

## COURSE OUTLINE

**COURSE NAME:** On the Edge of Chaos – Working with High Risk, Marginalized and Vulnerable Youth

**COURSE NUMBER:** GDSE 595

**COURSE CREDITS:** 3

**INSTRUCTOR:** Tom McEvay, BED, MED – Retired Principal and current Education Consultant

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**DATES AND TIME:** April 13 and 27, May 11 and 25 and June 8. Classes are 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

**LOCATION:** VIU Nanaimo and possibly Port Alberni

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will provide an overview of the characteristics and needs of high risk, marginalized and vulnerable youth who are often not successful in traditional school structures and methodologies. The course will investigate current and best practises in creating meaningful learning environments, supports and opportunities for these youth. The course will give participants hands on experience and practical knowledge and skills to apply in their current and future work.

### COURSE OUTCOMES:

Students will .....

- Be reflective of current and past attitudes and practise as they relate to how the system works with and often fails with high risk, marginalized and vulnerable students.
- Gain an understanding of the environmental, socio-economic, psycho-emotional and other health related variables that contribute to the risk factors impacting youth.
- Identify the learning and developmental characteristics of youth typically identified as the highest risk students in our school systems.
- Become familiar with current and best practise in Alternative Education and develop plans for programs in their schools and Districts.
- Discuss how school/program culture and classroom climate are critical to the successful delivery of programs for these clients.
- Be exposed to practical information and solutions from guest speakers and panelists from a wide variety of fields including current and former Alternative Ed students and teachers and medical specialists.
- Understand the critical importance of community partnerships by investigating government, and non-government services and supports available to marginalized and vulnerable students.
- Acquire an understanding of BC Ministry of Education policy and funding expectations as they relate to this population and Type 3 Alternate Programs.
- Design Integrated Case Management and Wrap Around strategies to meet the needs of identified case studies.
- Be introduced to different assessment practises and measures of success as well as how to build meaningful and successful Student Learning Plans.

## **COURSE TOPICS:**

### **Session One - : Introduction to Alternative Education**

- What do you know and what do you want to learn?
- Who are the students who need alternative programming?
- What are their needs? Maslow, Assets and Attachment Theory.
- The three R's – Relationships, relationships and relationships
- What is happening in your schools and Districts?
- What are the key goals, what do we hope to accomplish?
- What works, what doesn't?
- Ministry policy, expectations and funding?
- Ministry Handbook of Procedures – An enabling document.
- The importance of knowledge, understanding and empathy – story time.
- Needs of the Students vs Needs of the System.
- Assignment # 1 – Develop a Presentation on a Current Program Model

### **Session Two – : A Continuum of Care - Program Development and Implementation**

- Presentations of assignment # 1 – Current models.
- What do we mean by student centered?
- Referral, application and screening processes
- The use of assessments, reports and files
- Special Education designations and requirements
- Useful student learning plans and IEP's
- What structures need to be considered from intake to exit?
- How to create healthy culture and climate in schools and classrooms?
- Support systems, resource personal, school based teams etc.
- Who is the architect, the advocate and the orchestra leader – the key role of the Advisor.
- Codes of Conduct – hard line rules vs cultural expectations.
- Integrated Case Management and Wrap Around
- The stages of attachment, engagement and empowerment
- Assignment # 2 - Case Studies

### **Session Three – : Student Needs – The Myths and Realities**

- Continued presentations of assignment # 1 – Current Models
- Equal doesn't mean the same – there are no templates or panaceas.
- Back to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Attachment Theory and Developmental Assets
- The growth industry – mental health issues.
- The dimensions of poverty – socio- economic factors.
- The many forms of abuse – physical, sexual, emotional, neglect etc.
- Cognitive variables – learning challenges and multiple intelligences.
- Self-regulation – is it the key to success?
- Appropriating assessment, evaluation and reporting
- The importance of success, recognition and celebration.
- What resources are out there?
- Assignment # 3 – Reading Review

#### Session Four – : ***It Takes a Whole Village – Partnerships That Work***

- Final presentations of assignment # 1 – Current Models
- Parental support and engagement
- School based support systems
- District resource people and systems.
- Ministry resources and programs.
- BCTF and the Alternate Education PSA
- How can post secondary institutions be involved?
- Other governmental departments and services.
- Community based agencies and organizations.
- The role of business and industry.
- Individual role models and mentors.
- Shared professional development and planning.
- Funding sources – grants, service contracts, partnerships, sales etc
- The importance of informing and educating your partners.
- Assignment #4 – Community Partnership Directory

#### Session Five – : ***Personalized Learning – The Future is Now!***

- Presentation of assignment # 4 – Directories
- The importance of student success
- Authentic student learning plans and IEP's
- Student interests and abilities.
- Student voice, participation and engagement
- Service learning, volunteerism and character education
- Learning styles and teaching strategies
- The emerging role of experiential, project-based and hands on learning
- Curriculum selection and development
- The important role of prior learning assessments and adjudication.
- Meeting outcomes in creative and diverse ways
- Graduation planning
- Transition planning and exit strategies
- Future support and tracking
- Assignment # 5 – self-assessment and course evaluation (in class)
- Celebration