

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Master of Arts in Human Services emphasizing Trauma, Resilience, and Self-Care Strategies focuses on the impact trauma has on an individual's mood, behavior, cognition, physical health, and overall interpersonal and social functioning. Research purports traumatic events encountered early in the life course significantly negatively impact the psychological health and psychosocial functioning in adulthood than trauma experienced later in the life course. A trauma-informed care approach in human service settings is gaining traction locally and internationally. When human service professionals learn effective responses to client trauma and how to help instill resiliency skills necessary to thrive in daily functioning, improved outcomes can result in all areas of life.

Professionals working within the fields of human service, criminal justice, forensic behavioral health, family science and allied disciplines will develop the insights, strategies, and skills to work more effectively with clients and families impacted by trauma and to promote recovery for impacted individuals and their families. Professionals will also gain knowledge and strategies to manage vicarious and secondary trauma and to foster self-care. Resiliency will be explored and emphasized throughout this program applicable to clients and families and the helping professional, in order to prevent burnout and compassion fatigue.

### Two Options to Choose

15

#### CREDIT GRADUATE CERTIFICATE

in Human Services with  
an emphasis in Trauma,  
Resilience and  
Self-Care Strategies

36

#### CREDIT MASTER OF ARTS

in Human Services with  
an emphasis in Trauma,  
Resilience and  
Self-Care Strategies

The 15-credit Certificate in Trauma and Resilience and Self-Care Strategies in Human Services or the 36-credit MA in Human Services, emphasizing Trauma and Resilience and Self-Care Strategies, are conveniently offered in an online format. The program coursework is designed to be sequential.

This program is designed for busy adult students interested in obtaining their degree and requires the flexibility to attend class on their schedule.

### COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

This program will include six currently offered three-credit courses (18 credits) and five new, three-credit courses (15 credits).

#### Course 1 (3 Credits): HSV543 - Foundations in Trauma and Stressor Related Disorders

Trauma- and stressor-related disorders (e.g., reactive attachment disorder, disinhibited social engagement disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, acute stress disorder, and adjustment disorders) are a collection of serious and complex psychiatric conditions that develop in some individuals following traumatic or stressful life event exposure (e.g., adverse childhood experiences, complex and developmental traumas, manmade and natural disasters, interpersonal and community violence, car accidents, painful medical procedures, etc.). This course is designed to increase understanding of the causes, characteristics and symptoms, consequences, comorbid disorders, and differential diagnostic issues of trauma-and stressor-related disorders in order to promote trauma-informed approaches and practices within human service, criminal justice, forensic behavioral health, telehealth direct support, and other allied field settings. This course will emphasize communication, screening, and intervention strategies appropriate for client-based populations living with these disorders. A section of this course will also examine the impact these disorders have on special needs populations (e.g., autism, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, traumatic brain injury, and serious and persistent mental health disorders). Empirically-based research findings and case study examples will be discussed throughout this course.

#### Course 2 (3 Credits): HSV 548 - Neurobiology of Trauma and its Impact on the Developing Brain

Early-life exposure to trauma (e.g., adverse childhood experiences and complex trauma) and toxic stress can significantly alter structural and functional brain development and contribute to lifelong cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and physical impairments. This course will examine the impact prenatal (e.g., alcohol and other substances in utero, nutritional deficiencies) and postnatal (e.g., neglect, abuse, poverty, placement instability) traumas have on child brain development. Emphasis will be placed on topics including attachment, executive function, Theory of Mind (ToM), social-emotional processing, and language development. A section of this course will also examine the role and impact trauma and adversity have on stress hormone functioning and how this can lead to the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (HPA axis) dysfunction. Trauma-specific interventions and approaches supporting positive children's brain development following exposure to adversity will be discussed during this course in order to promote and increase competency around the provision of trauma-informed care (TIC).

*(course descriptions continued on next page)*

### **Course 3 (3 Credits): HSV 561 - Forensic Behavioral Health Aspects of Trauma**

Trauma histories are common among persons involved in the criminal justice system (e.g., intervention, detention, arrest, confinement, and probation), legal (e.g., criminal trials and problem-solving courts), and forensic (e.g., forensic behavioral health and forensic state psychiatric hospital) settings. When such issues have not been appropriately identified and managed, impacted individuals are at an increased risk of exhibiting traumatic stress reactions (e.g., irritability, aggressiveness, avoidant behaviors), which may contribute to counterproductive outcomes such as self-destructive behaviors, poor impulse control, and an increased risk of antisocial and criminal behavior. This course will examine the implications trauma exposure has on persons and family structure involved in these various systems with the goal of increasing awareness and understanding of the importance of utilizing trauma-informed approaches and practices when working with criminal justice and forensic behavioral health populations. Emphasis will also be placed on the role, and impact trauma has on juvenile and adult legal proceedings (e.g., competency to stand trial, criminal responsibility, and sentencing) as well as on children involved in child welfare and protection matters (e.g., child maltreatment, allegations of abuse, termination of parental rights, foster care placement).

### **Course 4 (3 Credits): HSV 567 - Trauma and its Impact on the Family System**

Trauma and other adverse life events can impact entire family systems, resulting in significant distress for all immediate and extended members. Regardless of the type of trauma experienced (e.g., intergenerational trauma, parental abuse or separation, death of a loved one, collective trauma, witnessing a traumatic event, etc.), the adverse effects can be

wide-ranging, long-term, and contribute to a host of social, emotional, behavioral, and physical health challenges. When such issues have not been properly identified and supported, impacted families are at an increased risk of attachment and communication breakdowns, conflict, separation, and familial violence. This course will examine the implications trauma exposure has on families involved in criminal justice, forensic behavioral health, and human service settings. Strengthening family resilience and Trauma-specific interventions and approaches to support those impacted by trauma and adversity will be discussed during this course to promote stability, increase resilience, and heal within the family system.

### **Course 5 (3 Credits): HSV 578 - Trauma Informed Practice, Self-Care, and Resilience Strategies for the Human Service and Teleconsulting Care Professional**

Professionals working within various criminal justice, forensic behavioral health, and human service settings are frequently exposed to traumatic and stressful contexts. As such, it is imperative for professionals employed in these settings to practice ongoing self-care and maintain a high level of resilience. This course focuses on examining ways for professionals, including practitioners who provide teleconsultation services and organizational leaders, on building resilience and self-care practices (e.g., incorporating deep breathing, meditation, sleep, nutrition, work-life balance, limiting media and screen time exposure, etc.). Emphasis will be placed on topics including burnout, secondary and vicarious trauma, and compassion fatigue. A section of this course will also review the psychophysiology of resilience, stress, empathy, validation, joy, gratitude, happiness, and sleep and the implications these topics have for the helping professional.