Resilience and Trauma-Informed Perspectives

Chair, School of Social Work
• Sara Sanders

Coordinator, Resilience and Trauma-Informed Perspectives
• Yvonne R. Farley (Social Work)

Undergraduate certificate: resilience and trauma-informed perspectives
Website: https://clas.uiowa.edu/socialwork/

Many students are majoring in areas where they will encounter individuals who have experienced trauma. Untreated adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are connected to mental illness, substance abuse, and suicide. ACEs include physical and emotional neglect; physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; parental separation or divorce; mental illness; domestic violence; substance abuse; and incarceration of a parent.

Expanded ACE surveys include poverty, discrimination, homelessness, and community violence. The presence of four or more ACEs is associated with increased risk of poor behavioral, social, mental, and medical health. In adults, 13-15 percent of the population reported four or more ACEs (Center for Disease Control, 2010). On college campuses, the rate of depression may affect up to 10 percent of college students, and anxiety, up to 15 percent of students. Suicide rate among college students is about 8 in 100,000 students. Acknowledging the importance of identifying and treating ACEs, certificate students could positively impact these numbers, and will be better prepared to provide interventions to others.

The primary audience for the certificate program includes undergraduate students that are in helping professions such as social work, education, psychology, nursing, and public health. Students from health sciences programs, including the Carver College of Medicine, the physician assistant studies and services program, and the College of Law, could benefit as well. All undergraduate students are eligible to participate.

The Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Education, Nursing, and Law, and the Carver College of Medicine graduate the teachers, social workers, nurses, physicians, police officers, attorneys, judges, prosecutors, nonprofit organization workers and administrators, and public health workers that are employed across the nation. These professionals encounter the most traumatized individuals in society. Preparing undergraduate students in their professional fields with a good understanding of trauma, trauma-sensitive responses, and trauma-informed prevention and care provides skills that supplement their chosen professions.

Students who complete the certificate program will be able to:
• describe adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and the influence ACEs have on physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual outcomes in childhood and adulthood;
• identify their own trauma, if any, and learn how to process it to become healthier and more resilient in their own lives;
• describe resiliency, its dynamics, and ways to strengthen resiliency;
• analyze strategies to decrease or eliminate trauma in society including learning how to create trauma-informed organizations; and
• describe the impact of ACEs on communities and formulate strategies to prevent ACEs in communities and their field of practice.

The interdisciplinary Certificate in Resilience and Trauma-Informed Perspectives is sponsored by the School of Social Work and the College of Education, with support from the Colleges of Nursing and Public Health. The certificate is administered by the School of Social Work.