

**CLASS 1: CLASS HANDOUT #3: BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL  
SPECTRUM OF TREATING SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS (SMI)**

**BIOLOGICAL/PHYSICAL**

(Medical realm)

Science-based knowledge

**Clinical focus: Medical aspects  
of illness**

Symptoms, diagnosis, prognosis, medications; acute care, medical management of chronic illness; research

**Clinical Posture**

Positive, constructive.  
Looking for potentials for improvement.  
Alert for signs of relapse  
Willing to collaborate with other professionals.

**Clinical Goals**

To improve outcome, reduce discomfort, prevent relapse  
To find the best medical strategy to maximize recovery  
To increase knowledge

**BASIC SKILLS NEEDED**

Grasp of basic diagnostic and medical information  
Knowledge of medications and their side effects  
Recognizing early signs of relapse  
Knowledge of current research

**DANGER! IGNORANCE  
ABOUT MEDICAL ASPECTS  
OF MENTAL ILLNESS**

**EMOTIONAL/SPIRITUAL**

(Psychological/humanistic realm)

Psychology-based knowledge

**Clinical focus: Subjective  
emotions & feelings**

Inner experience, feelings, response to illness, self-regard, concern about the future.

**Clinical Posture**

Empathetic, understanding.  
Alert to signs of grief, stigma, demoralization.  
Aware of client's courage and fortitude.  
Patience with defensive coping strategies

**Clinical Goals**

To foster a close relationship  
To create safety and protection for expressed feelings  
To increase self-esteem and connection with others

**BASIC SKILLS NEEDED**

Empathetic listening and responding  
Ability to feel another's pain  
Ability to ignore stereotypes about people with SMI and their families  
Ability to take initiative in building relationships

**DANGER! EMOTIONAL  
ISOLATION; BLAMING  
THE VICTIM**

**SOCIAL/OCCUPATIONAL**

(Rehabilitation Realm)

Recovery-based knowledge

**Clinical focus: Self-Renewal/  
Re-entry into community**

Functional capacities, personal goals, adaptation to disability, sources of system/community support, long-term care

**Clinical Posture**

Realistic, hopeful, encouraging  
Willing to take initiative  
Alert to emerging talents and strengths  
Encouragement of positive coping strategies

**Clinical Goals**

Restoration of social ties  
Increased personal agency and self-determination  
Maximum personal fulfillment  
Maximum quality of life

**BASIC SKILLS NEEDED**

Negotiation  
Conflict resolution  
Guidance/Coaching  
Knowledge of community resources  
Advocacy

**DANGER! LACK OF HOPE;  
LACK OF SYSTEM  
RESOURCES**

**These 3 treatment strategies are interdependent: 1) Changes in any one of these areas can affect the other two; 2) No single treatment alone is sufficient for recovery; 3) No one strategy can ignore the benefits of the other two.**