



Sharpen Overcoming Adversity (“OA”) —Trauma and Stress on the Developing Mind a 4-hour evidence-based course

This course is a recommended companion for Sharpen Mental Health Literacy (SMHL), Sharpen Suicide Prevention and Postvention, and 5 Minute Mindfulness (5MM).

This four-hour course will enable participants to identify and understand:

1. The impacts of trauma, including adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and how stress impacts the brain. Most importantly, this training outlines the resources and skills for managing stress and improving overall wellbeing.

Sharpen's trauma courses were built in collaboration with national researchers and professionals at over 15 child welfare agencies (see list on p. 2).

2. Through expert testimony and personal stories of resilience, participants will learn the impact of long-term activation of the stress-response system, how trauma impacts the developing mind, attachment theory, prevalence of childhood trauma, and research outlining strategies for breaking the cycles of abuse.

3. Through over 50 interviews with veterans and psychologists specializing in PTSD, participants will learn about veteran PTSD and latest research around improving resilience.

4. Participants will receive a high-level understanding of the strategies for reducing toxic stress and for effectively mitigating the risk created by trauma.

Evidence-Base.

The Sharpen OA course has been deployed since 2017 in multiple Sharpen settings including with over 500 veterans, 5,000 foster parents, 5,500 educators and over 1,600 college students.

This course will help school and community leaders, teachers and staff assess and address mental health needs of students and improve educational life outcomes by increasing awareness of trauma-informed best practices and other protective factors for resilience and mental wellbeing.

Sharpen OT program was created in collaboration with United Way of the Piedmont as part of the Sharpen Family program to support foster families. A portion of the proceeds from this course benefits the nonprofit mission of the United Way of the Piedmont.

Agencies who collaborated on the project include:

- A Child's Haven
- Child Advocacy Center, Spartanburg
- Emerge Family Therapy Clinic
- Highland Neighborhood Association, Spartanburg
- Hope Center for Children



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- Northside Development Group-Purposebuilt Community
- Safe Homes Rape Crisis Center
- South Carolina Office of Suicide Prevention
- Spartanburg Area Mental Health Center / DMH
- Spartanburg Department of Social Services
- The Forrester Center for Behavioral Health and Substance Use Treatment
- Upstate Warrior Solution Veteran Agency
- USC Upstate Child Protection Training Center

Experts and individuals with lived experience who are featured in the course include:

- Bethany Brand, Ph.D.
- Timothy Brewerton, M.D.
- Candace
- Craig Burnette, Ph.D.
- Suzy Cole, J.D.
- Stephen Davis
- Taylor Davis, Ed.S.
- Stephen Hinshaw, Ph.D.
- Robert O. Hussa, Ph.D.
- Alex Karydi, Ph.D.
- Nicholas Kelley, M.D.
- Arialle Kennedy
- Naomi Letts
- Richard Loewenstein, M.D.
- DJ Moore
- Jennifer Parker, Ph.D.
- Robert Post, M.D.
- Frank Putnam, M.D.
- Jason Roberts, LPC
- Sylvia
- Ida Thompson, M.Ed.
- Roger Williams, LISW
- Over 100 families sharing stories of resilience and strength



Relevant Conference and Workshop Presentations

Karydi, A., Davis, T., **Hussa Farrell, R.** (2017-2023). The Spartanburg South Carolina suicide prevention task force was created and led by Robyn Hussa Farrell in 2017 in collaboration with the Office of Suicide Prevention, led by Dr. Alex Karydi who wrote the suicide prevention plan for the state of South Carolina and for SC schools through the Department of Education. The 5MM program was deployed as a training for suicide prevention task force members in Columbia and Spartanburg and utilized as a core part of the suicide prevention toolkits available to youth.

Hussa Farrell, R. (2021, 2022). Trauma-informed best practices for schools. 2021 and 2022 Attachment & Trauma Network annual conference (virtual presentations).

Hussa Farrell, R. (June – July, 2016; June-July, 2017). “Stress-Management and Mindfulness for Traumatized Children.” Data and evidence-based mindfulness techniques presented at Compassionate Schools Summer Summit, University of South Carolina – Upstate Child Advocacy Studies, SC.

Hussa Farrell, R. (October, 2016). “Stress-Management and Mindfulness for Traumatized Children.” Evidence-based techniques presented at South Carolina Association of School Social Workers Fall Conference in Pawleys Island, South Carolina.

