Communication and Conflict Resolution

01DM813

July 7-11, 2014

Dr. Hurley

This course is designed to help pastors to understand and to address important issues relating to communication and conflict. The course will attend to God’s Word and to information drawn from God’s world. Exegetically, we will work especially from Proverbs and Ephesians. Careful attention will be given as well to complementary research on neuroscience, systems theory and marital interactions. Frameworks for understanding security in relationships, conflict, conflict resolution and forgiveness will be developed. Students will practice implementing relevant skills in a supervised clinical setting.

Students will

• Understand exegetically and operationally key passages from Proverbs and Ephesians relating to establishing and maintaining secure constructive relationships and to managing differences and conflict between persons.
• Understand the role of key aspects of brain function as they relate to establishing and maintaining secure constructive relationships and to managing differences and conflict between persons.
• Understand an easily communicable method to help parishioners effectively to establish and to maintain constructive relationships and to manage differences and conflict between persons.
• Understand a framework and method to help married couples establish a firm base of friendship, to handle significant conflictual and non-conflictual differences, to support one another with respect to personal and couple longings and goals.
• Develop and demonstrate minimal proficiency implementing the methods learned.

Preparation for class – Due one week before class begins

1. Books and reading reports:

   Miller, Nunnaly and Wackman, Connecting

   Gottman, J., 7 Habits
Seigel, D. and Hartzel, M., Parenting from the Inside Out

Read each book and prepare for each an up-to-5-page summary that conveys the substance of the material, an evaluation of its relation to biblical teaching and your assessment of its probable utility to you in your congregational setting. Include on each summary an explicit statement that you have read the entire reading. \( (3 \times 8\% = 24\%) \)

2. Biblical study:

Read through and paraphrase Ephesians 1:1 – 5:2 in a manner that focuses on the implications and relevance of the text for personal relationships between believers. \( (8\%) \)

3. Congregational conflict:

Write a brief description of each of two conflict situations within your congregation. One must involve a married couple. Describe the basic situation, how it came to you, what you and the person’s involved did to address it and how it turned out. To the extent that you can, identify crucial elements in the process. \( (2 \times 4\% = 8\%) \)

**During class** At RTS, rehearse the skills and methods taught in class.

**After class**

4. Use class materials

Employ the methods and information from class to facilitate communication and conflict resolution in three congregational settings. At least one must be a couple.

**For each of the three situations, prepare a written report, describing** \( (3 \times 8\% = 24\%) \)

- The situation before you entered in, include a description of the issue over which there was conflict
- A description of the relationship system involved in the conflict
- A description of the conflict process/sequence involved in the conflict
- How you brought Scripture and God into your intervention
- The process by which you helped the participants to address the situation
- The rationale for your intervention
- The outcome of the intervention

**For one of the three situations** \( (16\%) \)
o Provide a 5-minute tape segment/sound file of an actual intervention with a couple, employing awareness wheel/listening cycle and/or Hurley protocol components
 o The segment MUST include a signed release to send the segment to Dr. James Hurley as part of a course project. The release should also explicitly state the subjects' understanding that the material will be kept confidential except for Dr. Hurley and that he will destroy the data after using it.

o Prepare a 5-10 page paper
  ▪ Identifying
    • The goal of your intervention
    • The process by which you believed it would be helpful to your parishioner
  ▪ Including a commentary (with verbatim transcripts) that will help your prof see that
    • You can relate four parts of the segment to components of one or both resources
    • You can evaluate how well the intervention worked
    • You can identify further work to be done with the couple

5. Neuroscience of Scripture (20%)

Select any portion of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or the New Testament letters not used in class presentation, up to 15 verses in length, which deals with the conduct of Christian life. Write a paper of less than 8 pages that relates the passage to class materials, with particular attention to neuroscience.

Assignment Due Date: October 31, 2014

Please email a copy of your assignment to jhurley@rts.edu and mwestbrook@rts.edu