safe
schools
academy

Mental Health Systems, Supports, and Awareness

Number of Credits: 3*

Course Instructors: Miriam Woods, Leo Petersen and Jordan Mix

Course Description: Schools are increasingly becoming spaces for students to find social, emotional, and mental health supports. Anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns can hinder peer relationships, academic success, attendance, and overall future success. As educators, it is our role to create safe environments for all students, and we need to ensure that our students have the supports necessary to thrive in their learning environments.

The purpose of this course is to address the urgent need of school mental health supports and to stop the stigma surrounding mental illness. This nine-week course will outline the current state of youth & adolescent mental health in the nation, and the biological & environmental factors affecting it. It will also describe the signs of symptoms of mental health concerns, including focused attention on self-harming behaviors and suicidal ideations. This course will dive into describe the signs and symptoms of anxiety, depression, ADHD, ADD, and bipolar disorder.

This course will bring focused attention to the importance of positive relationships and communication in student mental health, and it will also highlight the unique needs of people with marginalized identities who also experience mental health concerns. At the end of the course, participants will then learn about the best practices for address school mental health systems, including MTSS frameworks, social-emotional learning competencies, and other classroom supports.

Learning Objectives: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Define mental health and mental illness
- Describe the need for school-based mental health systems
- Describe the biological and environmental factors which can influence someone's mental health
- Describe the signs and symptoms of a mental disorder, including self-harming behaviors and suicidal ideations
- Differentiate between anxiety, depression, ADHD, ADD, and bipolar disorder and their manifestations in student behavior.
- Define intersectionality and describe the unique challenges in providing services for students from marginalized identities.
  Determine best practices for establishing school mental health supports
- Design an implementation plan which contains best practices for establishing school mental health supports

Resources: No texts are required to purchase in order to complete this course

- The mission of Iowa Safe Schools is to provide safe, supportive and nurturing learning environments for all students. Staff of the Iowa Safe Schools are experts in the fields of bullying prevention and intervention, developing positive school climate, and advocating for underrepresented and marginalized populations. LGBTQ students are at greater risk for being economically disadvantaged and living in homelessness. GSAs are shown to be a best practice for increasing awareness of discriminatory school policies, reducing bullying, reducing deaths by suicide, and ensuring students feel safe and support in their schools and communities.
- Kann, L., McManus, T., Harris, W. A., Shanklin, S. L., Flint, K. H., Queen, B., ... & Lim, C. (2018). Youth risk behavior surveillance—United States, 2017. *MMWR Surveillance Summaries*, *67*(8), 1.
    This report discusses various health-related behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth and adults, including behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence, sexual behaviors related to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, and unhealthy dietary behaviors.

- Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. Child development, 82(1), 405-432.
  - This study shows how SEL interventions that address CASEL's five core competencies increased students' academic performance by 11 percentile points, compared to students who did not participate in such SEL programs. Students participating in SEL programs also showed improved classroom behavior, an increased ability to manage stress and depression, and better attitudes about themselves, others, and school.

*Course Requirements: To receive full credit for the course, participants must complete ALL assignments and respond to specific questions outlined in each assignment. Failure to complete all assignments will result in a disqualification in the course and a failing grade.

Other Course Information:

Getting Started

- After registering for the course, you will be sent an email with the website address, password and course key you need to access your online course, along with login instructions.
- Access each assignment through the course home page. All assignments will be submitted through the Moodle platform on each respective assignment page.
- Please save a backup copy of all course assignments and completed work.

Participation

- You are not required to be present (i.e. online) specific days or times. You will work at your own pace. The course is structured in 9 Weekly Units, however all assignments will not be due until the final day of the course.
- All responses will be posted online. Large documents, files, photographs or PowerPoint presentations may be attached as part of your response by using the "Submit A File" option.
- You may work collaboratively and submit similar responses on all assignments except for quizzes which must be done individually.