Hussa Farrell, R. (2013-2018). “5MM peer resiliency program for adolescent youth.” Peer resiliency program for Spartanburg Day School, Meeting Street Academy and Spartanburg District 7 Schools, Spartanburg, SC.

Hussa Farrell, R. (2010-2016). Various trainings, workshops and presentations at NYU Silver School of Social Work, Common Day.

References Cited

Biber, D., Rothman, R., Abel, C., Hussa-Farrell, R. (2022, in review). Evaluation of Sharpen Mental Health Literacy Training Program for College Females. Submitted for publication to *Pedagogy in Health Promotion*: July, 2022.

Bhushan D, Kotz K, McCall J, Wirtz S, Gilgoff R, Dube SR, Powers C, Olson-Morgan J, Galeste M, Patterson K, Harris L, Mills A, Bethell C, Burke Harris N, Office of the California Surgeon General. Roadmap for Resilience: The California Surgeon General’s Report on Adverse Childhood Experiences, Toxic Stress, and Health. Office of the California Surgeon General, 2020. DOI: 10.48019/PEAM8812.

Chesin, M., Interian, A., Kline, A., Benjamin-Phillips, C., Latorre, M., Stanley, B. (2016) Reviewing Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Suicidal Behavior, *Archives of Suicide Research*, 20:4, 507-527, DOI: 10.1080/13811118.2016.1162244

Dindo, L., Van Liew, J. R., & Arch, J. J. (2017). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: A Transdiagnostic Behavioral Intervention for Mental Health and Medical Conditions. *Neurotherapeutics : the journal of the American Society for Experimental NeuroTherapeutics*, 14(3), 546–553. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13311-017-0521-3>



Fadel N., Garner, H., Stoner, A., Ridgeway, L., Cheng, N., **Hussa Farrell, R.**, Farrell, T., Berreta, K., Afkinich, K. (2019). A Mental Health and Wellness App For Osteopathic Medical Students. (6/2019-present). Initial results and program presented virtually at the 2020 American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM). Findings will be presented at 2023 American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) Annual Conference.

Luoma, J. B., & Villatte, J. L. (2012). Mindfulness in the Treatment of Suicidal Individuals. *Cognitive and behavioral practice*, 19(2), 265–276. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cbpra.2010.12.003>

Parker, J., Olson, S. & Bunde, J. The Impact of Trauma-Based Training on Educators. *Journ Child Adol Trauma* 13, 217–227 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-019-00261-5>.

Patrizi, J., Jones, A., Bishop, B., Stoner, AM., Fadel, N., Bendyk, H. Courtside Mindfulness—Keep Your Head in the Game: The Effects of 8-Week Mindfulness Training on Adolescent Volleyball Athletes. American Psychiatric Association Annual Conference, San Francisco. Poster Presentation. May 2019.

About Sharpen

Sharpen® is an evidence-based, trauma-informed mental health platform that has shown to improve mental health outcomes through the provision of technology that delivers individually-focused, award-winning, and community-driven content (Hussa-Farrell et al, 2021). Sharpen focuses on improving shared protective factors of both individuals and communities by increasing resiliency, mental health literacy, and productivity of users (Hussa-Farrell et al, 2021). Sharpen and its library of over 100 award-winning courses has been used for over five years as professional development training tools for licensed clinicians, educators and peer mentors and has shown to improve suicide prevention best practices (Karydi et al, 2017-2021), improve confidence and competence in assisting an individual or student who may be struggling (Anderson et al, 2017; Patrizi et al, 2019; Fadel et al 2020), decreasing shame and stigma around mental health topics (Fadel et al 2020), improving mental health literacy for school professionals and educators (Anderson et al, 2017), pediatricians (Haddad et al, 2015), and medical students (Fadel et al, 2020). Most notably, the Sharpen system was used to train elementary educators how to lead mindfulness interventions for children ages four to seven in Title 1 schools. The program not only improved health outcomes, but academic outcomes including increased literacy and decreased disciplinary action (Bauer et al, 2019; Parker et al, 2021). Sharpen contains the award-winning peer resiliency program, *Flourish*: a disordered eating prevention program designed and led at Spartanburg Day School in South Carolina, created in collaboration with pediatricians and licensed mental health professionals. The program ran over the course of five years, with over 15 students each year who were trained on the curriculum and then went to mentor elementary aged children in building protective factors such as improving body esteem, mindfulness, social emotional learning and mindfulness based stress reduction (Hussa Farrell 2015-2020).