**Course title:** Culturally Responsive and Evidence-Informed Assessment with Children, Youth, and Families  
**Course #/term:** SW 621, Section 002, Fall Term, 2021  
**Time and place:** Wednesday, 9:00 to 12:00 in-person  
**Credit hours:** 3  
**Prerequisites:** [Course Number] or permission of instructor  
**Instructor:** Laura Sanders  
**Pronouns:** she/her/hers  
**Contact info:** Email: lsanders@umich.edu  
Phone: 734-678-4814  
You may expect a response within 48 hours  
**Office:** 2760  
**Office hours:** After class, and by appointment

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1. **Course Description:**
   This course is intended to develop knowledge and skills for practice with children, youth, and families, with special attention to assessment. Students learn about
varying approaches to assessment, the various contexts in which assessment takes place, and the assessment skills used with children, youth, and families. Students will be familiar with both strengths and limitations of assessments, and how assessments are used (e.g., in school, juvenile justice, and child welfare forensic assessment) including assessments for intervention recommendations. Students will learn how to evaluate overall functioning, conduct developmental assessments, and make a determination about child, youth, and family service needs. Students will learn different models of assessment and the role of interdisciplinary assessments (e.g., medical examinations and psychological testing) in the overall assessment process. Students will also become acquainted with widely used assessment practices with children, youth, and families in terms of initial screening, risk assessment, and structured decision making. Existing evidence for their utility will be explored. Students will also be sensitized to their personal reaction to child and youth demonstrations of trauma and crises. They will be appraised of professional expectations, such as mandatory reporting of child maltreatment, and will learn about the general structure of service delivery to child and youth clients. Sensitization to the roles of power and privilege of professionals as they relate to both children and their parents is an integral part of the course. In addition, the course will address the sometimes-conflicting needs of children and families and child-serving systems (e.g., legal system; school) impacting assessment outcomes and recommendations. The diversity of children, youth, and families, in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, class, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and other social identities will be explored. Of particular focus is the over-representation of children of color and the differential response of various child and youth serving systems based upon social identity differences. Students will gain insights about how differences between themselves and client systems affect assessment process including outcomes and recommendations.

a. Objectives:
1) Describe theories that explain child and youth risks and protections.
2) Describe the roles and responsibilities of social workers in assessing children, youth, and families, including mandatory reporting of child maltreatment, multidisciplinary approaches to assessment.
3) Describe personal, professional, and societal responses to children, youth and families at risk and their impact on assessment observations, impressions, and recommendations.
4) Demonstrate knowledge and beginning skills in engaging diverse client systems that reflect knowledge about diversity (e.g., gender, developmental age, socio-economic class, culture, ethnicity, race, religion, physical and mental
ability, sexual orientation, national origin) and power differentials between themselves and clients.
5) Recognize the impact of discrimination based on economic, racial, ethnic, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and other differences on client system presentation during assessment, and of the effect the worker’s own personal experiences have their assessment observations.
6) Recognize the impact involuntariness has on assessment, including client system relationship with the worker and child-serving system based on past and current initial responses.
7) Demonstrate beginning ability to conduct individual and family assessments, including assessing parent-child attachment, evaluating overall functioning, and making recommendations consistent with assessment findings.
8) Incorporate a perspective that honors clients’ strengths as well as vulnerabilities to both assessments and treatment with child welfare clients.

b. Course Design:
This course will make use of lectures, demonstrations, discussion, media and online experiential activities, and small group exercises. Students will demonstrate their knowledge acquisition by means of class demonstration, written responses to assignments, participation in class discussion, in-class assignments, several brief reflection papers, and a biopsychosocial assessment of a child or youth, and their family.

