

Antwone Fisher Curriculum Guide for Practicum

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Practicum is a start of clinical classes for graduate students in counseling. Students are placed at a counseling site where they are required to conduct 100 clinical hours on-site of counseling. The students are also required to meet weekly for two hours with their on-campus supervisor. It is during this time period, that I was able to introduce my students to the movie *Antwone Fisher*. The movie is about a real-life character name Antwone Fisher who wrote an autobiographical book entitled *Finding Fish*. The story line of the movie entails a troubled young man who finally leaves home and join the navy. He stays in and out trouble because of his temper and was assigned to see a psychologist.

This movie is selected for this class to allow students the opportunity to take a look at a character who had a troubled childhood and how that impacted him in his adult life. The students also are given the opportunity discuss what they consider to be ethical and unethical counseling. Any time you select a movie for your students to review, it is always good practice to (1) alert them to any violence or improper behaviors they might be exposed to and (2) provide an opportunity for students to discuss what they watched.

Generally speaking, it is my practice to divide my class into groups since this is a relative small class. The typical class size for practicum can range from five to eight students. Since this is a small class the students have greater opportunities to get into rich and detailed discussions concerning their assignments.

Each group is given a list of questions to answer as it relates to the movies. The students have to apply what they have learned in their previous counseling courses to successfully answer the questions. Some of the questions require the students to research the topics. Even though the questions relate to the movie, I want the students to have the most current up to date information when they are addressing various topics.

During the Spring of 2017, when I taught this class, I administered a short survey of seven questions. The first being basic questions about the students. The identity of each student was kept confidential throughout the process. There were a total of 6 people in the class and all 6 people completed the survey.

Results:

- 6 out of 6 students strongly agreed that the use of a movie as a teaching technique for this class was enjoyable.
- 6 out of 6 students strongly agreed they would recommend the use of video for the future use of this class.
- 5 out of 6 students strongly agreed they were overall satisfied with this course. 1 student reported they agreed.
- Question number 7 was were students were given the opportunity to write any additional suggestions or comments they might have for improving the use of videos in the course. Below are those comments.
- Great Job Dr. Holloway. Once again you've proven why you are teaching this course - 😊:

- Since group dynamics, I have wanted you to teach other classes, but you haven't. This was the perfect timing for this class because I really felt like I learned a lot in class. I really enjoy classes you teach because you use different methods. Please continue to use videos in the future.
- It would be beneficial to watch a video together in class, and discuss the video with the classmates.
- After the movies, have students try to structure a counseling session and see how well they do. Find something they would or would not change.
- I believe that visual presentation will be helpful students it helps to understand the course better.
- This course was great! I am unsure why we had so many assignments. I would have liked to have guest speakers (ex: LPC, ALC, etc.).
- Less questions with more details.

Overall, students have expressed they really like the assignment. All the students took the time to provide some meaningful comments.

Practicum is one of those classes where students want to go to their sites and not have any additional classwork. I have found many sites are not always able to give our students the training they need for the short amount of time they have with clients due to having to complete case analyses, treatment planning and writing case note. Therefore, I have used movies to bring added value in this particular area. Additionally, it allows the students to add to their repertoire of counseling techniques by having an in class discussion about the characters in the movie. One of the comments that resonate with me the most was the idea to have students role play a counseling session with one of the characters in the movie. That is certainly a worthwhile idea for future practice.

Below is a copy of the curriculum guide I used. I hope you find it helpful.

Note: Please be advised the author does not own the copyrights to the pictures. They are used for training purposes only.



Figure 1

Antwone Fisher

Antwone Fisher is based on a true story of Derek Luke (Antwone Fisher) and therapist (Denzel Washington). Antwone is a person who has had a troubled past but one day he decided to enlist in the naval. Because of his tempter Antwone was order to see a naval psychologist. It was during his counseling sessions with his therapist, Antwone started to slowly confront his childhood traumas. He eventually had the courage to connect with his biological family. All of this was a part of his healing process.

Brief Bio of Antwone Fisher

Antwone fisher was born in prison. His mother’s name was Eva Mae Fisher who was seventeen years old when she gave birth to him. His father was Eddie Elkins twenty three years old when he was shot and killed. He died prior to his birth. Antwone was a ward of the state so he was placed in foster care the first two weeks of his life with a loving family. The state eventually removed him from this family placing him back into the foster care system. The reason they gave was they were concerned about an apostrophe attachment issues with his foster mother’s could be problematic. He was later placed in the home of Reverend and Mrs. Pickett, where he encountered for fourteen years some of the most traumatic childhood abuse any child could be to be exposed to both physical and emotional abuse.

