Course title: Trauma Basics
Course #/term: SW 540, Fall, 2020
Time and place: Online pre-learning Aug 31st-Oct 1st, 2020; Online (Zoom) workshop Saturday, Oct 3rd; Online post-workshop reflection Oct 5th-Oct 9th
Credit hours: 1
Prerequisites: Permission by school/department
Instructor: Todd I. Herrenkohl, PhD
Pronouns: He, him, his
Contact info: Email: tih@umich.edu  Phone: 734-763-9382 or 206-683-8119
You may expect a response within 24 hours
Office: School of Social Work Building 2712
Office hours: by appointment

Course Statement

This is a workshop-based inter-professional education course offered by UM School of Social Work in partnership with the School of Nursing and School of Education. It is the first course in a 3-course Interprofessional Mini-Certificate on Trauma-Informed Practice. Courses in the certificate are:

- Trauma Basics (SW/EDUC/HS 540)
- Trauma-Informed Practice (SW/EDUC/HS 541)
- Creating and Sustaining Trauma-Informed Systems (SW/EDUC/HS 542)

Trauma Basics serves as a prerequisite for the other two courses in the certificate and must be completed prior to enrolling in SW/EDUC/HS 541 or 542.

This course uses a series of online pre-learning readings, group discussions, and writing reflections to prepare students for an all-day workshop that includes short didactic presentations, small group discussions, and exercises that deepen knowledge about trauma and inter-professionals roles. Students will contribute their own knowledge and domain expertise throughout the course.
Course Description

The course provides basic, foundational knowledge related to childhood adversities and trauma. Goals of the course are to increase knowledge about the causes and developmental outcomes of trauma in children, as well as protective factors and resilience. The course emphasizes principles of inter-professional practice focused on helping students in social work, nursing, and education learn collaboratively about the factors contributing to trauma and strategies to prevent and lessen trauma symptoms in generalist and specialty practice roles.

This course uses readings, written work (journal entries), and online group meetings to prepare each student for an all-day workshop on **Saturday, October 3rd**. The workshop will include short didactic presentations, small group discussions, and exercises that deepen knowledge about trauma and inter-professionals roles. There is also a post-workshop reflection component of the course in which students are asked to write about their experiences of the workshop and future contributions to their respective fields of practice.

**To receive a satisfactory grade, all segments of the course (pre-learning, workshop, post-workshop reflection) must be completed in their entirety and assignments must be submitted on time.**

Pre-Learning (Online)

A pre-learning component of the course will cover foundational material in childhood adversities and trauma. This component provides an opportunity to explore and discuss selected readings on topics that will be covered in more detail at the in-person workshop.

**Pre-learning assignments consist of written journal entries and a final summative statement, which should be uploaded to Canvas as single Word document prior to the in-person workshop (see instructions below).**

The course officially begins on Monday, August 31st and finishes Friday, October 9th.

In Week 1, students will work independently to gain and understanding of trauma and its impacts on children. Starting in Week 2, students will be assigned to groups of 3-5 students for online meetings. **Participation in online group meetings is a requirement of the course. To ensure full participation, students will be asked to attest to having participated in all online group sessions when uploading their pre-learning work.**

While the pre-learning component of the course is based on small group discussions, questions about the readings can also be posted to Canvas for instructor comment. Questions will be answered at the end of each pre-learning week of the course.

Assignments
Journal Entries. Written responses in the pre-learning and post-workshop reflections should be written as “journal entries,” listed by date and session title. Details are provided below. Journal entries should be completed during the week they are assigned, but submitted on Canvas at the end of the pre-learning or post-workshop components of the course as a single Word document for each component.