INTASC Standards that are addressed in this course:

- 2. The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.
- 3. The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
- 4. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving and performance skills.
- 5. The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
- 6. The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
- 7. The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.
- 9. The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professional in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
- 10. The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

Check the Iowa Teaching Standards that are addressed in this course:

X	1. Enhance Student Achievement		5. Monitoring Student Learning
	2. Content Knowledge	X	6. Classroom Management
X	3. Planning and Preparation	X	7. Professional Growth
X	4. Instructional Strategies	X	8. Professional Responsibilities

Assignment Checklist

Topic/Activity	In Class Hours	Out of Class Hours
Getting to Know the Class; Additional Readings: Take the time to get to know the class layout, read over the Help section, and review any other materials present in the class to get started. Take your time!		3
Week 1 – What is Mental Health?		
Discussion: Introductions – Participants will introduce themselves to their classmates and describe what they hope to gain from the course.	1	2
Discussion: Kids In Crisis – In this lesson, participants will reflect on the *Frontline* episode "Kids in Crisis," and they were analyze current statistics on youth mental health trends. They will discuss their findings in a post.	2	3
Quiz: Mental Health & Mental Illness – In this lesson, participants will develop a common vocabulary and repository of foundational information on mental health and mental illness. They will assess their understanding through a quiz.	1.5	3
Discussion: Mental Health Literacy in Schools – In this lesson, participants will reflect on current perspectives of the school's role in developing mental health literacy in their educators. Participants will reflect on their understanding in a discussion post.	1.5	3
Week 3 – Sources of Mental Health Concerns		
Quiz: The Biology of Mental Health – In this lesson, participants will gain a neurological perspective on mental health. Participants will assess their understanding through a quiz.	1.5	3
Quiz: External Factors Affecting Mental Health – In this lesson, participants will learn how external and environmental stressors can influence mental health. Participants will assess their understanding through a quiz.	1.5	3
Discussion: Adverse Childhood Experiences - In this lesson, participants will learn about what Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are, take an ACEs assessment, and share their thoughts in a discussion post.	1.5	3
Week 2 – The Stigma of Mental Health		
Discussion: Ending the Stigma of Mental Illness – In this lesson, participants will watch Frontline's "A New State of Mind - Ending the Stigma of Mental Illness." They will reflect on what they learned in a discussion post.	2	3
Discussion: Stopping the Stigma in Our Schools – In this lesson, participants will see how the stigma of mental illness affects students in the classroom. They will share their reflections in a discussion post.	1.5	3
Week 4 – Signs and Symptoms of Mental Health Concerns		
Quiz: Signs of Childhood and Adolescent Mental Health – In this lesson, participants will gain an overview of the signs and symptoms which could be expressed by youth experiencing a mental illness or disorder. Participants will assess their understanding in a discussion post.	1.5	3
Quiz: Self-Harm and Suicide – In this lesson, participants will take an in-depth look into self-harming and suicidal behaviors. Participants will understand the differences between the two, and they will assess their understanding in a quiz.	1.5	3

Discussion: The Mental Health of Parents and Caregivers – In this lesson, participants will understand how the mental health of parents and caregivers can influence student behaviors. Participants will reflect on their understanding in a discussion post.	2	4
Week 5 – Mental Illnesses and Disorders		
Quiz: Anxiety – In this lesson, participants will learn about the signs and symptoms of anxiety and how educators can best support students with anxiety. They will assess their understanding in a quiz.	1.5	3
Quiz: Depression - In this lesson, participants will learn about the signs and symptoms of depression and how educators can best support students. They will assess their understanding in a quiz.	1.5	3
Quiz: ADHD/ADD - In this lesson, participants will learn about the signs and symptoms of ADHD and ADD and how educators can best support students. They will assess their understanding in a quiz.	1.5	3
Quiz: Bipolar Disorder – In this lesson, participants will learn about the signs and symptoms of bipolar disorder and how educators can best support students. They will assess their understanding in a quiz.	1.5	3
Week 6 – The Power of Relationships		
Discussion: Interacting with People with Mental Health Concerns - Participants will learn how to interact with students with mental health concerns. Participants will also learn about what to do if someone is at risk of suicide.	1.5	3
Discussion: The Effects of Social Media on Mental Health – Participants will take special attention to look at the intersections between social media use on mental health. Participants will share their reflections in a discussion post.	1.5	3
Discussion: The Importance of Communication – Participants will reflect on the power of forging positive relationships and how that impacts mental health. Participants will reflect on the resources in a discussion post.	1.5	3
Week 7 – Mental Health and Marginalized Identities		
Quiz: What Is Intersectionality? Participants will explore the overarching topic of intersectionality and review Ted Talks featuring various speakers on the subject. Participants will share their analysis in a discussion post.	1.5	3
Discussion: Mental Health and Poverty – Participants will analyze the intersections between class privilege, poverty, and mental health. They will share their understanding in a discussion post.	1.5	3
Discussion: Mental Health and Race - Participants will analyze the intersections between race and mental health. They will learn from the experiences of individuals who experience racial trauma, and they will share their understanding in a discussion post.	1.5	3
Discussion: Mental Health and LGBTQ Identity – While LGBTQ identity is not a mental illness or disorder, LGBTQ people do experience societal trauma because of their identities. Participants will listen to the stories of LGBTQ people, and they will share their findings in a discussion post.	1.5	3
Week 8 – School Mental Health Systems		
Discussion: Mental Health and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support – In this lesson, participants will discuss how mental health supports should be embedded in the already-existing Multi-Tired Systems of Support (MTSS) established in schools. Participants will share their reflections in a discussion post.	1.5	3
Discussion: K-12 Social Emotional Learning – In this lesson, participants will gain foundational understanding of Social Emotional Learning Competencies. In a discussion	1.5	3

