

Sarah K Howell, MSW, LCSW

(713) 427-9191

starcounselingconsultation.com

SarahKHowellLCSW@gmail.com

SOCIAL WORK EXPERIENCE

School Social Worker: Las Americas Newcomer School, HISD, Houston, TX

2014- Present

- Provide mental health services and crisis intervention with a trauma focus to newcomer students.
- Design, implement and advise on creating a trauma sensitive school.
- Create and implement a year long trauma informed newcomer social emotional cultural orientation curriculum that provides daily lessons for students to help them acclimate to life in the United States.
- Design trauma informed therapeutic and community safety interventions to protect and maintain immigrant student and family safety.
- Introduced animal assisted therapy with two therapy rabbits
- Built and utilized a Trauma Sensitive Sensory Butterfly Garden on campus
- Designed and implement a Restorative Garden on campus (expected completion Fall 2020)
- Overhaul the campus discipline structure by co-creating and implementing restorative justice for newcomers.
- Written and managed \$75,000 grant from Simmons Foundation to further trauma informed work on campus
- Serve as a campus administrator, manage day to day campus activities, and create/oversee all mental health programming including supervise 8 interns
- Coordinate plan and lead frequent tours and presentations on the campus to train visitors and media on forced migrant trauma and educating newcomer students. (Visitors include national funders groups to UNHCR Deputy Director Kelly Clements, to teams of medical students)
- Provide support and guidance to teachers and staff about working with a diverse immigrant and refugee population and how to use a trauma sensitive approach.
- Provide campus, district and community trainings and media requests regarding forced migrant trauma and newcomer students.

Social Work Department Coordinator: Houston reVision

2018-Present

- Design and build a girls program for at risk community and probation youth four evenings a week
- Provide individual therapy for youth on probation
- Provide in depth therapeutic case management for at risk youth and youth on probation with a special focus on immigrant youth involved in the justice system
- Manage the Harris Center Co-Location at reVision as a piloted community mental health site

Founder and Owner: STAR (*Survivors of Torture, Asylees and Refugees*) Counseling and Consultation, PLLC

2019-Present

- Create and provide training and technical support for school and community organizations around working with and supporting forced migrants, trauma, trauma informed education and social emotional learning
- Provide consultation and guidance for organizations working with refugee and immigrant students and clients
- Provide individual trauma informed therapy, Sondermind Network
- Contract Trainer for National Hispanic and Latino MHTTC (lead webinars, design trainings and speak on trauma and interventions)
- Contractor Presenter for Harris County Protective Services Region 6 Training Institute
- Awarded \$60,000 subgrant from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through the Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative to develop a trauma informed training manual for school districts and organizations serving children that have been detained by immigration July 2019-December 2020

CEO: STARS (*Survivors of Torture, Asylees and Refugee Support*) nonprofit, 501c3 status in process

2020-Present

S. Howell

Internship: Tahirih Justice Center, Houston, TX, January 2013 – August 2013

Internship: YMCA International Services, Houston, TX

TPAP: Trafficking Persons Assistance Program, October 2011- May 2012

Appointed to Mayor's Advisory Committee for Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (MACIRA) 2010-2020

Appointed to City of Houston's Welcoming Houston Task Force, 2016- 2017

Facilitate the Central American Minors Working group 2016- Present

EDUCATION

University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy and Practice (Penn SP2), Philadelphia, PA

Doctorate of Clinical Social Work, expected graduation May 2023

Research interests and focus:

- Nontraditional, brief trauma focused crisis intervention strategies for forced migrant youth
- Intersection between and presentation of antisocial behaviors (conduct disorder and antisocial pd diagnosis) and trauma in immigrant communities
- Attachment trauma in unaccompanied refugee minors with a focus on Central American minors and gang activity
- The role of cortisol in the stress response system as it relates to complex, developmental trauma in forced migrants

University of Houston, Graduate College of Social Work, Houston, TX

Master of Social Work, August 2013

Political Specialization and Clinical Concentration

Honors: Phi Kappa Phi

Phi Alpha, National Honor Society for Social Work Students

Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

BA, International Politics and Diplomacy, Minor: French, Minor: Economics, May 2007

Study abroad: Geneva, Switzerland Spring 2006 and Caen, France Summer 2005

Licensure: Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) #58920

Skills & Languages: Conversational Spanish

Therapy Trainings and Certifications

- Play Therapy courses, 2020
- CPI Certified, 2019
- Trauma Focused CBT
- EMDR, Basic Trained, completed June 2017
- EMDR Advanced Protocols: ASSYST, ASSYST-G, EMDR-IGTP, EMDR-PRECI, June 2019
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), May 2018
- Pet Partners: Animal Assisted Therapy, Therapy Animal Handler Workshop, June 2018
- Basic Restorative Practices and Facilitating Restorative Conferences
International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) New York, NY August 2018
- Trauma and Grief Component Therapy, Texas Children's Trauma and Grief Center, Feb 2019
- Train the Trainer: Houston Building Resilience, April 2019
- Train the Trainer School-Based Mental Health Services for Hispanic and Latino Children Youth April 24-25, 2019 with the National Hispanic and Latino MHTTC

