Methods**
 - a. Design**
 - b. Sample**
 - c. Procedures**
 - d. Measurement**
 - e. Instrumentation**
 - f. Data analysis**
- V. Human Subjects**
- VI. Limitations**
- VII. Conclusions**
- VIII. References**

I. INTRODUCTION

a. **TARGET PROBLEM** (10 points)

Provide a clear statement of the problem you are proposing to study, the specific research question, the purpose or aims of the research and the significance of the study to social work. This section should be a modification of the “Target Problem” section of Paper #1. Address instructor comments from Paper #1 and introduce the problem area that will be the focus of your proposed study. All content must be cited from the literature; opinion is not appropriate here.

b. **EBP QUESTION** MUST be included

II. Overview of theoretical framework (15 points)

a). Identify and discuss one substantive theory that can be utilized in your proposed project, either to support use of the intervention OR in relation to the problem area. The theory must have a name and the developer of the theory must be identified. Describe the theory in detail and include discussion of at least 3 concepts that the developers of the theory have specified. This typically requires 1-2 pages.

b). Describe how this theory and its concepts provide a framework for understanding the problem area or interventions that you’ll examine in your proposed study. Describe how the theory ties into your proposed study. This typically requires at least 1 page.

Remember, therapy is NOT theory – find a theory that acts as the foundation or underpinning of the therapy you are testing OR find a theory that explains the problem behavior or is a foundation for the problem area you are evaluating.

III. Review the literature concerning the *INTERVENTION OPTIONS* to examine for proposed study (25 points)

A literature review is a description of relevant research concerning the interventions you have chosen to compare. This section should be a modification of the “INTERVENTION OPTIONS” and “INTERVENTION OF CHOICE” sections of Paper #1. Address the comments of the instructor and focus the majority of the discussion on the intervention that will be your experimental intervention (Make sure you articulate which intervention is ‘experimental’ and which is ‘control’). Less description needs to be included about the intervention identified as “control,” but you must include content about this intervention as well. These interventions should be drawn from the interventions you reviewed in Paper #1 (make sure you re-write using instructor feedback on Paper #1).

Conclude this section with a paragraph or two that tie sections I, II, III together and gives a brief summary and introduction to the study you are proposing (the detail you’ll describe in the Methods section of this paper). Also, use the results of the studies you are citing to support the reason your study is necessary.

IV. Research Methods

Develop and describe a true experimental study that evaluates two interventions that address the problem area described in previous sections above. The methodology for the study you design should contain a high degree of internal/external validity and scientific rigor. Most threats to internal validity should be controlled, and reasonable efforts should be made to minimize measurement bias. This proposal should provide a concise enough description on how the study is to be conducted so that readers would be able to conduct the study themselves from your description. Remember to write this paper in future tense, i.e. “will do”.

a. Research Design (5 points)

Identify and describe the specific research design – if it is “classic experimental design, call it that (or whatever name the design is called). Provide further description by using notation (e.g. R O X O) plus narrative description of the design strategy you will employ for your proposed study. Don’t forget to describe each part of the design: whether random assignment, when measures will be done, how long intervention will last, which intervention is experimental and which is control, etc.

b. Sample (15 points)

Address these various topics in this section:

-- Describe the sampling procedure (what type of sampling – probably or non-probability type (name it), how selection of participants will occur, inclusion and exclusion criteria

-- Describe how you would recruit participants, who helps you get names to contact, and how is this done in an ethical manner?

-- Describe informed consent process and content of informed consent/assent (you don’t have to create a consent form, just describe how and when it would be done, and what would be included in the consent/assent)

-- Describe issues of compensation for participants – how much, when receive, for what activities are they compensated

-- Identify the study site (where you will find your subjects). Doesn’t have to be so specific that you name the location, but suggest where (state/city?) the project would be carried out and the type of facility or agency you will partner with to conduct the study.

-- Provide projected number of participants (from formula) with description of how the sample will be identified, and how the population (N) was determined. Cite all sources of where information came from (i.e. census, websites, etc.) and show the calculation of sample size (n).

-- Describe any specific difficulties you anticipate might occur in recruiting participants

c. Procedures (15 points)

-- Describe the process of implementing your study – start this section with what happens after the participants who have agreed to be in the study, completed informed consent procedures, etc. What, exactly, will you DO (Be extremely specific!).

-- Describe when measures will be conducted – pretest, posttest, any follow-ups.

