



Course title:	Trauma Basics	
Course #/term:	SW 540-001, Winter 2023	
Time and place:	Asynchronous 1/9-2/26 Live Class 2/18	
Credit hours:	1	
Prerequisites:	None	
Instructor:	Jennifer Towns, PhD, LMSW	
Pronouns:	She, her, hers	
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	You may expect a response within 24 hours	
Office:	3798 SSWB	
Office hours:	By appointment	

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.

Course Format

This course uses readings, written work (journal entries), and required online group meetings to prepare each student for an all-day workshop using Zoom on **Saturday, Feb 18th, 2023 9-3pm**. 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.

Grading for Course: Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

In order to earn a Satisfactory grade for this course, participants must a) prepare for, attend, and participate in all small group discussions in their entirety, b) submit assignments that satisfactorily address the assignment requirements, and c) attend the entire workshop on Feb 18th, 2023. You will not be able to pass the course without attending your small group meetings and the mandatory Feb 18th workshop.

Please notify the instructor ASAP if you have concerns about meeting any of these expectations.

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. (See instructions below).

Class Structure, Process, and Assignments

Duration of Course: January 9 - Feb 24th.

Schedule: 5 weeks of asynchronous work and one synchronous day-long mandatory Zoom Workshop: Saturday, Feb 18th, 9-3pm

Format: Asynchronous and Synchronous online learning, required small group virtual pre-learning discussions, required virtual workshop. All course activities are provided via a remote learning format.

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.

--Process--

The course officially begins on January 9th.

In Week 1 (Monday January 9th), you will work independently to gain an understanding of trauma and its impacts on children. You will receive your small (4-5 students) group assignment and work with your other small group members to set up a virtual meeting time. Group meetings begin Week 2.

Starting in Week 2 (week of January 16th), small group meetings begin. At this point, you should have contacted all individuals in your assigned small group and scheduled times to meet. **Participation in online group meetings is a requirement of the course. To ensure full participation, you will be asked to attest to having participated in all online group sessions when uploading your 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. These entries should be completed during the week they are assigned.

Journal entries 1-3 are due on Canvas **Sunday January 29th by 5pm**. Please upload Journal Entries 1-3 as a single word document.

By **Sunday February 12th, at 11:59pm**, Journal Entries Week 4-5 are due with the Summative Statement, including statement of participation (See details below). Please upload Journal Entries 4-5 with Summative Statement as a single word document.

Due **Thursday February 23rd at 11:59pm**, 1-page final journal entry/reflection.

Weekly Schedule

Pre-Learning (Online)

Week 1 (week of January 9th): Defining Trauma
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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. Save this to combine it with the next 2 journals - you will submit all 3 in a singular document by January 29th.

- What are two things you learned about the impact of trauma on young people?
- How might childhood trauma 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?

After receiving your group assignment, work with your other group members to set up a remote group meeting time for Week 2. Use Zoom, Blue Jeans, Google Hangouts, or another platform to join with your group online. These small groups meetings are required. Please contact the instructor if you are having trouble connecting with your group.

Week 2 (January 16th): Group Introductions and Context Setting

On your own read, SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach, July 2014 pp 1-10. [SAMHSA Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach](#) (Links to an external site.)

After receiving your group assignment, use Zoom, Blue Jeans, Google Hangouts, or another platform to arrange a meeting and join with your group online. Introduce yourself to your group and discuss the questions below. These small groups work best if the group is mindful about turn taking, making sure that everyone has a chance to speak and listen, and students come to group having completed the assigned readings in advance. Please work together that to make sure that the time is being used wisely to discuss specific course-related reading and other content and to share with each other as interprofessional team members.

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 (shermanb@umich.edu) ASAP so that I can help resolve the problem.

- Introduce yourself (Name, pronouns, other important parts of your identities you would like to share, program, and course of study, and one non-school/non-profession related interest).
- 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?
- Related to the SAMSA article, please discuss the 3 E's of Trauma, and the 4 R's of Trauma Informed Response.

Following this first meeting, write a journal entry of approximately one paragraph that summarizes what you learned about others in your group, particularly about their thinking, hopes, and ideas related to childhood adversities and trauma. This will be journal entry 2.

<p>Week 3 (week of January 23rd): Adverse Childhood Experiences and Toxic Stress</p>

Read the article by Merrick et al. (2019) on Adverse Childhood Experiences.

