

Tel Aviv University
The Bob Shapell School of Social Work
MA in Coping with Stress, Crisis and Trauma

Dealing with stressful and traumatic situations: Basic intervention skills
Semester I and II, 2014-2015

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COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

Stress, crisis and trauma are inescapable parts of modern life that significantly challenge individuals, families, groups and communities leading to breakdown and deterioration or to adaptation and even growth. A systemic ecological perspective (Belsky, 1980; Berger, 2002) suggests that mobilizing coping skills on multiple levels and effectively utilizing personal or communal resources will determine the impact of these situations. Hence, the role of the psycho-social interventionist is to either facilitate recovery processes during the crisis or to build the community resiliency prior to such events. The aim of this course is to provide you with understanding of what individuals and communities undergo during stressful and traumatic situations, but more importantly, to equip you with **basic practical skills** that will enable you to provide psychological first-aid, to design early interventions and to establish community-based programs taking into account multi-systemic levels of interventions. The course will address the following topics:

- **The phenomenology** of individuals during stress, crisis and trauma
- **The multi systemic impact** of a society exposed to crisis and trauma
- **Assessment** – On the individual level (evaluating stress-related disorders), the family (identifying dysfunctional patterns) and the community (need assessment procedures).
- **Immediate interventions** – Individual level (psychological first-aid) family level (family-interventions) and group (psychological debriefing and group traumatic processing).
- **Rehabilitative interventions** (short-term and long-term) – Interventions will be geared toward various systemic levels and will include: pacing & leading, stress-reduction, body-oriented strategies, expressive techniques, motivational enhancement, therapeutic communication (reflecting validating empathizing), setting boundaries, building family and group cohesion and designing community-based rituals.
- **Preventive interventions** - Designing primary and secondary preventive projects, learning empowerment skills and building local capacity
- **Self-maintenance skills** – Learning how to modulate your own stress reactions and how to build self-maintenance programs for emergency personnel.

The course is designed as a laboratory for practicing the skills necessary for a psycho-social interventionist dealing with communities exposed to stress, crisis and trauma. The course will familiarize you with the basic skills that an interventionist needs in order to better design staff and apply a psycho-social program in the aftermath of a disaster or a crisis situation. Students will be given educational information (lecture and case studies of real situations), experiential part (role-playing, simulation or video-experiences), skill-practice by all students and homework assignments (the assignments will not be time-consuming but mainly observations, reflections and skills practicing in between classes). Additionally, self-management skill (SMS) will be taught and practiced during class.

REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and participation - Attendance in all classes is mandatory (students will be excused only with a special permission by the teacher). Active involvement in class role playing, simulations and discussion is required.

Reading – For each class you will have to read the "required reading". The articles are accessible through the course internet site.

Class presentations – Throughout the semesters each student will focus on one stress-related topic provided from a list of potential topics by the teacher, deepen her/his understanding about it, and finally, find some way to creatively engage the class in dealing with it.

Final Test – The multiple-choice final test will focus on the material learned in the second semester. The questions will require understanding of the material and application to practical situations

EVALUATION

Grading – The course grade will be based on three components: 1) Class Presentations which will be given only in the first semester (20%), 2) Final test (80%).

Format

Semester- I (Theoretical orientation) 2014-2015

Date	Topic of lesson	Students' presentations & skills learned	Bibliography
1 10.27	Introduction & contract. "Who I am"? Resourcing – An experiential exercise. Identify your resource deficits & the MOST BASIC	No presentation <i>(SMS) – Mindfulness Practice</i>	Teacher's Handout Item # 1-2
2 11.3	The 3 circle evolutionary model – Attachment processes and emotional regulation systems & coping strategies. Compassion fears – A questionnaire	No presentation <i>(SMS) Mindfulness Meditation</i>	Teacher's Handout Item # 3-4
3 11.10	Resourcing – An experiential exercise. Identify your resource deficits & the MOST BASIC and Basic skills of containment & empathy- exercise	No presentation <i>(SMS) Pacing & Leading skills</i>	Teacher's Handout Item # 5
4 11.17	The nature of stress and stress theories Assessing your own level The phenomenology of traumatic stress	No presentation <i>(SMS) Diaphragmatic breathing</i>	Teacher's Handout Item # 6-7
5 24.11	The epidemiology and diagnosis of post traumatic disorder (PTSD) – lecture The dilemma of PTSD - students	1) The dilemma with the PTSD diagnosis (gender, culture etc.) <i>(SMS) Somatic pendulation</i>	Teacher's Handout Item # 8-10
6 12.1	Stress-related disorders and evaluating individuals at risk - Lecture & diagnostic exercise in couples	2) Recovered memories controversy <i>(SMS) – Interviewing skills</i>	Teacher's Handout Item # 11-13
7 12.8	Death and traumatic grief – diagnosis & intervention principles (a video) Meeting my loss object -exercise	3) Is grief necessarily traumatic? <i>(SMS) Guardian angel</i>	Teacher's Handout Item # 14-15
8 12.15	Immediate intervention during crisis: principles of individual interventions - A whole class simulation	4) Psychological First Aid: who and when it should be done? <i>(SMS) – "Muscular Relaxation"</i>	Teacher's Handout Item # 16-17
9 12.22	Immediate intervention: principles of group interventions and simulation of psychological debriefing (CISD)	5)The controversy regarding psychological debriefing <i>(SMS) – Body Scan</i>	Teacher's Handout Item # 18-19
10 1.5	Creating your own interest as a psycho-social interventionist: using expressive art therapy – A guest lecture!	6) Art therapy & PTSD <i>(SMS) Guided imagery: Safe place</i>	Teacher's Handout Item # 20
11 1.12	Immediate intervention: sensory-motor procedure – lecture, TRE group exercise and video of application in Sri Lanka	7) Somatic Experiencing: A review <i>(SMS) – "Progressive Relaxation"</i>	Item # 21-22
12 1.19	Post-traumatic growth – theory and application. Have you experienced PTG? - exercise	8) Is there such a thing as Post-traumatic growth? <i>(SMS) Mindfulness Meditation</i>	Item # 23

