

## Course Description



This course offers an integrative, mindfulness-based approach to on-going assessment and interventions with adult survivors (all genders) of sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse. It draws on the most current theory including feminist, attachment, regulation, and interpersonal neurobiology; and evidence-based practices, including mindfulness, cognitive, emotion-centred, somatic, neurofeedback and other emergent approaches for trauma, addiction and mental health. The baseline premise is that the embodied present-moment personhood of the therapist is the primary evidence-based intervention in working with survivors. The course is also situated within an understanding of culturally relevant practice and how multiple identities, social locations and historical contexts inform interventions with survivors; and how counsellor reflection, self-knowledge and self-care form the basis for ethical counsellor praxis. While this course does not provide in-depth training in a specific modality it will introduce and critically consider various modalities, theories, principles and ethics associated with working with survivors of sexual violence. This course is designed for practitioners who may wish to work with survivors of sexual violence, or who may be already working with survivors and would like to more deeply inform their practice. Participation is open to those in the helping fields (mental health professionals, social workers, etc.) whose scope of practice falls within the code of ethics and standards of practice of the professional body to which they belong.

## Learning Objectives

At the completion of this 12-week, on-line, integrative course, students will be able to:

1. Integrate evidence-based self-care practices, including building a community of support, to increase resilience and minimize practitioner burnout;
2. Articulate theoretical frameworks for understanding sexual violence and trauma, how they reflect values, worldviews, and interventions;
3. Understand the complexities of responding to the effects and impacts of sexual violence, that there is 'no average client' and to affirm practitioners' capacities to co-create and sustain a therapeutic relationship;
4. Understand and apply the principles, tools, and skills to reduce distress and provide stability (including case work), and to conduct initial and on-going assessment strategies (e.g. feedback informed therapy);
5. Understand the **basic** principles, tools, and skills (with examples provided) of a variety of evidence-based approaches to the effects of sexual violence and trauma, including mindfulness, cognitive, emotional, somatic and anti-oppressive approaches;
6. Draw on a number of approaches to work collaboratively adult survivors of sexual violence addressing the relationship issues that may be specifically meaningful to them, for example: self-advocacy in the legal system, interpersonal boundaries, healthy sexuality, political action;
7. Mindfully bring the therapeutic relationship to closure.

## **Course text(s)**

### **Required:**

Van der Kolk, B.A. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. NY: Viking.

### **Also highly recommended:**

Briere, J.N. & Scott, C. (2014). *Principles of trauma therapy: A guide to symptoms, evaluation and treatment*. 2nd ed. with DSM-5 update. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.  
Herman, J. (1997). *Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence from domestic abuse to political terror*. NY: Basic Books.  
Lipsky, L.v.D., & Burk, C. (2009). *Trauma stewardship : An everyday guide to caring for self while caring for others* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

## **Assignments (Requirements to obtain a certificate of completion are underlined)**

### ***On-Line Student Journal***

Keeping a journal will help you get in touch with your personal responses to readings, behaviours, experimentation, cohort dialogue, work experiences, and interpersonal relationships. It will help you “think about the way you think and feel” encourage the integration of theory and practice, and serve as a record of your experiences and learning in the course.

You will be provided a place on the Course Site to keep a personal and confidential on-line journal. The journal is a place for recording personal reflections. This journal is shared with the instructor(s) only. Because of the instability of technology, it is a good idea to write your journal entry off-line in a Word document then copy and paste your entry into the on-line journal.

The personal journal requires a minimum of 10 entries in order to receive a certificate of completion for the course. Your journal entry will explore how the course content readings and discussion relate to your practice and what questions may be arising for you.

### ***Case Study Example Discussion***

Each module will address a specific theme. Within each module, two cases examples will be presented in each class (one in Kate’s group and one in Rachael’s). This structure will allow each participant to present at least one case example during the course. Each presentation will align with the module’s topic.

Information for case example discussion:

1. You will prepare and post a written synopsis with the three questions on the discussion board.

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2. The following week you will present the case example and facilitate discussion with the instructor's support.
3. If you are not the facilitator for that module, you will keep the case example and questions in mind while completing the module's readings, coming to class prepared for an in-depth and reflective discussion (i.e. you do not need to respond on the discussion board).

### Some examples of possible questions and question types:

Ethically-based choice points; how do I recognize the choice points; how do I help myself ...; what am I not seeing; what else could I try; how can I use my connection; how do I repair the rupture; how is the lens that I am looking through helping or hindering us going forward; where do I start; how is this modality helpful or not compared to other modalities; what am I thinking; what does this client need, and how do I find out?

