NU7403 Forensic Mental Health (Elective Module)

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ECTS  10
No. of Hours  See Appendix VI
Pre-requisite  Undergraduate Study

Rationale
This module was developed in response to the extensive and rapid changes presented to various professionals who work with mentally disordered offenders. It will give them the opportunity to strengthen and improve their understanding of the core skills and competencies and the underpinning theoretical knowledge base from which they practice.
The skills of reflection, critical thinking and analysis will be used.

Aims
To provide professionals from a range of settings such as mental health, justice, voluntary sector and primary care including educators, general practitioners, counsellors with the core knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to become competent in providing the appropriate services and support to those within the various forensic mental health settings.
To support and encourage students in evaluating literature, systematically collecting, critically analysing and interpreting data to inform and enhance their practice.

Expected Outcomes
Having completed the module the student will be able to:

- Appraise the development of the National Forensic Service and discuss in the context of legislation, social policy, national and local guidelines, international developments, and EU directives.
- Critically examine the Mental Health Act (2001) and the Criminal Law (Insanity) Act (2006) and how they may influence the National Forensic Service.
- Critically examine the concept of ‘Therapy versus Security’ and the impact this may have on service structure and evaluate the therapeutic uses of security.
- Differentiate the core competencies for specialist practice.
- Critically examine some of the practical ethical dilemmas, which may be encountered within forensic mental health practice.
- Examine the ever-changing demographic and epidemiological profile of the forensic population and discuss the implications for both the management and the delivery of the appropriate services.
- Critically examine the different perspectives on the theories of crime.
- Explore and discuss the relationship between psychopathology and criminal behaviour.
- Examine the contextual and decision making issues that arise in crisis and risk management.
- Critically evaluate the tools for risk assessment, identify common risk factors in the life cycle.
- Critically analyse and discuss official enquiries and reports to inform practice and to provide for effective interdisciplinary working.
• Evaluate the concept of multidisciplinary team working and analyse the roles and functions of individual agencies and identify strengths, weaknesses and gaps in current arrangements.
• Utilise solution/evidence-based interventions for offending behaviours and evaluate these against rates of post intervention recidivism.
• Analyse the practical uses and implications of competing explanatory models applied to specific disorders, including personality disorders, sex offending, arson, substance misuse and juvenile offenders.
• Critically examine the value and limitations of psychiatric, psychological and criminological models applied to violent and aggressive behaviour.
• Appraise the instruments available to predict future violent and aggressive behaviours.
• Explore the concept of stigma and discuss this in the context of mentally disordered offenders.
• Critically analyse the origins of past and current societal attitudes to mentally disordered offenders.

Indicative Content

Principles of Forensic Mental Health
Introduction to forensic psychiatry (definition, development of forensic services both nationally and internationally)
• Law and Mentally Disordered Offenders
• Therapy versus Security. Therapeutic use of security
• Competencies for specialist practice
• Ethics and forensic mental health

Criminology, Criminogenic Needs and Offending Behaviour
Theories of crime (general criminology): developmental, ecological and sociological perspectives.
• Patterns of crime: career, specialisation and co-morbidity.
• Rates of offending and factors associated e.g. inheritance, neurophysiological, poverty (The Cambridge study), social factors e.g. control theory of delinquency, labelling, large towns, schooling and the media.
• Mental disorders and crime - how it may contribute or result in psychopathology & criminal behaviour.
• The effects of crime on victims and communities.

Risk and Rehabilitation
• History of probability and risk
• Evolution of risk assessment
• Modern approaches to risk management in clinical practice
• Risk management in mental health services.
• Multidisciplinary/Interdisciplinary working
• Effective partnership between services users and carers
• Community services
• Utilisation of solution/evidenced-based interventions for offending behaviours
• Evaluate interventions against rates of post intervention recidivism
  • Specialist practice:
  • Personality disorders
  • Sex offenders
  • Arsonists
  • Substance misuse
  • Juvenile Offenders

Prevention and management of aggression and violence
  • Theories of violence and aggression

Apply the concept of risk assessment and management to the prevention of violence and aggression
  • Provide an in-depth understanding of how the management of violence and aggression is reliant upon both verbal and non-verbal communication skills
  • To effectively manage self-harm and suicide using safety plans and harm minimisation

Working with Stigma
  • The social construction of stigma
  • The psychopathology of stigma
  • Stigma strikes back
  • Services and stigma

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**Mode of Assessment** | **Weighting**
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Essay (3,000 words) | 100%

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**Reading list**


Victimology