For this section, given the instructors expertise in Animal Assisted Intervention and Learning, we will practice assessment skills (self-regulation and awareness, observation, engagement, reflection, interpretation, and cultural sensitivity) in partnerships with animals in an experiential activity.

c. Intensive Focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (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. Using 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. Emphasis in this course will focus on teaching students’ sensitivity, respect, and competence when working with clients where there are racial /
ethnic, cultural, socio-economic class, religious, gender, ability, nationality, and other differences presented by the client system. Case examples will highlight how differences, issues relevant to impoverishment, and involuntariness affect clients’ responses to assessment. Students will understand that children are at a fundamental disadvantage in systems that are controlled by adults. The role of power and privilege will be a theme throughout the course. Students will explore the ways in which diversity (e.g., race / ethnicity, socio-economic disadvantage, and gender) are differentially responded to in initial responses, and students will learn that an appropriate role for social workers in oppressive child-serving systems is often that of advocate. In this course students will explore the role of prevention and system disruption in situations in which institutional processes unjustly disadvantage client systems based on social identity differences. To the degree possible, literature and resources will be used that demonstrate evidence-informed practice and students will be taught skills to critically reflect upon practices in which social science knowledge and research findings wittingly or unwittingly demonstrate bias, stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.

Class Requirements

Text and class materials

The text for this class is:

Delahook, Mona (2019) Beyond Behaviors: Using Brain Science and Compassion to Understand and Solve Children’s Behavioral Challenges, PESI Publishing and Media, WI.

This book is very practical and provides tools for social workers to effectively assess children from a wholistic and trauma-informed perspective. There are numerous ways to get this book. Students are very creative about getting books from Amazon, renting them, kindle, etc.

We will also be using articles and some, videos, and podcasts that can be easily accessed via links provided. I will place all required readings/videos/podcasts on our course Canvas site in the modules that correspond to the weeks they are due.

You are expected to read all the required readings for each week although we will not regularly discuss all of them in detail necessarily. Some of them are supplemental to the course content and you will be expected to be able to apply
them in depth in several of your assignments. The required readings beyond the
text will be accessed through “modules” on your canvas site.

Attendance, class participation and expectations:

1) Class attendance in-person is expected. There will not be asynchronous
materials to substitute for class attendance because the class is highly
experiential, so plan to be at every class. One absence without point penalty is
allowed. I would like to know if you are going to be absent, so please email me
in advance, even if it is last minute due to illness. I do not excuse absences, but
I would like to know what is going on with you if you chose to share it. If you miss
more than one class, expect to lose at least 3-5 points off your final accumulation
for the course for every absence. Of course, if you are facing a crisis, talk to me
asap so we can plan for you to succeed in the course. Class attendance is so
important because lecture, activities and discussion will focus how to practice
and provide opportunities for you to expand your assessment skills. Most class
sessions will begin at 9:00 and will end at 11:50 with a 10-minute break. I will
provide an office hour after class by appointment.

This is the first time this course is being offered in person and the course outline
is a work in progress. There may be some class sessions that include
asynchronous expectations beyond readings, for example recorded lectures,
video, etc. I will be sure you know what is expected for the following week.

2) In class, I ask you that you fully engage interpersonally and do not have
electronics on unless you need your computer to take notes. Please do not
distract with your phone, email, or other social media during class. I need your
full attention during my lectures, and we all need each other’s undivided attention
when we are participating in class. I believe this is one way to practice good
social work (key word – “social”) – fully showing up in mind, body, attention, and
expression. I will be there with you in full, and I need that of you as well.

3) It is expected that you will turn in all assignments when they are due, and that
they reflect your best work to date, as we are all a work in progress. Please
communicate with me over email if you want an extension on an assignment due
date. I am much more flexible about due dates than I am about attendance. I
would rather have you come to class prepared and take longer on an assignment
than miss preparing for, or being in class, so please contact me if you need an
extension and I will very likely be flexible with no reduction in points.

Accommodations:
If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, please let me know asap. 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 pronouns uses will be honored.

**Trauma reminder warning:**
This course is heavily trauma-informed and focused. For any student who has experienced adversity in childhood or trauma it will likely bring up painful material. Students may experience a range of emotions throughout the course and may feel vulnerable. All feelings are acceptable, but you will be expected to be able to manage them. There will not be sufficient follow up for processing painful memories or severe anxiety that might get triggered by the course content. In general, it is important that students who expect to struggle seek support or therapeutic assistance to work through their own recovery during their graduate education so you can be present and effective in working with wounded clients. Wounded healers who are aware and have worked toward resilience make some of the best social workers. See resources for this below.

