



## **Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Futures of Promise**

3 semester hours of undergraduate or graduate credit

Psychology or Special Education 389RY/ 589RY

Instructor of Record: Steve Van Bockern, EdD

### **Background information**

This two-day workshop is anchored in practice wisdom and scientific research that explains what is necessary in order for our children to experience well-being. The roots of this strength-based approach to reclaim challenging youth are found in the human needs for belonging, mastery, independence and generosity as presented in the *Circle of Courage*. This model was first described in the book *Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Futures of Promise* (Brendtro, Brokenleg, Van Bockern, 2019, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition). When these universal growth needs are met, children do well. Psychologist Henry Murray (1938) defined needs as brain-based drives which organize thinking and behavior toward specific goals. Designed into our DNA, biosocial needs are universal across age and culture. To qualify as a need, a motivating force must have a direct relationship to well-being. Needs when satisfied promote healthy development but when thwarted lead to negative consequences. The *Circle of Courage* model is drawn from a consilience of indigenous cultures, youth work pioneers and contemporary psychological research.

In modern society, the bonds between generations can too easily be broken when needs are ignored. Problems of children and youth are not unique to impoverished communities but are found in city, suburban, and rural settings. Family instability, substance abuse, delinquency, school problems, racism, and alienated youth are all symptoms of broken communities. Children who are not attached to adults fail to learn the values of respect for self and others. Hungry for attention, they become prisoners of peer approval. Unattached to others and unmotivated in school, they fail to develop their potentials. Struggling for power, they challenge authority. Many youth mask their spiritual emptiness by reckless pursuit of pleasure. Their disruptive behaviors are signals of distress. Beneath their defiance, indifference, or reckless bravado, many of our youth are swimming in rivers of pain. But when their behavior bothers others, they are likely to be dealt more pain by punishment or exclusion.

This workshop is grounded in the value-based belief that all youth, even those presenting difficult behavior, have positive potential. To succeed in the face of risk and challenge, children need concerned adults and peers who respond to their needs rather than react to problem behavior. This workshop builds skills in these three areas:

*Connect: Develop strategies to form respectful alliances with youth in conflict.* Young people in trouble may be reluctant to cooperate with persons in authority and may be skilled at outwitting adults. Traditional coercive approaches fuel adversarial encounters and conflict cycles. This training provides methods to build trust with unmotivated, wary youth.

*Clarify: Develop strategies for talking with youth and using problems as learning opportunities.* By jointly exploring key life events, youth and adult identify the counterproductive thinking and values that maintain problem behavior. Attention is given to identifying potential strengths as well as helping youth replace their self-defeating behavior and private logic with more effective coping styles.

*Restore: Develop strategies for providing external supports and building internal strengths.* The goal is to enable young people to assume responsible, prosocial roles. This requires attention to the ecology of family, school, peer group, and community. Resilient outcomes are ultimately tied to relationships, and youth who thrive draw support from concerned adults and positive peers.

Learning Goals: Students will:

1. Explore the historical roots of the reclaiming movement. Examples include the work and research of Redl & Wineman, Maslow, Coopersmith, Bronfenbrenner, Ainsworth, Werner & Smith, Benard, and Masten.
2. Examine the research that is foundational to the *Circle of Courage* and connect those universal growth needs with positive youth development.
3. Review and consider practical applications of reclaiming principles that help transform children and families in youth programs, schools, juvenile justice and residential programs.

## **Topical Outline**

### Enduring Truths

- Searching for Solutions.
- Identifying Universal Needs

### The Circle of Courage

- The Spirit of Belonging
- The Spirit of Mastery
- The Spirit of Independence
- The Spirit of Generosity

### Seeds of Discouragement

- Relational Trauma
- Failure as Futility
- Powerlessness
- Loss of Purpose

### Bonds of Trust: Strengthening Attachment

- Adult-Wary Children
- Bids for Connection
- Trust-Building Strategies

### Brain-Friendly Learning: Strengthening Achievement

- The Resilient Brain Requires Failure
- Genes Are Not Destiny
- Safety and Learning
- Experiential Learning
- Learning Is Social

### Pathways to Responsibility: Strengthening Autonomy

Understanding Autonomy  
Rethinking Discipline  
Understanding Coping and Conflict Cycles  
Developing Resilient Problem Solving  
Lives with Purpose: Strengthening Altruism  
A Curriculum for Caring  
Positive Relational Support  
From Surviving to Thriving  
From Trauma to Resilience

### **Course Requirements**

Participants who successfully complete these requirements will earn three (3) semester hours of graduate or undergraduate **workshop credit**, graded with an A-F letter grade.

All requirements/assignments are to be submitted to the instructor of the training within 30 days of the last day of training. Permission from the instructor is necessary to extend this deadline. If permission is given, the student has until the middle of the next semester (a summer session counts as a semester) to submit the work. If the work is not submitted by the extended deadline, the grade automatically is recorded as an F grade. Paperwork should be mailed or emailed to the address given by the workshop instructor. Please be sure to obtain the mailing or email address of the instructor before leaving this training.

#### **Undergraduate 3 semester hour**

1. Fully participate and complete in-class projects.
2. Write a three-page reflection paper on what you learned during this course.
3. Exam. Read the book *Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Futures of Promise* (2019, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition) by Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern. Complete an open book, objective exam on key concepts and ideas.
4. Explore a topic or idea of interest presented in the workshop in a three-page library paper. A minimum of three references are required. Use APA referencing standards.

#### **Graduate 3 semester hour**

1. Fully participate and complete in-class projects.
2. Write a five-page reflection paper on what you learned during this course.
3. Exam. Read the book *Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Futures of Promise* (2019, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition) by Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern. Complete an open book, objective exam on key concepts and ideas.
4. Explore a topic or idea of interest presented in the workshop in a four to six-page library paper. A minimum of five references are required. Use APA referencing standards.
5. Options: (select one)
  - a. Create a PowerPoint that presents key principles from the training. The PowerPoint should have a minimum of 25 slides and contain speaker notes.

- b. Read and provide a two-page reflection that connects one of the following books to your personal practice:

*Schools That Matter: Teaching the Mind, Reaching the Heart*

*Deep Brain Learning: Evidence Based Essentials*

*The Three Pillars of Trauma-informed Care*

- c. Read three related research-informed articles and provide a reflection that connects those articles to your personal practice (one page per article).

### **Registration and Cost**

Registration occurs during the workshop. Students will complete a registration form indicating a desire for either psychology or special education credit, and either graduate or undergraduate level. Payment is due at the time of registration. The cost for 3 semester hours of undergraduate or graduate credit is **\$300** (US dollars). Cash is not accepted. Checks, money orders payable to **Reclaiming Youth at Risk** and credit cards are accepted (Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express). Payment will appear on your credit card statement as Reclaiming Youth at Risk.

### **Grading and Transcripts**

After final grades are submitted, students will receive an emailed grade report from Augustana University. This will come from [registrar@augie.edu](mailto:registrar@augie.edu). Once the grade report is received, students can request an official transcript through the following link:

<http://www.augie.edu/academics/registrars-office/transcript-requests>

**For questions or concerns, please contact Wendy Beukelman, University Credit Coordinator at:**

**Reclaiming Youth at Risk, PO Box 650, Lennox, South Dakota 57039 USA**

**Email: [wendy@reclaimingyouthatrisk.org](mailto:wendy@reclaimingyouthatrisk.org); Phone: (605) 906-4694**

**Note: Instructors should submit all registrations (along with payments) to:**

Reclaiming Youth at Risk  
Attn: Wendy Beukelman  
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Lennox, SD 57039 USA