



Planning Restorative Outcomes: PRO Assessment

Psychology or Special Education 686RY, 3 semester hours graduate credit

Instructor of Record: Larry K. Brendtro, PhD

Course Overview

PRO Assessment is being employed by professionals in education, treatment, juvenile justice, family services, and child and youth care.¹ This strength-based model enlists young persons and other stakeholders in developing positive plans for learning and growth. Instead of focusing on pathology, deficit, and disorder, PRO draws from a consilience of evidence in positive psychology, neuroscience, cultural psychology, and the ecology of positive human development.² Conflict, adversity, and trauma are reframed as opportunities to develop strengths and resilience.³ The focus is on meeting brain-based biosocial needs for Attachment, Achievement, Autonomy, and Altruism.

Traditional assessment of emotional and behavior challenges targets pathology and disorder. The most widespread example is seen in the latest edition of the DSM-5 framework from the American Psychiatric Association.⁴ The lack of validity of this model has been documented by researchers at The National Institute of Mental Health⁵ and by noted psychiatrist Allen Frances.⁶ Further, the medical model tilts interventions toward prescribing medications to manage surface behavior instead of providing restorative educational and therapeutic experiences.⁷ In contrast, most problems of children and youth result from unmet needs and stress from “Dis-Ease” in the ecology.⁸ PRO Assessment can be adapted to deal with a range of problems:

- *Brief Support Plans* use life space skills to deal with a specific conflict or crisis.
- *Growth Plans* are designed to develop educational and treatment goals.
- *Reclaiming Plans* are used with chronic or serious problems including school removal or placement in restrictive treatment or justice settings.

It is assumed that professionals seeking to conduct PRO Assessments have skills in communication, counseling, or relationship-building, since such is essential to engage youth as partners in this process.⁹

Course Goals and Outcomes:

1. Engage the youth as a key expert in the assessment process using strategies to *connect* for support, *clarify* challenges, and *restore* harmony.
2. Explore timelines of significant life events to see how the individual copes with challenging situations in resilient or self-defeating ways.
3. Scan the social ecology of family, peer, school, and community to gather information on relationships that contribute to strain or positive support.
4. Identify strengths and problems related to needs for Attachment (Belonging), Achievement (Mastery), Autonomy (Independence), and Altruism (Generosity).
5. Formulate specific interventions to mobilize supports in the ecology and build strengths in the young person.
6. Create a written PRO Assessment plan on a child or youth.

Topical Outline of Course

Consilience

- Sources of evidence about positive learning and growth
- Integration of science, practice expertise, and positive values
- The evidence base and evolution of PRO Assessment

Adversity

- Types and sources of trauma and risk
- Adverse Childhood Experiences and traumagenic needs
- Conflict cycles and youth participation in problem solving

Resilience

- The psychology of coping with stress
- Developing inner strengths and resources
- Building resilience with relational support

Designer Brains

- The triune brain, stress, and coping strategies
- Genes are not destiny: the science of epigenetics
- Building brain-friendly learning and living environments

Connecting

- Safety: physical, emotional, and cultural events
- Attachment: Belonging, rejection, separation, and loss
- Strategies for connecting to adult-wary individuals

Coping

- Achievement: Mastery in social and emotional learning
- Autonomy: Independence, self-regulation, and self-efficacy
- Strategies for coping with external challenges and internal stress

Thriving

- Altruism: Generosity, empathy, and purpose beyond self
- Adventure: adolescent brains, risk taking, and inspiration
- Experiences of serving others, finding purpose in life

Transforming

- The change process in persons and their environments
- Problem solving and planning positive futures
- Designing and writing PRO Assessment plans

Course Requirements

1. Course participation: Fully participate in all sessions in a two-day course or complete the on-line version of this course.
2. Exam: Complete a multiple-choice exam on key concepts and competencies which can be downloaded from the website ReclaimingYouthAtRisk.org.
3. Practicum project: Conduct a basic PRO Assessment with a young person, including record review, interviews with youth, consulting with stakeholders, triangulating information, assessing needs, and developing a growth plan.
4. Write a PRO Assessment Report about 5 double-spaced pages using the outline provided. While your report will only be read by the course instructor, you can alter or redact the name and identifying information to preserve confidentiality.
5. Personal reflection: Analyze your experience with this process in 5 double-spaced pages including the reason for the assessment, how you enlisted the youth in the process, challenges faced, and what you learned.
6. Literature review: Write five one-page evaluative essays (include your analysis instead of just recapping content of articles). You can review articles from the online *Thriving Journal* (GrowingEdgeTraining.com), the PRO Assessment manual, or readings from the references cited in this syllabus. Articles or chapters chosen should connect to PRO Assessment themes.