**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 ssw.wellness@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

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources. They include:

- Safety and emergency preparedness
- Mental health and well-being
- Teaching evaluations
- Proper use of names and pronouns
- Accommodations for students with disabilities
- Religious/spiritual observances
- Military deployment
- Writing skills and expectations

**Academic integrity and plagiarism**
COVID-19 Statement - Required Health-Related Class Absences

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. Your participation in this course is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including properly wearing a face covering in class and compliance with the University COVID-19 Vaccination Policy. Other applicable and additional safety measures may be described in the Campus Maize & Blueprint. Your ability to participate in this course may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the Office for Institutional Equity and those seeking an exemption related to the vaccination requirement should submit an exemption request through WolverineAccess. I also encourage you to review the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the COVID-related Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Health-Related Class Absences

Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and coming to campus if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. School of Social Work students who miss class due to illness of any kind will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with alternative learning opportunities. Please notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a doctor’s note) for medical excuses is not required.

Recording Class

Audio and video recording of in-class lectures and discussions is prohibited without the advance written permission of the instructor. Students with an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings must present documentation to the instructor in advance of any recording being done. The instructor reserves the right to disallow recording for a portion of any class time where privacy is a special concern. If the instructor chooses to record a class, they will decide which classes, if any, are recorded, what portion of each class is recorded, and whether a recording is made available on the course management website. On days when classes are recorded, students will be notified in advance that a recording will occur and be provided with an option to opt-out. Class recordings and course materials may not be reproduced, sold, published, or distributed to others, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the instructor.

Recommended Resources:
There are numerous “resource files” under “files” on your canvas site which include readings about working with specific populations and issues. Please check them out. They can help you get information for this class or others.

**Highly Recommended additional books:**


Post Bryan, *From Fear to Love* (2010) and/or *The Great Behavior Breakdown* (2009), Post Institutes and Associates, Palmyra, VA

Other required readings are posted on Canvas, files, required readings and appear by author.

**Recommended Optional Books to have in your library:**


Forbes, Heather, *Help for Billy: A Beyond Consequences Approach to Helping Challenging Children in the Classroom*, Beyond Consequences Institute


Herman, Judith, *Trauma and Recovery* (1992), Basic Books, NY.


FOUR ASSIGNMENTS:
These assignments are described in detail under “Assignments” on your Canvas site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Percent of overall grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genogram and Ecomap Assignment</td>
<td>Sept 22</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring Standardized Assessment Tools: Student Presentations</td>
<td>Oct 6</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing Assessment Skills with Animal Partners</td>
<td>Oct 20</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practicing Assessment Skills with Adolescents Reflection</td>
<td>Nov 10</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biopsychosocial Assessment Paper</td>
<td>Nov 17</td>
<td>40%</td>
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WRITING AND GRADING:
All written assignments are expected to be typed, double-spaced, using 12-point font, with 1” margins on each side, using APA style. It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, which can result in severe penalties according to the School of Social Work policies. If writing or editing is difficult for you, please seek help from Betsy Williams, our writing consultant. [https://ssw.umich.edu/contacts/profiles/staff/betsywil](https://ssw.umich.edu/contacts/profiles/staff/betsywil) If writing errors interfere with the flow of your good ideas, I will return the paper to you for further editing and writing assistance.

The grading scale is:
A = 100% - 95%  
A- = 94% - 90%  
B+ = 89% - 86%  
B = 85% - 83%  
B- = 82% - 80%  
C+ = 79% -76%  
C = 75% -73%  
C- = 72% - 70%

I reserve the option to give an A+ for students who meet a 100%, have excellent attendance and participate in class.