Eventually, Antwone had all he could take and left the Pickett’s home. After he graduated from high school, he stayed at the YMCA. He ended up meeting Butch, a criminal who helped with avoid sexual predators at the YMCA. Antwone ended up having to sleep in the park on benches and alleys trying to survive. It was at this point he decided to enlist in the Navy.

Antwone Fisher stayed in the Navy for eleven years. But it was during this time, he befriended a Navy a psychiatrist, Commander William (portrayed as Denzel Washington in the film), who helped him realize he had potential. Once he left the Navy, he landed a job as a security guard at Sony Pictures Entertainment. In 1992, Antwone went on a quest to meet his biological family. He was successful in meeting his aunt, Annette Elkins, and in a few months he was able reconnect with the rest of his family to include his mother’s, Eva Mae.

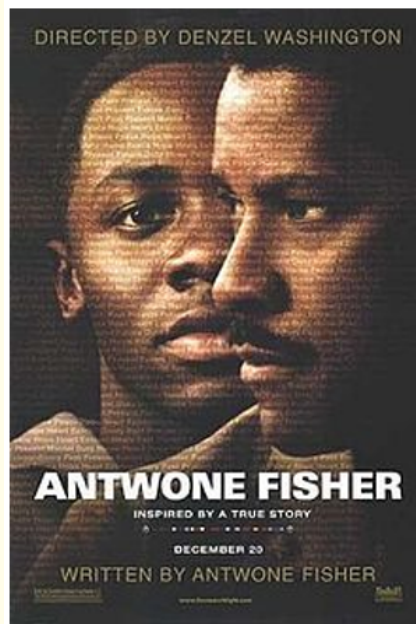


Figure 2

Critical debriefing questions

Antwone Fisher

Note: You will answer the following questions from a therapist perspective and based on the knowledge you have gleaned from all your core counseling classes.

Group-1



Figure 3

1. What were the real reason(s) for Antwone's anger? Please explain in detail.
2. Explain the incident that happened between Antwone and the navy officer that resulted in having to report to Major Davenport (Psychiatrist).
3. How did Antwone's first visit go with Major Davenport? What sort of questions did he ask him? Did you think these questions were appropriate, why or why not? Would you have done anything differently, why or why not?
4. What motivated his psychiatrist, Major Davenport, to send escorts to bring Antwone to his next appointment? What time and date were Antwone's appointments?
5. How many counseling sessions did Major Davenport state he would have with Antwone? Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.
6. What was your impression of how Major Davenport handled Antwone's unwillingness to talk? Do you think it was effective, why or why not? Would you have done anything differently, if so what?
7. Basically their first sessions are largely characterized by the patient's squirming in silence after stating, "You might be able to make me come here but you can't make me talk". So what exactly was the patient conveying to the therapist?
8. Why do you think most therapists find it extremely challenging to deal with silence in counseling sessions?
9. What types of questions did MAJ Davenport initially ask Antwone and what were Antwone's answers? Why do you think Antwone was reluctant to answer his questions?
10. How was MAJ Davenport able to get Antwone to start talking during his counseling sessions?

11. Elaborate on what Antwone and Major Davenport were actually saying toward the end of the fifth session.
“What do you want me to say”? And Major Davenport responds, “It’s not what I want you to say, it’s what you want to tell me”. And their conversation continues: “I understand you like to fight “. “That’s the only way some people learn”. “But you pay the price for teaching them”.
12. What types of books did MAJ Davenport give Antwone to read and why?
13. Please review the poem below and explain exactly in your own words what Antwone was attempting to express.

Who will cry for the little boy?

Who will cry for the little boy?

Lost and all alone.

Who will cry for the little boy?

Abandoned without his own.

Who will cry for the little boy?

He cried himself to sleep.

Who will cry for the little boy?

He never had for keeps.

Who will cry for the little boy?

He walked the burning sand.

Who will cry for the little boy?

The boy inside the man.

Who will cry for the little boy?

Who knows well hurt and pain.

Who will cry for the little boy?

He died again and again.

Who will cry for the little boy?

A good boy he tried to be.

Who will cry for the little boy?

Who cries inside of me.

by Antwone Fisher from Who Will Cry for the Little Boy?

