Connecting Cultures/NESTT Course
_Evidenced-Based Mental Health Interventions for Survivors of Torture and Trauma_
January 2016 – May 2016
Tuesdays 12:00 – 1:00
Dewey Hall; Room 100

**Course Overview and Objectives:**
This weekly course provides Connecting Cultures clinical psychology and social work graduate students and interns with a detailed training of Connecting Cultures best practice and a review of evidence-based, and culturally adapted assessment and intervention for survivors of torture and trauma. When appropriate, course material will be presented in the context of clinical work and ethical considerations. The specific aim of this course is to orient students to Connecting Cultures policies and procedures, to further develop skills in the assessment and treatment of trauma and torture related psychopathology, and to enhance cultural competence when working with a refugee population and community organizations. The accompanying reading list enhances student knowledge of various topics related to mental health services for refugees with and without histories of torture.

**Assignments:**
Weekly topics and reading assignments will be assigned and discussed during our meetings. Although weekly topics are outlined in this syllabus, topics and readings are subject to change.

**Class Participation and Format:**
Class participation is an important component of this course and includes weekly attendance, active involvement in class discussions, role-plays techniques, and/or presentations. This treatment course consists of readings in trauma focused interventions and treatments, didactic presentations and discussions, and client case conceptualization and review.

**Psychological Evaluation of a Clients Seeking Asylum:**
Graduate Students and Interns are given the opportunity to serve as co-evaluators of clients referred for a psychological evaluation for an Asylum application. This evaluation offers graduate students and interns the opportunity to implement knowledge gained through this readings course about the evaluation and treatment of survivors of torture or trauma. Graduate students and Interns conducting asylum evaluations will attend weekly Vertical Team meetings throughout the evaluation to receive supervision by Karen Fondacaro, Ph.D. and peer-supervision, allowing other students to gain experience with meta-supervisory roles.

**Evaluation:**
Vertical-team students and interns will be evaluated based on attendance and participation, completion of assignments and competencies expected.
**Schedule**

**January 26, 2016**

**Topic #1**  
An Overview of Syllabus and New Programs at New England Survivors of Torture and Trauma (NESTT) and Connecting Cultures - Incorporating Yoga Practice into Trauma Treatment for Refugees and Survivors of Torture – Part 1  
Facilitator(s): Karen Fondacaro, Ph.D. and Anne Brassell, B.A.

**February 2, 2016**

**Topic #2**  
VT Refugee Resettlement Program (VRRP) speaks on Resettlement Process and Syrian Refugee Crisis  
Facilitator: Amila Merdzanovic or Designated Presenter from VRRP

**February 9, 2016**

**Topic #3**  
Semi-Annual Report and Documentation Review  
Facilitator(s): Valerie Harder, Ph.D., Anne Brassell, B.A., & Karen Fondacaro, Ph.D.

**February 16, 2016**

**Topic #4**  
Site visit from ORR  
Facilitator: Karen Fondacaro, Ph.D.  
Dr. Curi Kim, Director of ORR’s Division of Refugee Health, will be conducting a site visit of the NESTT program on Tuesday February 16th and meeting with the Connecting Cultures team to discuss the strengths and challenges associated with the program.

**February 23, 2016**

**Topic #5**  
MT-NESTT Meeting @ Vermont Law School (February 23, 2016)  
Facilitators K. Fondacaro, A. Brassell, V. Baptiste & E. Pichler: Presentation to legal team by the Psychology team regarding DSM5, PTSD and CTS Framework. Connecting Cultures will be traveling to the Vermont Law School. Other presenters from Psychology or Social Work are welcome to join! Please speak with Karen if you are interested.

**March 1, 2016**

**Topic #6**  
Psychopharmacological Treatments for PTSD  
Facilitator: Guest Lecturer; Rob Althoff, M.D./Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Vermont, will provide a lecture on the use of pharmacological treatments for PTSD.

**March 8, 2016**

**Spring Recess - No Meeting**
March 15, 2016

Topic #7
Case Presentation regarding the Bhutanese Women’s Chronic Pain Group
Facilitator(s): Lindsay Holly, M.A. and Emily Pichler, B.A.
A presentation regarding the Bhutanese Women’s Chronic Pain Group

March 22, 2016

Topic #8
MT-NESTT Meeting @ NESTT/Connecting Cultures
Facilitator(s): Erin Jacobsen, Esq., Art Edersheim, Esq., and SRLC/VLS law students.
Professors and Students of the South Royalton Legal Clinic (SRLC) of the Vermont Law school will present to the Mental health team of NESTT on the Asylum process and other legal issues facing refugees and torture survivors.

March 29, 2016

Topic #9
Semi-Annual Report and Documentation Review
Facilitator(s): Karen Fondacaro, Ph.D., Emily Mazzulla, Ph.D., Anne Brassell, B.A., & Valerie Harder, Ph.D.

April 5, 2016

Topic #10
Case Presentation
Facilitator(s): The Social Work Team will provide a case presentation – possibly in conjunction with a psychology student or intern. Specifics TBD.

April 12, 2016

Topic #11
Alumni Group and Psycho-education Program Overview
Facilitator(s): CPIP (Clinical Psychology Internship Program) Interns will provide a case presentation possibly in conjunction with psychology or social work students. Specifics TBD.

April 19, 2016

Topic #12
Psychopharmacological Treatments for PTSD: Case Reviews
Facilitator: Guest Lecturer; Rob Althoff, M.D./Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Vermont, will provide a lecture on the use of pharmacological treatments for PTSD.

April 26, 2016

Topic #13
Topic TBD

May 3, 2016

Connecting Cultures Party!
Additional Connecting Cultures Activities Spring Semester
Monthly Self-Care Activities (Dates, times, activities TBD)

Reading List
Connecting Cultures /NESTT

Grants Awarded to Connecting Cultures/NESTT and Semi-Annual Reports

1. ORR (Office of Refugee Resettlement) – Victims of Torture Service Grant
2. NIH – SBIR Connecting Cultures with Technology Grant
3. HRSA
4. UN (United Nations) “Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture” NESTT Grant
5. Semi-Annual Report for Office of Refugee Resettlement Grant

Connecting Cultures Articles


Prolonged Exposure Therapy for PTSD


Webinar (Archived in Heal Torture.Org)
Healing People with PTSD. Presented by Edna B. Foa, Ph.D.

Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD

cognitive processing therapy for PTSD with refugees in a community setting. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice, 13*, 322-331.

**Psychopharmacological Treatments for PTSD**

**Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**

**Web Didactic:**
A 10-hour web-based course highlighting Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy; presented by Judith Becker, Ph.D.

**Cultural Sensitivity**

**Treatment for Survivors of Torture**


**Narrative Exposure Therapy for PTSD and KidNET**


**Coordinating treatment: working with social workers, physicians, and lawyers**


**Supervision of trauma related cases (May, 2015)**


**Consultation with Trauma-Related Cases in the School**


**Consideration of Professional Ethics in the Treatment of Trauma**