Creative Interventions with Youth Experiential:  
Many Ways to Promote Changes in Children and Youth Through Doing It Yourself 
Mini-course Syllabus (subject to changes) 
University of Michigan School of Social Work

SW 510-015, Fall term, 2019  
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Course dates and times:  
Room: TBA
8/27/2019, 1:00-5:00
8/28/2019, 8:30-12:00
8/29/2019, 8:30-2:00

Creative Interventions with Youth Experiential

This course provides an experiential opportunity for students to explore a wide range of creative, art and adventure-type activities, rooted in evidence-based theory integrated to explore trauma and other issues presented by youth. These interventions include, but are not limited to the use of art and drawing, writing, sensory games, ceremony, adventure and animal-assisted activities. This high-paced, hands-on course provides students with experiences to practice these activities individually and in small groups and explore how these activities are supported by cognitive behavioral, trauma-informed, play therapy and psychodynamic theories. Assessment considerations based on the unique needs of clients, ability issues and cultural diversity, will be explored through real case examples. Through this course, students will gain a tool box of activities, understand their theoretical relevance and practice them with each other, making for a fun and engaging course where participants develop practical interpersonal skills preparing them for their field experiences with children and youth. This course also includes a specific anti-racism training.

The overarching learning goals of the course are:

1) To explore creative, therapeutic activities that capture the attention of adolescents and are grounded in evidence-based theory. (Competency, 10C-intervention)
2) To gain assessment skill in choosing appropriate activities based on the needs of individual clients and diversity issues. (Competencies, 4-diversity, 10B-assessment, 3-critical thinking)
3) To gain skill in the actual practice of these activities through experiential engagement. (Competencies, 10A-engagement, 10C-intervention)
**Seed Week Objective:**
Students will participate together in experiential activities that create opportunities for deepening engagement throughout the course toward building connections and communities.

**PODS Objective:**
Students will raise cultural awareness and humility and critically consider how to select intervention activities based on assessment information and client's unique intersections of identity and culture through real case examples. Anti-racism will be address through special guest presentation.

**Foundational-level skill-building Objective:**
Students will hone practical skills through facilitating activities, trying them out with each other, learning the theoretical base to the activities and reflecting on their value, creating a tool box of ideas to take into their field experiences.

**Reading:**
The readings are supplemental to the experiential learning in the course. Students choose five articles form the list of peer reviewed articles based on the student’s interests and relevance to the course content. Two articles should be read in advance of the first day of class and three should be read in between the two days. The syllabus offers other resources including suggested book titles, videos and you-tube clips, and is a work in progress, but the six articles should be from the peer reviewed articles list. They are posted on the canvas site for the course under “files” and then “required readings”.

**Assignment and Product:**
Students will keep a journal of brief, critical reflections on each activity presented and will create an actual tool box of artifacts that represent the learned activities as a future, practical resource. This will be accomplished in the class. Students are expected to read the required readings to supplement their experiential learning. Some time to share personal reflections with group mates and the instructor will be allotted, but this assignment is not graded.

**Significance of the course:**
Capturing the attention of hard-to-engage youth takes confidence, courage and practical skill. When new social work students are confronted with the task of engaging and intervening with struggling youth and their families that challenge can feel overwhelming, anxiety escalates, and their knowledge gained from books and class lectures can be easily lost. Students often express their desire for more practical skills to engage youth and their families. They learn theory and the foundational principals of evidence-based methods, but feel that in traditional educational settings, they are lacking in opportunities to practice actually applying and implementing therapeutic activities and skills.

This course provides the opportunity for students to actually try out therapeutic activities that are evidence-informed from a variety of theoretical bases, with themselves and each other and
then critically reflect on those experiences. Providing a hands-on experience unique to Seed Week this course contributes to foundational skills where students will fill up their intervention tool boxes with numerous ideas of therapeutic activities, rooted in evidenced methods, to practice with diverse youth and families as they head into their social work education and field placements. This learning will happen for students while they engage experientially with each other, fostering the supportive, social work community they are craving, and which reflects one of the core missions of seed week.

**TRIGGER WARNING:** Because the course is experiential and encourages students to explore and share issues of identity, resilience, pains, family history, etc. it will likely bring up both pleasurable and painful material. The exercises are designed to “trigger” disclosure, so students may experience a range of emotions throughout the course and may feel vulnerable. All feelings are acceptable, but students will be expected to be able to manage them. Students should not feel pressured to share the most painful material of their lives unless they feel prepared to do so. There will not be sufficient follow up for processing painful memories or severe anxiety that might get triggered. In general, it is important that students who expect to struggle seek therapeutic assistance to work through their own recovery during their graduate education in order to be present and effective in working with wounded clients. Wounded healers who have worked toward resilience make some of the best therapists. See resources for this below.

**CLASSROOM CULTURE AND STUDENT WELLBEING:**

**Health and Wellness:**

Health and wellness situations or circumstances may impede student success within the program. Students should feel free to contact the School’s Health and Wellness Advocates, Lauren Davis or Nyshourn Price, at sswwellness@umich.edu. Students may also visit/call the University’s Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). CAPS offers a variety of clinical services, referrals, and workshops. CAPS, Hours: 8am-5pm, 530 S State St., Ann Arbor, MI 48109 caps.umich.edu

**Informed Consent:**

On the second day of the course we will be exploring animal assisted therapy interventions through experiential exercises with animal partners in the courtyard if the weather permits. This requires a signed informed consent by the student to be given to the instructor in advance in order to participate in activities with animals. As a part of that consent, you are required to inform the instructor of any health or other limitations you may have in regard to interacting with animals or the outdoors. The instructor will make every effort to accommodate your needs, but please inform asap by email: lsander@umich.edu, or phone, 734-662-3509. The consent form can be found under “forms” in the “files” tab on your Canvas site.