post, participants will reflect on how this work benefits the overall mental health of the school.		
Discussion: Evaluating Current Supports of Student Mental Health – In this lesson, participants will reflect on the current mental health supports currently being implemented in schools. They will share their findings in a discussion post.	2	3
Week 9 – Student Supports		
Discussion: Supporting Mental Health in the Classroom – In this lesson, participants will research best practices for supporting student mental health in the classroom. They will share their findings in a discussion post.	1.5	3
Discussion: The Importance of Self-Care - In this module, participants will use the online resources to evaluate their own self care practices and will discuss how they can be improved in a discussion post. Participants will also be provided with mental health resources that can be used by themselves or their students.	1	2
Final Assignment:	2	4
Total Class Time	45 Hours	90 Hours

Coursework: Participants can earn up to 185 points total for the course. The following table depicts the breakdown of points possible for the required coursework

Activity	Points
18 Discussion Posts (5 Points Each)	90
10 Quizzes (5 Points Each)	50
Final Implementation Plan/Paper	75
Total	**185**

Grading Scale – Graduate Credit

100-90% (185 - 167 points)	A
89-80% (166 – 148 points)	B
79-70% (147 - 130 points)	C
69-60% (129 - 111 points)	D
59%-Below (<111 points)	F

Grading Scale - License Renewal Credit

100-80% (185 - 148 points)	P
79%-Below (<148 points)	NP

Student Requirements Students are required to:
- Participate in **ALL** discussion forums and quizzes
- Complete a final implementation plan

Americans with Disabilities Act: If you are a student with a disability and require any auxiliary aids, services, or other accommodations for this class, please see the instructor to discuss your accommodation needs.

Statement of Plagiarism: Academic dishonesty results in failure of this course. Give credit where credit is due. Use the APA Publication Manual to cite references when needed. Not crediting ideas or words of others is unacceptable

scholarship as is submitting work that was done for a previous course or that is not your own origin in design or completion. Submit original assignments. Do not submit work for this course that you have done for other courses.

Grading Rubrics for Individual Activities

18 Discussions (90 points possible) Discussion Forums are asynchronous ways to engage in class discussions. They require you to submit an answer to a question and respond to the posts of other peers. Because they are an integral part of sharing strategies, analyzing research, and sharing ideas, discussion forums in this course comprise a significant percentage of your final grade. It's highly recommended that you read and respond to more than the required two peer postings because greater participation will facilitate a greater depth of understanding. Additionally, it's important to make posts in a timely manner to benefit from peer responses.

Grading Rubric for Discussion Forums		Points
Critical Thinking	Makes connections to the other content and real=life that are supported by reference(s) and example(s)	1
	Offers new ideas, connections, or applications	1
	Expresses and justifies personal opinion	1
Assignment Specific Criteria	Addresses all parts of the assignment, cites sources	1
Participation (Responses to at least 2 peer posts)	Responds to other posts (when available)	1
Total Points Possible		5

Final Assignment (75 points possible)

The final assignment is a critical part of this course. Participants must complete a two-page final assignment. The paper is meant to be a reflection as well as a chance to state what you will use going forward. The rubric below will be used to grade the final assignment, but additional details will be provided within the course.

Grading Rubric for Implementation Plan		Points
Critical Thinking	Highlights any new knowledge gained as a result of course.	15
	Offers new ideas, connections, or applications	15
	Expresses and justifies personal opinion	9
	Discusses Overall Implications	6
Assignment Specific Criteria	Addresses all parts of the assignment, cites sources	6
Mechanics	Writing is clear, well developed, and organized, No or few grammar and spelling errors	6
Implementation	Clearly states ideas to use in the future	6
	States resources to be used	6
	Is realistic in their approach – understands limitations may exist	6
Total Points Possible		75