-- Describe the process of the intervention as well – how the intervention is actually delivered, number of sessions, content of sessions, focus of intervention strategies, etc. This is largest part of this section and requires that you include as much detail as possible in terms of what the clinician does in the context of therapeutic intervention. This section is different from ‘lit review’ of interventions in that ‘lit review’ discusses literature supporting use of the intervention and this section discussion HOW the intervention is delivered to clients.

-- Describe how you will keep track of participants after they have completed posttest. Describe how you will track them for follow-up testing – how do you plan to decrease attrition?

d. Measurement (20 points) –

-- Cite the PRIMARY source for each measure, if you didn’t develop it yourself – DO NOT cite the measures book. The examples of items from scales or any self-developed question must look like the participant would see it if they were asked to complete your measurement instrument. Don’t just describe the variable; show how the participant would actually see it on the pre or post test.

-- Ideal measures are multifaceted and composite scales (continuous measure); include simple ones only if there is strong rationale for you to do so. Measures should be easy for anyone to see why you chose them, as they measure concepts in your research question.

-- Remember we always measure many, many variables in every study; however, for this paper you are being asked to demonstrate the BEST variables that would be included in your study, based on answering your research question. Everyone measures demographics, so choose more important variables for your paper to show your expertise in choosing variables that actually measure components of your research question. We can assume that demographics will be measured, so choose other, more complex variables to demonstrate your knowledge.

1d). Specify 2 dependent variables (or 2 ways to measure one dependent variable)

From your Research Question, what is the DV or outcome your study is trying to change? This section must include the following for both DVs:

-- Name of the variable

-- Describe how you are operationally defining it

-- Provide rationale for why this specific measure is included in the study

-- Describe specifically how it is measured -

include the actual question if it is a self-developed one;

include an example of 4-5 items from the scale, if using a standardized

measure, etc.

-- Identify the level of measurement (dichotomous, categorical, continuous) for each variable. Remember scales are made up of individual items/questions that may be coded categorical, but when the scale is used as a composite measure, it is summed and the total score for the variable is continuous.

2d). Specify 5 independent variables

From your Research Question, what are at least 5 IVs that will likely have an effect on the outcome variable(s) in your study? This section must include the following for each independent variable:

- Name of the variable
- Describe how you are operationally defining it
- Provide rationale for why this specific measure is included in the study
- Describe specifically how it is measured -
 - include the actual question if it is a self-developed one or
 - include an example of 4-5 items if from a standardized scale
- Identify the level of measurement (dichotomous, categorical, continuous) for each variable.

Remember scales are made up of individual items/questions that may be coded categorical, but when the scale is used as a composite measure, it is summed and the total score for the variable is continuous.

e. Instrumentation (10 points)

Describe one additional variable that is measured by a standardized research instrument; this is one additional variable to the 7 included above. This section must include the following:

- variable name,
- description of the scale to measure that variable,
- rationale for why this specific measure is included in the study
- the populations with whom the instrument has been tested and norms for its use,
- scoring methods,
- specify reliability and validity of the instrument (using appropriate statistical terms)
- you must cite the developers of the scale (primary reference for the scale itself, not where you found it).
- full copy of the entire scale must be included within this section.

f. Data Analysis (5 points)

Describe one statistic that could be used to answer the research question posed. Using the powerpoints from class and any other useful sources, describe the appropriate statistical test that could be used to test your research question. Section only a brief paragraph to describe the variables being used and a brief description of what the statistical test is and what it is supposed to test.

V. Human Subjects/ Ethical Considerations (10 points)

Describe the unique procedures that must be taken to protect your specific participants. Do not discuss the consent form or how you will get consent, but identify areas of potential harm to your population and specific measures that you would have to carry out to ameliorate them. What unique issues must be dealt with in working with the specific population of your study? Again, address the

SPECIFIC human subjects' issues that are unique to the participants of your study, not just general human subjects issues that should have been discussed in the Sampling section.

VI. Limitations (5 points)

Discuss the potential limitations of the study. May discuss issues of sampling, ethical challenges, political issues, but **MUST** address issues associated with internal and external validity.

VII. Conclusion (5 points)

Include a final conclusion section that summarizes the entire study and what next steps might be, implications for future research and suggestions for how findings might impact practice. This section is relatively short; approximately 1 paragraph to summarize and draw implications of what the contribution might be of your study to the field of social work.

VIII. References & Overall presentation of the information (10 points)

Organization, clarity of argument and statements, grammar and punctuation, proper APA formatting for references and in-text citations, professional language and presentation of information, and all areas described in sections above being addressed.