**Accommodations:**

In the era of iPhones, iPads, laptops and wireless networks, some students may wish to spend class time reading email, texting, surfing the web, or doing work for other classes. Please don’t
do this. You are provided a journal to take notes. If you need a computer as a resource for note-taking please let me know, but I would prefer that they not be open at all. I find that they interfere with discussion and active listening to me and other students. Thanks.

If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, please let me know soon. The earlier that you make me aware of your needs the more effectively we will be able to use the resources available to us, such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site and the like. If you do decide to disclose your disability, I will treat that information as private and confidential. Also, please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements. Also all preferred name and gender pronoun uses will be honored.

Safety and Emergency Preparedness:
In the event of an emergency, dial 9-1-1 from any cell phone or campus phone.

All University of Michigan students, faculty and staff are required to familiarize themselves with emergency procedures and protocols for both inside and outside of the classroom. In the event of possible building closure (i.e. severe weather conditions, public health notices, etc.) you may contact (734)764-SSWB (7793) for up-to-date School closure information.

Be Prepared. Familiarize yourself with the emergency card posted next to the phone in every classroom/meeting room. Review the information on the emergency evacuation sign (located nearest the door) and locate at least (2) emergency exits nearest the classroom.

If you are concerned about your ability to exit the building in the case of an emergency, contact the Office of Student Services and/or email ssw-ADAcompliance@umich.edu., Office of Student Services
School of Social Work | Room 1748, 734-936-0961

For more information, view the annual Campus Safety Statement at http://www.dpss.umich.edu/.

Register for UM Emergency Alerts at http://www.dpss.umich.edu/emergency-management/alert/.

READINGS:

Peer-reviewed resources for the course:

Alvarez and Stauffer, Tony, Musings on Adventure Therapy, Journal of Experiential Education June 200124: 85-91

Coholic, Diana; Lougheed, Sean; Cadell, Susan
Exploring the helpfulness of arts-based methods with children living in foster care.

Errington, Dancing Drumming and Drawing the Unspeakable: An Exploration of an Arts-Based Programme as Complementary Interventions in the Diversion of Youth Sex Offenders


Ping Ho et al., The Impact of Group Drumming on Social-Emotional, Behavior in Low-Income Children, Hindawi Publishing Corporation, Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Volume 2011, Article ID 250708, 14 pages, doi:10.1093/ecam/neq072


Wettig, et. al., Evaluating the Effectiveness of Theraplay in Treating Shy, Socially Withdrawn Children, American Psychological Association paper.


Other Sources:
Books:


Camilleri, Vanessa, Healing the Inner City Child: Creative Arts Therapies with At-risk Youth Jessica Kingsley Publishers, Philadelphia, PA, 2010


Malchiodi, Cathy, A., Creative Interventions with Traumatized Children Gilford Press, 2915

Gil, Eliana, Trauma-Focused Integrated Play Therapy (TF-IPT) in Handbook of Child Sexual Abuse: Identification, Assessment, and Treatment, Published Online: 4 OCT 2011

Gil, Eliana, Cultural Issues in Play Therapy, Gilford Press., 2005
**Videos:**

Gil, Eliana, Essentials of Play Therapy. (1996)

Gil, Eliana, Play Therapy for Severe Psychological Trauma

Horses that Heal, PATH (Professional Association for Therapeutic Horsemanship

**YouTube videos:**

Bob Grainger Discusses the Merits of Adventure Therapy  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWhOdhKY5PQ

Expressive Arts Therapy Video with Natalie Rogers  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sd62Al_NsYU&list=PLONT6wAgEQ1KqpRF51YuwjBZKCEI2yXNb

The Virtue of Art Therapy, Ann Lawton:  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPszGBfjuOY

Introduction to Theraplay  
https://www.youtube.com/user/TheraplayIn

Gismo the Therapy Dog:  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ixy1GTDx1uo

Therapy Dogs in Children’s Hospital Setting:  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgXYFnguj8

Gentle Carousel Miniature Therapy Horses:  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oK6kTjqL7do

**The Course Agenda:**

This course begins with introduction to each other, working group formation and to the arc of the course which integrates creative activity with evidence-based and best practices with youth. It includes four experiential exercises focused on foundational engagement, assessment and intervention skills through art, music and play activities that promote change in young people from psychodynamic, trauma recovery, attachment and family systems perspectives. Individual and group reflection is critical to debriefing each of the four experiential exercises.

Day two and three of the course involve four additional experiential exercises providing opportunities to practice intervention skills through drawing, partnering with animals in Animal Assisted Therapy (weather permitting to use the outdoor courtyard) or myth and story (if it is raining), and ceremonial approaches with youth that are grounded in cognitive-behavioral,
trauma recovery, narrative and relational cultural methods. Again, time to reflect through individual writing and group conversation is key to learning.