

Child Advocacy Studies Program

Trauma Exposure, Self-Care, and Resiliency Departmental Policy

Approved By and Date:	Executive Leadership Team	09/15/2025
	ICore	09/10/2025

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support the well-being of students and faculty engaged in Child Advocacy Studies coursework. Given the sensitive nature of course material, which may include exposure to traumatic content, this policy establishes trauma-informed practices, self-care strategies, and resiliency-building supports to ensure a safe and sustainable learning and teaching environment.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all students, faculty, and staff who participate in Child Advocacy Studies courses or related academic activities affiliated with the national Zero Abuse Project.

III. Policy Statement

Stanly Community College recognizes that exposure to traumatic material can impact the emotional, psychological, and physical health of students and faculty. The institution is committed to promoting a trauma-informed educational environment by integrating self-care resources, resiliency practices, and institutional supports.

IV. Guiding Principles

This policy is grounded in trauma-informed principles of:

1. **Safety** – ensuring emotional and physical safety in learning environments.
2. **Trust and Transparency** – clear communication of expectations and supports.
3. **Collaboration and Mutuality** – fostering shared responsibility for wellness.
4. **Empowerment, Voice, and Choice** – respecting autonomy in participation.
5. **Cultural Responsiveness** – acknowledging the role of identity, culture, and lived experience in trauma and healing.

V. Procedures and Practices

A. Trauma-Informed Classroom Practices

1. Faculty will provide advance notice when course material includes sensitive or potentially triggering content.

2. Students may choose to step out of class or decline participation in specific in-person activities without academic penalty.
3. Confidentiality will be respected in all classroom discussions; sharing of personal experiences is voluntary.

B. Self-Care Supports

1. The instructor will provide students and faculty with information regarding on-campus counseling services, Student Assistance Program (SAP), Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), and community-based mental health resources.
2. Students are encouraged to take wellness breaks during while working on the course sessions that involve intensive or sensitive subject matter.

C. Resiliency-Building Practices

1. Students will be encouraged to participate in resiliency strategies, such as mindfulness practices, reflective writing, and facilitated peer discussions.
2. Faculty will model healthy coping strategies and foster a supportive classroom community.
3. Faculty will be encouraged to participate in additional training addressing secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue, and resiliency skills.

D. Faculty and Staff Support

1. Faculty teaching Child Advocacy Studies will be offered professional development on trauma-informed pedagogy and self-care.
2. Peer consultation and debriefing opportunities will be made available to faculty to process challenging experiences.
3. Supervisors will consider the emotional demands of course content when evaluating workload and performance.

VI. Accountability and Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years in partnership with faculty, and representatives from the Zero Abuse Project to ensure alignment with best practices.

VII. References

1. National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) – Secondary Traumatic Stress Resources
2. Zero Abuse Project – Child Advocacy Studies Program Guidelines