CLASS AGENDA

Class readings, assignments, and topics are subject to change based on the class’s progress, interests, and the instructor’s discretion. Below is an outline of the expected week to week plan. Any changes will be communicated via Canvas announcements or in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Required Readings &amp; Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Orientation to each other and the course</td>
<td>Read:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 1</td>
<td>• Introductions:</td>
<td>• SW 621 Syllabus</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Class plan and structure</td>
<td>• Speaking Up Without Tearing Down</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Review syllabus, and assignments</td>
<td>• Interrupting Bias: Calling out vs. Calling In</td>
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<td>• FFTs and no polish</td>
<td>• From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Intro to assessment/why assess</td>
<td>• Safe and Brave Spaces</td>
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<td>Supporting podcast: Optional</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Unlocking Us Podcast: Brene on FFTs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Antiracist Assessment, Cultural Humility,</td>
<td>Read:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 8</td>
<td>Risks and Protections.</td>
<td>• Text: Delahooke, Chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strengths-based Assessment</td>
<td>• UMSSW Anti-racism Statement</td>
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<td>• Davis, Anti-black Racism Takes a Heavy Toll on Mental Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Reflexive Awareness in Cross-cultural Assessment and Components of a Good Biopsychosocial Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td>* Case Example: Dialogic Cross-cultural Social Work: The case of Aduke</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Lecture: Components of a Good Biopsychosocial Assessment</td>
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| Read: |
| Text: Delahooke, Chapter 2 |

| Supporting videos: Optional |
| #RaceAnd: Judith LeBlanc |
| #RaceAnd: Sonia Guiñansaca |
| #RaceAnd: Kay Ulanday Barrett |
| #RaceAnd: Arielle Newton |

- Culturally sensitive and anti-racist Assessment
- Experiential: The Case of William: Assessing Risk and Protective factors across systems in groups
- Cultural humility/cultural responsiveness
- The use of genograms and ecomaps

- **Ethics Alive! Cultural Competence, Awareness, Sensitivity, Humility, and Responsiveness: What's the Difference?**
- **Biopsychosocial Perspective of Adolescent Health and Disease**
- **NASW Code of Ethics**

| **Ethics Alive! Cultural Competence, Awareness, Sensitivity, Humility, and Responsiveness: What's the Difference?** |
| **Biopsychosocial Perspective of Adolescent Health and Disease** |
| **NASW Code of Ethics** |

**Week 3**

**Sept. 15**

**Reflexive Awareness in Cross-cultural Assessment and Components of a Good Biopsychosocial Assessment**

- Case Example: Dialogic Cross-cultural Social Work: The case of Aduke
- Lecture: Components of a Good Biopsychosocial Assessment

**Read:**

- Text: Delahooke, Chapter 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Supporting videos: Optional</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept.22</td>
<td>● <strong>Beyond the Cliff - Laura van Dernoot Lipsky</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Factors for Young Children and Biopsychosocial Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>● The impact of attachment and early trauma</td>
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<td>● Executive functioning with Julie Ribado</td>
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<td>● Experiential: The use of play in assessment</td>
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<tr>
<th>Assignment due:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genogram and Eco-map Assignment</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Read:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test: Delahooke, Chapter 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>● <strong>Assessment of Young Children</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>● Anderson, Assessment and Development of Executive Function (EF) During Childhood</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Optional reading: <strong>Children, Executive Functioning, and Digital Media: A Review</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Supporting videos:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Executive Functioning in Young Children with Julie Ribaudo:</strong> (We will view this lecture in class)</td>
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</table>
| Week 5  | Practicing Assessment Skills through Animal Assisted Learning - We will practice these assessment skills experientially:  
  - Setting safety and structure  
  - Self-awareness and regulation  
  - Cultural humility  
  - Non-judgmental observation  
  - Reflexive and radical engagement  
  - Reflection  
  - Interpretation or sensemaking | Read:  
Text: Delahouke, Chapter 4  
- Sanders, Animal Assisted Interventions: Introductory handout  
Supporting video: Optional  
- I went for an Intake and Never Went Back |
| Week 6  | Exploring Standardized Assessment Tools  
Class presentations on the following tools: Achenbach CBCL, PHQ-9, and GAD-7, BASC, CAFAS: Child PTSD Scale, Suicide assessment scales for children and youth, Child Dissociative Checklist | Assignment due:  
Assessment Tool presentation  
Read:  
Text: Delahouke, Chapter 5  
Supporting video: Optional  
- Getting relationships right |
|---|---|---|
| **Assessing Young Children using Ages and Stages**  
- Guest speaker on the use of Ages and Stages Questionnaire and IEP  
- Cross-cultural dilemmas in the use of ASQ  
- Understanding the IEP: Individualized Education Plan | Read:  
Text: Delahooke, Chapter 6  
- Charkaluk, et. al. Ages and Stages Questionnaire at 3 Years for Predicting IQ at 5–6 Years, PEDIATRICS Volume 139, number 4, April 2017: e20162798  
| Week 8 Oct 20 | **Understanding Trauma and Assessment in Children**  
- Family violence  
- Child abuse  
- Adverse Childhood | **Assignment Due:**  
Practicing Assessment Skills with Animal Partners Reflection  
Read:  
Text: Delahooke, Chapter 7 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 9</th>
<th>Child Welfare, Mandated Reporting and Other Ethical Dilemmas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 27</td>
<td>Reporting issues: Ethical challenges, gray areas, and biases</td>
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<td>Difficult child welfare cases</td>
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<td>Forensically sensitive assessment</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 10</th>
<th>Building Assessment Skills with Adolescents</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 3</td>
<td>Read: Text: Delahooke, Chapter 9</td>
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</table>