Summative Statement. In addition to journal entries, each student must complete a 1-page summative statement at the end of the pre-learning section of the course. In the statement, explain how content applies to the roles and functions of professional social workers, nurses and educators who work in schools and other systems (1-2 paragraphs); where professional roles intersect (1 paragraph), and how inter-professional teams can serve the needs of vulnerable children and their families (1 paragraph). It is understood that not everyone will have prior knowledge of inter-professional work and that the depth of content provided in these statements will vary as a result. The goal of this assignment is to stimulate thinking about how practitioners from different professions can work successfully to address trauma in and across relevant systems. At the end of the statement, please include the following acknowledgement of your participation: “By submitting this statement, I attest to having fully participated in all online group meetings and discussions.”

Objectives and Curricular Themes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

Articulate knowledge of content in a number of core areas, including:

- Definition(s) of trauma
- Epidemiology of trauma and populations at high(er) risk for adverse and traumatic experiences
- Types of trauma
- Causes of trauma
- Signs and symptoms of trauma in children and families
- Long-term, developmental impacts of trauma (neurobiological, psychological, social, physical)
- Resilience and methods of positive coping
- Protective and mitigating factors to enhance social support, learning, health and well-being across the lifespan

Apply the guiding principles of trauma-informed programs and practices used in schools and other systems that serve vulnerable children, youth, and families, with a focus on perceiving and assessing trauma.

Describe how interprofessional and team-based approaches are optimal to effectively engage in trauma-informed practice.

Draw upon the roles and functions of their own and other professionals from different fields of practice in team-based approaches to address trauma.
Identify key strategies for interprofessional collaborations that include goals for successful communication, coordination, and distribution of roles, functions, and tasks.

Objectives of the course directly engage themes related to understanding and applying research from the social and behavioral sciences; to engaging concepts related to multiculturalism and diversity; and to advocating for social justice and the promotion of prevention and interventions for vulnerable populations.

Social Work Ethics and Values

This course will engage the NASW’S Code of Ethics, specifically content pertaining to the core values and ethical principles of social work and standards of research and evaluation related to trauma and trauma services.

Intensive Focus on PODS

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

Grading

This course is graded as Satisfactory or Not Satisfactory based on completion of all assignments and attendance of the full-day workshop.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND CONTENT

Pre-Learning (Online)

Week 1 (week of August 31st): Defining Trauma

In Week 1, work independently on the following:

Visit the website for the National Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) found here: https://www.nctsn.org/ (Links to an external site.)

Then go to the section on “About Child Trauma” (https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/about-child-trauma (Links to an external site) and read the page in its entirety.
After reviewing these materials online, write a 1-paragraph response to each of the following questions. This will be journal entry 1.

- What are two things you learned about the impact of trauma on young people?
- How might childhood trauma might show up in work you do as a social worker, nurse, or school professional?
- What role do you, or might you eventually, play in helping to prevent or lessen trauma reactions in children?

**Week 2 (week of September 7th): Group Introductions and Context Setting**

After receiving your group assignment, use Zoom, Blue Jeans, Google Hangouts, or another platform to join with your group online. Introduce yourself to your group and discuss the questions below.

*As a reminder, all members are expected to participate in online meetings. If someone in your group does not participate, or if you have difficulty connecting with others in your group online, please notify me (tih@umich.edu) ASAP so that I can help resolve the problem.*

- What would you like to learn in this course and how does the content relate to your goals for higher education and your career?
- What led to your choosing the profession you have?
- What do you hope to achieve through your work?
- How familiar are you with ideas related to childhood adversities and trauma?
- Have you worked on inter-professional teams? If so, how did these teams function and what was their purpose. What do you recall about the experience?

Following this first meeting, write a journal entry of approximately one paragraph that summarizes what you learned about others in your group from this initial conversation. This will be journal entry 2.

**Week 3 (week of September 14th): Adverse Childhood Experiences and Toxic Stress**

On your own…read the article by Merrick et al. (2019) on Adverse Childhood Experiences. After reading the article, write a journal entry of approximately one paragraph that explains the racial and ethnic disparities that were observed in the study and the reasons why these disparities likely exist. This will be journal entry 3.