### **Learning Environment (Requirements to obtain a certificate of completion are underlined)**

This 12-module course is offered in a blended learning format, using an on-line learning management system (CourseSites) for self-paced learning between real time classes that take place in a live, on-line classroom (Zoom). The CourseSites self-paced learning is supported by activities to help you grasp and integrate the "knowledge" (information and theory) and learning objectives for each module. The live classroom learning is designed to help you translate knowledge to practice, and practice into being a skillful, embodied, present moment-centred counselor. You will have received information on how to access the password-protected CourseSites learning management system and Zoom. Students are required to attend and actively participate in a minimum of 10 live classes. If more than 2 classes are to be missed, please consult with the instructors beforehand. Class participation is an important component to your learning experience, as well as your peers. We depend on you to be there!

### **Live Classroom Schedule: Twelve Thursdays starting Jan 17, 6:00-8:00 pm Mountain**

Information about how to connect to the live Zoom classroom is on the CourseSite. Classes will be recorded and posted the following day.

### **Herman's Three-Stage Recovery Model and Organization of the Course**

According to Judith Herman (1997) the process of moving on from sexualized violence can be viewed as a three-stage approach:

*The central task of the first stage is the establishment of safety. The central task of the second stage is remembrance and mourning. The central task of the third stage is reconnection with ordinary life. Like any abstract concept, these stages of recovery are a convenient fiction, not to be taken too literally. They are an attempt to impose simplicity and order upon a process that is inherently turbulent and complex. - Herman, J. (1992).*

**Herman's recovery model is reflected in the organization of the course modules:**

Part 1: Safety, Stability and Resourcing

- Module 1 Introductions, mindfulness, theory and language (Jan 17)
- Module 2 Working with health in the system (Jan 24)
- Module 3 Effects of sexual violence; No average client Individually tailored responses; Therapeutic relationship (Jan 31)
- Module 4 Distress reduction; Affect regulation; Window of tolerance (Feb 7)

Part 2: Remembrance and Mourning

- Module 5 Memory and emotional processing (Feb 14)
- Module 6 Somatic and sensory processing (Feb 21)
- Module 7 Narrative and cognitive processing (Feb 28)
- Module 8 Additional considerations (Mar 7)
- Module 9 Working with different aspects (Mar 14)
- No class March 21
- Module 10 Working with alternative modalities (Mar 28)

Part 3: Reconnecting

- Module 11 Identity, belonging and (re)connecting with community (Apr 4)
- Module 12 Tying it all together: Closure, endings (Apr 11)

*(Topics and content are subject to change)*

**INSTRUCTORS / CURRICULUM DEVELOPERS:**

<p>Kate Burns, MSW RSW  <a href="mailto:k_burns@shaw.ca">k_burns@shaw.ca</a></p>	<p>Rachael Crowder, PhD RSW  <a href="mailto:rcrowder@ucalgary.ca">rcrowder@ucalgary.ca</a>  <a href="http://www.presentmoment.ca">www.presentmoment.ca</a></p>
<p>During 30 years in the field of social work - mostly in non-profits - I've counselled individuals, facilitated groups / workshops, taught courses and mentored adult learners. Responding to women (mostly) who have experienced the effects of sexual violence has remained prominent throughout, whether working in residential recovery programs, a women's centre, local college, women's employment program, or engaged in social action. Currently, through private practice, I offer a range of options to adults as they navigate the reverberating effects of sexual violence. While holding a collaborative and strength-based orientation, I incorporate dynamic mindfulness with experiential, sensory, and somatic practices. These are integrated with methods gleaned through certification in Hakomi, Equine Facilitated Wellness, training in Self-Regulation Therapy and creative pursuits. I meet with clients in the office and outdoors where we also include nature-based practices to support healing, recovery, and growth. I value an inclusive and liberatory approach and remain committed to the transformational powers held within each of us.</p>	<p>My community-based social work practice began in the early 1990's working with women who experienced interpersonal violence. I was at the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre for 10 years, and Executive Director of a women's shelter for a short period before going into my PhD program in 2003. Through various non-profits I facilitated groups for moms and children who experienced violence; empowerment groups with exotic dancers; therapeutic groups with survivors of sexual assault and historical sexual abuse; and crisis intervention with individuals face-to-face and over the telephone. It was in the early years at the ORCC that I first learned how to use mindfulness as a grounding skill with women in flashbacks. I have been teaching mindfulness since my MBSR/MBCT training in 2006. My PhD research was about integrating mindfulness with feminist practice, a modality I call Mindfulness Based Feminist Therapy (MBFT). I joined the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary as an Assistant Professor in 2009, and teach mainly in our Clinical Master of Social Work (distance) program. For me, teaching and learning, whether sitting in meditation, with a client, or in a classroom, is a practice of liberation and love.</p>