[Merrick, M. T., Ford, D. C., Ports, K. A., Guinn, A. S., Chen, J., Klevens, J., . . . Mercy, J. A. \(2019\). Vital signs: Estimated proportion of adult health problems attributable to Adverse Childhood Experiences and implications for prevention – 25 States, 2015–2017. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Atlanta, GA.](#)

Also in Week 3, read a second article titled “Persistent Fear and Anxiety Can Affect Children’s Learning and Environment” (NSCDC 2010).

[National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. \(2010\). Persistent Fear and Anxiety Can Affect Young Children’s Learning and Development: Working Paper No. 9. \(Links to an external site.\)](#) 


Reconnect with your group online and follow this agenda:

- 1) Do a quick check-in re: how the week went for everyone by taking a moment for each person to share, about EITHER a rose (eg something positive), OR a thorn (something tricky/disappointing/painful) OR a rosebud (something you looking forward to).
- 2) Re: the Merrick et al. article, what was the role of the stacking of adverse childhood experiences and some of their findings related to possible protective and prevention strategies related ACES?
- 3) Re: the assigned NSCDC 2010 article, how stress impacts the brains and bodies of children. Talk specifically about how chronic stress influences children’s learning and behavior.

Following your group meeting, summarize your discussion of these two questions in a 2-3 paragraph journal entry response. This will be journal entry 3. Submit Journals 1-3 in a singular document by January 29th.

Week 4 (January 30th): Trauma and Racism

In Week 4, read the article titled "Racism and Invisibility" by Franklin et al. (2006).


[Franklin, A.J., Boyd-Franklin, N., & Kelly, S. \(2006\). Racism and invisibility. *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, 6, 2-3, 9-30.](#) 

Reconnect with your group online to follow this agenda:

- 1) Do a quick check-in re: how the week went for everyone by taking a moment for each person to share, EITHER a rose (eg something positive), OR a thorn (something tricky/disappointing/painful) OR a rosebud (something you looking forward to).
- 2) How does this article relate to other themes of the course?
- 3) Consider the excerpted paragraph below. Discuss in your group how the trauma of racism and other forms of oppression can be acknowledged without pathologizing those who are harmed. How might these concepts influence your thinking about trauma work in schools, health care, and other settings?

"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:

[Franklin, A.J., Boyd-Franklin, N., & Kelly, S. \(2006\). Racism and invisibility. *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, 6, 2-3, 9-30.](#) Download Franklin, A.J., Boyd-Franklin, N., & Kelly, S. (2006). Racism and invisibility. *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, 6, 2-3, 9-30. 

Summarize your discussion of these two questions in a 2-3 paragraph journal entry response. This will be journal entry 4 (which will be combined with Journal 5 and submitted by February 12th).

For those looking for additional resources on 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

Anderson, R.E., Saleem, F.T., and Huguley, J.P. (2019, Oct. 28). Choosing to see the racial stress that afflicts our Black students. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 101 (3), 20-25. (<https://kappanonline.org/racial-stress-black-students-anderson-saleem-huguley/> (Links to an external site.))

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

[Alvarez, A. \(2020\). Seeing race in the research on youth trauma and education: A critical review. *Review of Educational Research*. Download Alvarez, A. \(2020\). Seeing race in the research on youth trauma and education: A critical review. Review of Educational Research.](#)

Week 5 (February 6th): Trauma and Resilience

Read the article by Lynch et al. (2007) titled "The Story of My Strength" and watching Dr. El-Khani's Ted Talk from " Bombs to Bread".

[Lynch, S.M., Keasler , A.L., Reaves, R.C., Channer, E.G., & Bukowski, L.T. \(2007\) The story of my strength. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 14,1-2, 75-97. \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Dr. El-Khani "From Bombs to Bread" TED TALK [From Bombs to Bread Dr. El-Khani TED Talk](#)

Connect online with your group another time to discuss your reactions to the narratives presented in the materials. Refer to the questions that follow to guide your conversation.

Here is the agenda:

Doing a quick check-in re: how the week went for everyone by taking a moment for each person to share, about EITHER a rose (eg something positive), OR a thorn (something tricky/disappointing/painful) OR a rosebud (something you looking forward to).

Questions for your group meeting:

- 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 the takeaways you have from the reading/Ted Talk and discussion with your group. This will be journal entry 5.

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Summative Statement including Statement of Participation (Due Thursday February 12th 5:00pm , with Journal Entries 4-5, all as one word document). In addition to journal entries, complete a 2-page (double-spaced) 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 primarily 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 statement of your participation: "By submitting this statement, I attest to having fully participated in all online group meetings and discussions."