- List and explain some potential ethical/boundary concerns you thought MAJ Davenport opened up during his client/counselor role.
- How would you describe Antwone’s relationship with his girlfriend, Cheryl Smolley? Do you think she played a major role in his healing process, why or why not? Explain.
- What was Antwone’s reaction to the therapist when he attempted to terminate the counseling sessions? What do you think actually motivated this response?
- List some examples when you witnessed “Self Disclosure” being utilized and did you think it was beneficial, why or why not?
14. Describe in your own words what Antwone’s first experience was like when he meets his mother’s. What did he express to her and how did she respond?

15. Define the word “Forgive”? How and why is this important for Antwone being able to cope/deal and heal? What and how can “Forgiveness” play a role in therapy? Please take a look at least two articles and tell what researchers have to say about “Forgiveness” in the therapeutic process. Be prepared to explain this in detail to the class.
16. There are many young men who have experienced what Antwone Fisher had to go through. You have been requested by local child protective services to develop a program to assist young men like Antwone. Please explain your program in full detail.
17. Why is important in the black community that young black men have positive role models in their life?

Good Luck!



Figure 4



Figure 5

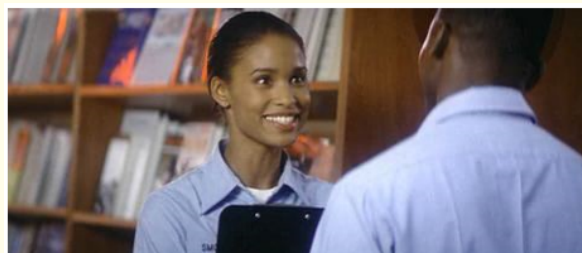


Figure 6

Critical debriefing questions

Group -2

1. Pick out three critical scenes in this movie which had the most impact on you and explain why.
2. What was Antwone’s relationship like with his girlfriend? Did he display any anger toward her, why or why not?
3. What were your overall impressions of Antwone’s psychiatrist, MAJ Davenport? What did you like most about his counseling techniques? What did you like least? Explain.
4. Did Antwone have any real true friends once he joined the Navy, if so who? Explain what his relationship was like with his Navy comrades.
5. How would you describe Antwone’s childhood and what impact did it have on him as adult?
6. Did Antwone have any issues with:
 - a. Trust
 - b. Abandonment
 - c. Love
 - d. Self-EsteemPlease give examples to support your answers.
7. What occurred that caused Antwone to return to MAJ Davenport after he completed his first counseling engagement?
8. What counseling techniques did MAJ Davenport utilize while working with Antwone? Did you agree with them, if so why or why not? Explain.
9. Describe Antwone’s reaction to MAJ Davenport when he was terminating their overall counseling sessions?
10. Describe in detail what was Antwone’s experience was like when he went home to locate his family (to include his first meeting with his biological mother’s).
11. What did Antwone mean when he told his foster mother’s Ms. Tate: “i am still standing. I am still strong you could not destory me”.
What did Antwone mean when he told the young lady who lives with Ms. Tate: “I was six years old?”
12. Please review the poem below and explain exactly in your own words what Antwone was attempting to express?
Who will cry for the little boy?
Who will cry for the little boy?
Lost and all alone.
Who will cry for the little boy?
Abandoned without his own.
Who will cry for the little boy?
He cried himself to sleep.
Who will cry for the little boy?
He never had for keeps.
Who will cry for the little boy?
He walked the burning sand.
Who will cry for the little boy?

The boy inside the man.
Who will cry for the little boy?
Who knows well hurt and pain.
Who will cry for the little boy?
He died again and again.
Who will cry for the little boy?
A good boy he tried to be.
Who will cry for the little boy?
Who cries inside of me.

By Antwone Fisher from Who Will Cry for the Little Boy?

13. List and explain some potential ethical/boundary concerns you thought MAJ Davenport opened up during his client/counselor role.
14. What impact did Antwone have on MAJ Davenport's personal self-growth?
15. How effective was Antwone having to go and locate his family to his healing process? Please explain in detail.
16. What actually motivated Antwone to join the Navy? Do you think the Navy helped or hindered his growth into manhood, if so how?
17. Where exactly was Antwone born? What impact do you think could have on any child?
18. What actually happened to his father, Mr. Eddie Elkins? What impact do you think this had on Antwone's life?
19. Please provide the class a list of social services that can assist young men like Antwone.
20. What is your perspective on foster care? Do you think there needs to be improvement in that area, if so what? Explain.
21. How often do you think young black boys are sexually molested? What and how do you recommend the black community handle this?



Figure 7

Disclosure

This article has not been published elsewhere, nor has it been submitted simultaneously for publication elsewhere. It does not constitute a conflict of interest for the author.

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