**Article:**

Also in Week 3, read a second article titled “Persistent Fear and Anxiety Can Affect Children’s Learning and Environment” (NSCDC 2010) and then reconnect with your group online to discuss how stress impacts the brains and bodies of children. Talk specifically about how chronic stress influences children’s learning and behavior. Summarize your discussion in a half page journal entry response. This will be journal entry 4.

Article:

Week 4 (week of September 21st): Trauma and Racism

In Week 4, read the article titled “Racism and Invisibility” by Franklin et al. (2006) and meet with your group online to discuss how this article relates to other themes of the course. After your discussion, write a 1-paragraph journal entry response about the excerpted paragraph below. In your response, please comment specifically on the issue of diagnosis and its relation to individual treatment for post-traumatic stress. What is your perspective on the issue of diagnosis and how does it influence your thinking about trauma work in schools, health care, and other settings? This will be journal entry 5.

"Carter, Forsyth, Mazzula, and Williams (2004) have presented an important caution, however, against a blaming-the-victim approach to racism and PTSD. They clarify that the use of the term “disorder” locates the problem in the individual person of color. These researchers argue that “it is more accurate to assess the effects of racism (e.g., harassment and discrimination) as psychological and emotional injury than as mental disorder since the effects of racism come from the sociocultural environment, not from an abnormality that resides within the individual” (p. 12). They caution clinicians that diagnosing persons of color who have encountered race-related trauma with PTSD may lead to individual treatment strategies that may ignore the systemic, environmental, and institutional factors of racism."

Article:

For those interested in this topic, you might also read:

https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/culturally-speaking/201509/the-link-between-racism-and-ptsd?eml (Links to an external site.)

or

This article by Alvarez (2020) provides an excellent review and discussion of research on the intersection of race, trauma, and education.


**Week 5 (week of September 28th): Trauma and Resilience**

After reading the article by Lynch et al. (2007) titled “The Story of My Strength,” re-connect online with your group another time to discuss your reactions to the narratives presented in the article. Refer to the questions that follow to guide your conversation:

- What stands out from these narratives about the ways in which individuals cope and rebound from highly stressful and traumatic experiences?
- Is resilience a given in all cases?
- What contributes to an individual's becoming resilient in the face of adversity?
- How do these ideas relate to practice in schools and other systems that serve children and families?
- What other issues come to mind as you reflect on these narratives?

Following your online discussion, write a half page summary of any individual take-aways you have from the reading and discussion with your group. This will be journal entry 6.

**Article:**


**Workshop: Saturday, October 3rd (Online)**

The workshop for this course will be held VIRTUALLY ON ZOOM (link available on Canvas). The session will begin at 9am and end by 4pm on Saturday, October 3rd. Please join the session a few minutes before 9 to get settled and address any connectivity issues. There will be a 1-hour lunch break during the workshop from approximately 12-1pm.

**Note: It is critical that all pre-learning work be completed before the in-person workshop. To attend the workshop on Saturday, October 3rd, you must upload your journal entries and summative statement (as a single Word document) by no later than 5pm on Thursday, October 1st. If this document is not uploaded before the workshop, you will be informed that the pre-learning component of the course is incomplete and you will not be permitted to continue with the course**

**Post-Workshop Debriefing (Online) Week of October 5th**
Following the workshop, reconnect online with your group one last time to debrief the experience and share your responses to these questions.

1. What are your overall reactions to the day?
2. What were the most useful parts of the workshop and why?
3. What did you find challenging, puzzling, or difficult?
4. What will you carry forward from the experience for your future training and field practice?

After your online debriefing session, write a 1-page final journal entry/reflection that responds to the following:

*Imagine yourself in the future speaking to members of your own profession about working with youth in schools or other systems. Outline for them 2-3 steps that professionals within your discipline can take to become more attuned and responsive to what we know about stress and trauma.*

Please upload your final journal entry as a single Word document by no later than 5pm on Friday, October 9th. After receiving your journal entry, I will review your work and assign you a grade (Satisfactory/Not Satisfactory) for the course.