Required Weekend Workshop: Saturday, February 18th (9-3pm)

The workshop for this course will be held **VIRTUALLY ON ZOOM**. The session will begin at 9am and end by 3pm on Saturday, February 18th. This session is mandatory to successfully complete the course. Please join the session a few minutes before 9 to get settled and address any connectivity issues. There will be a 1/2 lunch break during the workshop from approximately 12-12:30pm.

**** Note: It is critical that all pre-learning work be completed before the in-person workshop. To attend the workshop on Saturday, February 18th, you must upload your journal entries and summative statement (as a single Word document) by no later than 5pm on February 12th. 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 February 20th.

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 debrief journal entry as a single Word document by no later than 11:59pm on Thursday February 23rd. After receiving your journal entry, I will review your work and assign you a grade (Satisfactory/Not Satisfactory) for the course.

Grading

The goal of this class is personal reflection, self-awareness, and growth – which cannot be quantified through grade allocation. However, you will have assignments due throughout the course that have specific expectation related to critical analysis and reflection, and that – versus information regurgitation – will be what you are graded on. This course is a Pass/Fail. Therefore, completion of your asynchronous work, your small group attendance, and the day-long live workshop are all mandatory.

Course Policies

COVID-19 STATEMENT: 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. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in this course on an in-person/hybrid basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distancing of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the [Wolverine Culture of Care](#) and the [University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19](#). Your ability to participate in this course in-person/hybrid 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](#). If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis. 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.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES: This semester is unique in its need to rely so heavily on electronics for the delivery and receipt of material and experience. We will use electronic devices as needed to enhance the learning environment. Please be respectful to your peers and do not text/surf the internet/etc while actively participating in a class.

COURSE CHANGES: Course topics, assigned readings and/or assignments may change at the professor's discretion. Students will be notified of course changes through Blackboard and updates will be reviewed in class as applicable.

DISABILITIES/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT/OTHER CONCERNS: According to university policy, we will provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have on-going disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact their instructor early in the semester to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. You also must be registered with Academic Services so that official documentation can be obtained to ensure appropriate accommodations.

There are times where an individual or "one-time" accommodation may be needed for more acute issues. It is imperative that you discuss this with your professor immediately, especially if it will impede your ability to participate in the classroom or complete necessary class requirements. At that time, it is up to your professor's discretion on whether accommodations can be made related to undocumented acute concerns. If it is determined that it may be a long-term or on-going concern, your professor may refer you to Academic Services for guidance and/or documentation for the accommodation required. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact Academic Services to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

ACADEMIC HONESTY & INTEGRITY: Students are expected to adhere to the University of Michigan Student Code of Conduct and the Academic Integrity Policy. Plagiarism will not be accepted in any form in the class or in assignments. When presenting any information from any source, whether directly quoted or paraphrased, citations are required. Violations of any of the above will result in a grade of zero for assignments affected and a referral to the college judicial system.

Social work majors are also bound by the **NASW Code of Ethics** (see Social Work Student Handbook.) Violation of the **Code of Ethics** is grounds for dismissal from the Social Work Program.

TIMELINESS OF ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION: Assignment due dates are listed on the course schedule. Failure to turn in an assignment as outlined will result in a reduced grade. 10% will automatically be deducted if the assignment is late, with 50% reduction after 2 days late, and no credit if 3 or more days late.

PROFESSIONALISM: Social work majors are preparing to be professionals and are expected to behave as such in the classroom. Additionally, students from other major disciplines are expected to adhere to these behavioral guidelines:

- a. Participation.** Students are expected to attend class and come prepared to actively engage in the learning process. Self-awareness is crucial so that you know how best to contribute. Learning to be assertive is important to participation.
- b. Respect.** There will be different ideas about the material presented in class. You can argue and disagree but you must do so with respect for your peers and for the instructor.
- c. Responsibility.** Professional behavior includes coming to class on time, turning in assignments when they are due, and following through on commitments.
- d. Confidentiality.** Classes often demand participation and sharing of information or experiences which are personal in nature. It is important that students feel comfortable and safe in class. Students are expected to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and to respect the confidence of their peers.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION WITH PROFESSOR: Student email will be answered within 24 hours. It is your responsibility to communicate with me at any point in time. If you are struggling, please reach out so that assistance can be given.

***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*
- *Academic integrity and plagiarism*