Semester-II (practical orientation) 2014-2015

Date	Topic of lesson	Experiential exercise & skill learned	Bibliography
13	The social impact of exposure to traumatic conditions – the case of the kids in Gaza. The trailer 10% Visit to the AJCC - AOL	9) The model of political extremism (SMS) – <i>Receiving care mindfulness</i>	Teacher's Handout Item # 24
14	Exposure to trauma and resilience How to build a resilient community? Sderot under fire DVD	10) What is resilience and who are resilient people? (SMS) – <i>Benefactor mindfulness</i>	Item # 25
15	The multi systemic model for community crisis & Disaster – principles of intervention: a case study	Experiencing and coping with traumatic stress (SMS) – <i>Self-Affirmation</i>	Teacher's Handout Item # 26
16	A Preventive model for children experiencing stress & trauma: ERASE-Stress, Demo ERASE-S session	Dealing with automatic thoughts (SMS) – <i>CBT thought challenging</i>	Teacher's Handout Item # 27
17	ERASE- Stress: Demo sessions focusing on assertiveness and social issues	Exposure vs. non-exposure techniques (SMS) – <i>Assertiveness</i>	Teacher's Handout Item # 28
18	Dealing with distressed youth -The Multi-Stage Model ("Fairy-Tale Model"): its rationale and principles	Group Exercise: Constructing a case (SMS) – <i>Case construction</i>	Teacher's handouts Item # 29
19	Dealing with distressed youth the Multi-Stage Model – Focus on contact, case formulation	Role-playing in small groups (SMS) – <i>Case construction</i>	Teacher's handouts Item # 30
20	Dealing with distressed youth the Multi-Stage Model – Focus on resourcing and establishing a therapeutic plan	Role-playing in threesomes (SMS) – <i>Future projection</i>	Teacher's handouts Item # 31
21	The TMR Model – The biological and clinical rationale + the basic principles for processing traumatic memories	Live demo with a volunteer (SMS) – <i>Somatic tracking</i>	Teacher's handouts
22	The TMR Model – Review procedure. Live demo with a volunteer and class discussion. Practice emotional and cognitive processing in couples	Practice emotional and cognitive processing in couples (SMS) – <i>Processing practice</i>	Teacher's handouts
23	Group functioning during crisis and disaster: Role assignment & leadership The NASA exercise	How do group function during major disaster? (SMS) – <i>A socio-metric technique</i>	Teacher's Handout
24	Leadership during crisis: what are the main issues facing leaders	Preparation for final exam	Teacher's Handout

¹References

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- 2) *Carver, C. S., Scheier, M. F., & Weintraub, J. K. (1989). Assessing Coping Strategies - a Theoretically Based Approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56(2), 267-283.
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- 4) Pacing and Leading. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zAgYNKej2g&feature=related>
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- 7) Layne, C.M., Warren, J.S., Watson, P., & Shalev, A. (2010) Risk, Vulnerability, Resistance, and Resilience: Towards an Integrative Conceptualization of Posttraumatic Adaptation
- 8) *Bleich A, Gelkopf M, Solomon Z. (2003): Exposure to terrorism, stress-related mental health symptoms, and coping behaviors among a nationally representative sample in Israel. *JAMA*, 290, 612-620.
- 9) *Isserlin, L., Zerach, G., & Solomon, Z. (2008) Acute Stress Responses: A review and synthesis of ASD, ASR, and CSR. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 78, 423-429.
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- 11) George A. Bonanno, G.A. (2004). Loss, Trauma, and Human Resilience Have We Underestimated the Human Capacity to Thrive After Extremely Aversive Events? *American Psychologist*, 59, (1), 20–28
- 12) *Shear, K. et al., (2011). Complicated grief and related bereavement issues for DSM-5. *Depression and anxiety*. 28: 103–117 (2011).
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- 14) Ruzek, J., Brymer, M.B., Jacobs, A.K., Layne, C.M., Vernberg, E.M., Watson P. J. Watson (2006). Psychological first aid. Field Operations Guide: Second Edition. National Child Traumatic Stress Network and National Center for PTSD.
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¹ When there is an asterisk the reading item is optional

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- 19) Gray, E.L. A. (2011). Expressive arts therapies: Working with survivors of torture. Volume, volume 1, number 1.
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