**Experiences**
- The neurobiology of trauma
- Trauma-informed care

**Tip 57:** *Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services*

**Supporting video:** Optional:
- Foster Documentary

**Read:**
- Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect, Child Welfare Information Gateway
- Hoads, Is it Conflict or Abuse?
- Alternatives to Calling DCFS
- Promoting Safe and Stable Families, Detroit Center for Family Advocacy
- Hershkowitz, Allegation Rates and Credibility Assessment in Forensic Interviews of Alleged Child Abuse Victims: Comparing the Revised and Standard NICHD Protocols
| Experiential Practice Guests: Youth actors | The HEADSS Assessment Guide  
Oosterhoff, Adolescents Motivations to Engage in Social Distancing During Covid -19  
**Biopsychosocial Perspective of Adolescent Health and Disease**  
**Tweens, Teens, Tech, and Mental Health**  
Supporting podcasts and videos: Optional  
**The Mysterious Workings of the Adolescent Brain**  
- **Kids These Days: Why is being a teen so complicated?**  
- **Kids These Days: What's it like living with anxiety?** |
|---|---|
| Week 11  
Nov 10 | **Assessing for Suicide in teens**  
- Addressing serious risk/danger and associated complications |
| | **Assignment Due:**  
Practicing Assessment Skills with Adolescents Reflection  
Read:  
- Reynolds, W. M., & Mazza, J. J. (1999). Assessment of Suicidal Ideation in Inner-City Children and Young Adolescents: Reliability and Validity of the Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire-JR. School Psychology Review, |

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17
<p>| Week 12  | Assignment Due: | Biopsychosocial Assessment Paper |
| Nov 17 |  ● Working with LGBTQ Children and Youth | |
| |
| ● Affirmative assessment principles |
| ● Risk and Protective factors |
| ● Assessing gender identity |
| ● Working with difficult parents |
| ● Advocacy starts with assessment | |
| |
|  ● Posner, et al., Factors in Assessment of Suicidality in Youth  |
|  ● Bo-Kyung et al., Statewide Trends of Trauma History, Suicidality, and Mental Health Among Youth Entering the Juvenile Justice System  |
|  ● Sandmaier, It Takes a Tribe- What It's Like to Raise or Be a Transgender Child,  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 13 Dec 1</th>
<th>Current issues and Moving from Assessment to Intervention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Linking assessment to realistic expectations for change</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Setting clear treatment goals</td>
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<td>- Racial injustice</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Read:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Building Developmental Relationships During the COVID-19 Crisis</strong></td>
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</table>

Supporting videos: Optional

- **Voices of Transgender Adolescents in Healthcare**
- **Gender Diversity and Affirmation for Children and Adolescents**
| Week 14 | Dec 8 | Self-care and where do we go from here?  
- Where are your gaps?  
- What do you still need to learn? | Read:  
**Brene Brown, Living into our Values from Dare to Lead**  
Supporting video: Optional  
**Every Kid Needs a Champion** |

- **COVID-19 and Race: Youth Voice and Power**  
- **Black Student Voices: What We Need from Our Schools**