S. Howell

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Teacher, ESL (English as a Second Language) – Houston Community College (HCC) Houston, TX, 2016-2017

Instructor, ESL (English as a Second Language) - Bilingual Education Institute (BEI) Houston, TX, 2009-2013

International Services Program Coordinator - American Red Cross, Houston, TX, 2007-2011

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

International Experience

- Central America: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico: assisted with group therapy, visits to local schools, social service migration and reintegration programs. Yearly trips each year from 2014- present.
- Kenya: English Instructor, Echami Learning Center, Kakuma Refugee Camp, Summer 2010
- Tanzania: English, Kao Amani English School, Summer 2009
- Switzerland: Intern with Geneva Social Observatory, Geneva, Spring 2006

Written Work

- Howell, Sarah K, et al. “The Uniqueness of Refugee Trauma: Cumulative Experiences Over a Prolonged Period.” *Handbook of Refugee Experience*, edited by Jeffrey Kottler, 1st ed., Cognella, 2020, pp. 223–239.
- Howell, Sarah K. “Intervention Strategies for Working with Newly Resettled Refugee Children in a Western Public Schools.” *Handbook of Refugee Experience*, edited by Jeffrey Kottler et al., 1st ed., Cognella, 2020, pp. 312–329.

Honors

- Las Americas Newcomer School was nominated for Children At Risk’s 2018 and 2019 Academy Awards of Child Advocacy, Innovation in the Field of Child Advocacy
- Selected for 50 for 50 University of Houston’s Graduate College of Social Work 50 distinguished alumni

Selected Lectures, Presentations and Panel Discussions

- “Applying a Children’s Rights Framework in Texas: Human Services and Education” Panel Discussion Children Displaced Across Borders: Bridging Policy, Practice and Disciplinary Approaches to Further Human Rights November 18, 2016
- Immigration, Trauma and Substance Use: The Latino Journey to the US, May 24, 2017
- Beyond the Wall Screening and Panel Discussion Texas Tribune, HPD Police Chief Art Acevedo “Mobilizing Coherent Community Responses to Changing Immigration Policy”, Center for Migration Studies Catholic Charities and South Texas College of Law June 7-9, 2017
- “Access to Education among Immigrants Communities: Challenges and Opportunities” Panel, Who Cares for the Health of Migrants? October 11-12, 2017 UTMB
- “Addressing Trauma and Immigrant and Refugee Students in the 2017 Landscape” Why do Students Act This Way & What Can I Do About it? October 13, 2017
- Refugee Mental Health and Wellness Conference, April 21, 2018 Research to action: Addressing gaps in policy, knowledge and implementation, UTMB December 13-14, 2018
- “Navigating Traumatic Experiences of Newcomer Youth in a School Setting” Restorative Support for Families after Violent Death: Building an Informed Community, Texas Children’s Hospital, Houston. TX September 21-22, 2018
- “Engaging with Newcomer Families with a Trauma Informed, Transitional, Therapeutic Approach” Sarah K Howell, LCSW and Jennifer Can, Region IV FACE, August 2018, BESL December 14, 2018
- “Serving Newcomers in a transcrisis state” Children’s Bereavement Center of South Texas Symposium, February 1, 2019, San Antonio, Texas
- Relationship Building, training for America Reads volunteer staff, Rice University February 5, 2019
- Integrating Refugee Youth Through Education Panel Discussion Refugee Mental Health and Wellness Conference, April 24, 2019

S. Howell

- “Dear Guatemala: The truth about the Migration process” (panel discussion in Spanish) Guatemalan Scholars Network, Antigua, Guatemala July 11, 2019
- School Based Mental Health Interventions in a High Trauma Setting” National webinar Latino and Hispanic MHTTC, October 3, 2019
- Trauma & School Based Interventions
Latino and Hispanic MHTTC: Acculturation, Trauma and Mental Health Services for Hispanic and Latino Children and Youths Symposium, December 4-5, 2019
- Finding Normalcy in Crisis Parenting Training Video, Spring Branch ISD May 2020
- “Engaging and Treating Guatemalan Families, Children, and Youth,”
Hispanic Latino MHTTC National webinar June 3, 2020
- “Mental Illness in Youth” Harris County Protective Services, June 30, 2020
- UNICEF-MPI Virtual Convening: Supporting Unaccompanied Children’s Transitions into Communities, July 30, 2020
- “Trauma of Immigration”
School Behavioral Health Collaborative, September 27, 2020

Selected Media

- Houston Chronicle: Students at HISD’s Las Americas Newcomer School had extreme PTSD, So a social worker planted a garden, June 20, 2019
- Children at Risk: Growing up in America! Radio Show, September 10, 2018
- Houston Chronicle: Trump’s immigrant crackdown brings ‘blanket of fear’ to Houston Schools
- PBS Newshour: For young newcomers, school offers a steppingstone to life in America
- Politico: Houston’s Learning Curve
- AP Archive: Newcomer schools help kids adapt to US life, December 3, 2019.