Course Grading

- Participation: (required but not graded)
- Course Exam: 25%
- Practicum Project Report: 25%
- Personal Reflection: 25%
- Literature Review: 25%

Grades: Participants who successfully complete these requirements earn three (3) semester hours of graduate credit, graded with an A-F letter grade.

Time Due: All written assignments are to be submitted together and within 30 days of the last day of the course to your instructor. Submission is preferably in digital copy.

Requesting a grading extension: If additional time is needed to complete the work, a one-time extension may be requested. Contact your instructor to get permission for an extension. Unless otherwise specified, work ordinarily will be due no later than the middle of the next semester (March 15, July 15, or October 15). If assignments are not submitted by the extended due date, a grade of F is automatically given.

Review the Academic Honesty Policy: (<http://www.augie.edu/about/college-offices-and-affiliates/academic-affairsoffice/honor-code>) We expect this work to be original.

Registration: This is completed during the workshop using forms provided by the instructor. The course can be taken for graduate credit in either psychology or special education.

Payment is due at the time of registration by check or credit card. Cost for three hours of graduate credit is \$300.00 (USD).

Grading and Transcripts: After the instructor submits final grades, students receive a grade report from Augustana University. If you need official transcripts, these can be requested by writing to:

Augustana University, Office of the Registrar,
2001 S. Summit Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57197
Or Fax to 605-274-4450 or request online at augie.edu

For questions or further information, please contact Reclaiming Youth at Risk by e-mail, wendy@reclaimingyouthatrisk.org or by phone at 605-906-4694.

Outline for Writing Planning Restorative Outcomes Reports

Assessment Facilitator

Name, Contact Information

Assessment Participant

Name, Date of Birth (pseudonym for confidentiality acceptable)

School and Family Contact

Sources of Information

Records Reviewed, Prior Assessments

Persons Interviewed

Reason for Assessment

Questions to be Addressed

Connecting

Relational Ecology

Safety and Belonging Scans

Coping

Private Logic and Coping Strategies

Mastery and Independence Scans

Thriving

Current interests and Future Goals

Generosity and Adventure Scans

Developmental Milestones

Lifespan Pathways

Inventory of Assets and Needs

Ecological Supports and Strains

Individual Strengths and Challenges

Growth Planning

Building External Supports

Building Internal Strengths

Endnotes

¹ Freado, M. (2016). Transforming assessment. In CF Learning (Ed.), *A thousand fires burning: Reclaiming Children and Youth*. (p. 30-35). Amarillo, TX: Cal Farley's.

² Brendtro, L., Mitchell, M., & colleagues (2015). *Deep brain learning: Evidence based essentials in education, treatment, and youth development*. Albion, MI: Starr Commonwealth.

Brokenleg, M. (2016). How indigenous people see the world. *Thriving Journal*, 1(1). Published online http://growingedgetraining.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/How-Indigenous-People-See-the-World_Thriving_vol_1-1.pdf

Van Bockern, S. (2017). Schools that matter. *Thriving Journal*, 2(4). http://growingedgetraining.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Schools-that-Matter_vol_2-4.pdf

³ Brendtro, L., Brokenleg, M., & Van Bockern, S. (2020). *Reclaiming youth at risk: Futures of promise*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Bath, H., & Seita, J. (2018). *The three pillars of care: Trauma and resilience in the other 23 hours*. Winnipeg, CA: University of Winnipeg Faculty of Education.

⁴ APA. (2013). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.)*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

⁵ Insel, T. (2013). Transforming diagnosis. National Institute of Mental Health. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/about/directors/thomas-insel/blog/2013/transforming-diagnosis.shtml>

⁶ Frances, A. (2013). *Saving normal: An insider's revolt against out-of-control psychiatric diagnosis, DSM, big pharma, and the medicalization of everyday life*. New York, NY: William Morrow.

⁷ Foltz, R., & Huefner, J. (2014). The subjective experience of being medicated in troubled youth: A sample from residential treatment. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 23(4), 752–763.

⁸ Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

⁹ Trainings offered by the nonprofit institute Reclaiming Youth at Risk include *Life Space Crisis Intervention*, *Respectful Alliances—Positive Peer Cultures and Inspired Staff Teams*, *The Art of Kid Whispering*, *Moccasin Paths*, *Schools that Matter*, *Rolling with Resilience—Building Family Strengths*, and *The Three Pillars of Transforming Care—Trauma and Resilience in the Other 23 Hours*. See ReclaimingYouth.org.