Overview:

Students in the Conflict Clinic Restorative Justice practicum will:

1. Engage in theoretical and empirical foundations of restorative approaches to conflict
2. Learn conflict facilitation skills based on Dominic Barter's Restorative Circles model (see competencies below)
3. Provide conflict facilitation and/or restorative programming to local schools, campus units, community organizations and/or families
4. Support local schools, campus units, and/or community organizations in implementing restorative systems/structures that will be used by the community to work through conflict
5. Participate in the evaluation of restorative approaches to conflict on campus and/or in the community.

Competencies:

Over the course of the practicum, students will work on developing skills and competencies relevant to addressing conflict in communities, groups, schools, organizations, families and couples. While applied to conflict in this practicum, these skills are also relevant to facilitation and therapeutic interventions with families, organizations, and groups. Competencies will include:

- deep ("needs based") listening
- empathic connection and presence with people in crisis
- tracking of meaning among multiple participants
- translation of difficult to hear messages into their underlying meaning
- the creation of a "safe container" for participants
- differentiation between needs, emotions, strategies and evaluations in participant messages
- the ability to shift to different "forms" of facilitation or employ different types of containers depending on intensity of conflict
In addition, students will engage in skills needed to conduct ethical outreach and research in local community and campus settings, including but not limited to:

- understanding the needs of the setting
- building relationships with relevant stakeholders (including stakeholders at different levels of power and hierarchy)
- navigating the research process (including IRB, privacy, confidentiality, ethics)
- creating materials appropriate to community members
- collecting evaluation data in community settings

Training and Supervision:
Initially, training and supervision will focus on allowing students to:

- Learn and participate in role plays of conflict-based situations using the Restorative Circle approach
- Learn and practice deep listening skills, including empathic reflection, tracking, needs-based conceptualization, and "translation" of hard to hear material
- Learn to understand causes of conflict and practice conflict-related skills, including de-escalation and win-win approaches
- Learn the difference between an individual-level approach to conflict and system-level approach
- Understand the unique ethical considerations involved in the Restorative Circles approach to conflict

As competency develops, students will:

- Co-facilitate (with supervisor) and facilitate (depending on competency level) live Restorative Circles with youth at the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC), youth and families referred by the Youth Assessment Center and individuals from campus and other organizations wanting to engage conflict restoratively.
- Share the RC process with others and provide community and university organizations with support to help them establish their own restorative systems and facilitate their own circles
- Contribute to the development of a research component to examine the effectiveness of the RC process in various contexts, including the Champaign County JDC, elementary and middle schools (we expect to be working with several outside the Champaign-Urbana area), college campuses.
More About the Restorative Circles model

Restorative Circles (RC) is a restorative practice originally developed in Brazil that is part of the recent international Restorative Justice movement. Unlike punitive/retributive approaches to justice which seek to punish the person(s) identified as having done something wrong, restorative practices seek to determine what harm was done (to relationships as well as to objects) and to repair the harm and restore the relationships. As such, restorative approaches to justice and conflict can both take the place of punitive approaches and function alongside them. Moreover, a review of research on restorative justice across multiple continents showed that Restorative Justice systems reduce recidivism in both violent and property crime in comparison to traditional justice systems and provide a variety of benefits to the “victims”, including improved mental health and greater satisfaction with the justice process (Sherman & Strang, 2007). Similar outcomes are also found in schools and other settings.

Restorative Circles provide a way for individuals and communities to handle conflicts compassionately, heal from these conflicts, and learn what conflicts have to teach us.

Learn more at www.restorativecircles.org

For additional information about the practicum or to request permission to enroll (enrollment is by permission only), email lyubanskym@gmail.com