

WJCS EDYTHER KURZ EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE COURSE CATALOG 2026-2027



WJCS Commitment

WJCS offers professional trainings for licensed social workers, mental health counselors, psychologists, nurses, and other health practitioners through the WJCS Edythe Kurz Institute.

Westchester Jewish Community Services is current with the latest developments in its field of practice, and the Edythe Kurz Educational Institute is committed to transmitting this knowledge to WJCS staff and professionals from other human service organizations.

The WJCS Edythe Kurz Educational Institute, which is sponsored by the Kurz Family Foundation, offers skill-enhancing courses, workshops, seminars, and conferences to help ensure that behavioral healthcare and human services provided by WJCS staff and other professionals in Westchester County are of the highest, most up-to-date, evidence-based quality. **All courses and seminars are free for WJCS staff!**

Maintaining quality service in a rapidly evolving environment is the mission of our Educational Institute. Our system of behavioral healthcare and human services must accommodate new approaches to providing care, including brief, evidence-based interventions; community-based programs; and person centered care plans. Our continuing focus has been to provide quality and proven services that are highly effective for the increasingly varied people we serve.

Advance your knowledge with professional courses led by mental health, trauma, and other experts. Explore trainings with leading professionals who cover the latest developments in treatment.

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for Licensed Social Workers, Psychologists, and Mental Health Counselors

WJCS offers several fee-based courses for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) that enable licensed social workers, psychologists and mental health counselors to maintain their certifications. Westchester Jewish Community Services is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Psychology as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed psychologists #PSY-0101, and by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Workers an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers #SW0067, and by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Mental Health Practitioners as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed mental health counselors #MHC-0313.

Edythe Kurz Annual Clinical Conference

Early Childhood Matters: Building Foundations

November 10, 2026
9:00 A.M. – 11:30 P.M.

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Dr. Samuel Kahn Memorial Lecture

TBA

9:00-10:00 A.M.

COURSE OFFERINGS

The Educational Institute offers two types of courses:

- Core Courses: Mandatory foundation courses
- Elective Courses: Specialized treatment courses with didactic and practicum sessions
- Additional courses may be added throughout the year

REGISTRATION

Registration opens 4 weeks prior to each course and is available on the WJCS website www.wjcs.com or through the link provided in the monthly email announcement of upcoming courses.

- **WJCS staff:** Register on-line with supervisory approval
- **Community professionals:** Register and pay on-line
- **Course Location:** Most courses are live via zoom, and will be listed in the course description
- **For Information Contact:** John Alterman, LCSW, Director, Educational Institute
- (914) 949-7699 Ext. 2474 or edinstitute@wjcs.com

CORE CURRICULUM

The Core Curriculum courses mandated for WJCS clinical staff, depending on practice setting.

CORE COURSES:

- Assessing and Treating Clients with co-Occurring Mental Health & Substance Use Conditions
- Common Factors of Trauma Treatment
- Crisis De-Escalation Training
- Differential Diagnosis
- Intro to DBT
- Zero Suicide: Safer Suicide Care

ELECTIVE COURSES:

- CBT for Insomnia
- Developmental Disabilities: Current Research and Modifications for Therapeutic Intervention
- Dissociation
- Grief Special Topics: Ambiguous Loss, Disenfranchised Grief
- Initial Assessment and Risk Evaluation for Children
- Organizational Skills Training
- Self-Disclosure in Psychotherapy: Research, Clinical Judgment, and Ethical Practice
- The Intersection of trauma & Developmental Disabilities
- Theories & Practices to Support Clinicians working with Grieving Clients
- Trauma Treatment Across the Lifespan

COURSE SCHEDULE

2026-2027

Dates	Course	Time	Instructor	# Sessions	Contact Hrs./CEUs
7/15/2026 7/29/2026 7/30/26 8/3/26	Zero Suicide: Safer Suicide Care (WJCS Staff Only)	Various times	Ashley Cabrera, LCSW; Christina Favale, LCSW; Christopher Libby, PhD	1	2.5
8/4/26 8/18/26	Intro to DBT	9:00-10:30	Chris Libby, PhD	2	3
8/11/26	Initial Assessment and Risk Evaluation for Children	9:00-10:30	Alyssa Neary, PsyD	1	1.5
9/8/2026	Common Factors of Trauma Tx	9:00-10:30	Liane Nelson, PhD	1	1.5
9/15/2026	Dissociation	9:00-10:30	Liane Nelson, PhD	1	1.5
9/29/26 10/6/26	CBT for Insomnia	9:00-11:00	Tiffany Huseman, PsyD		
10/6//26 10/13/26	Differential Diagnosis	9:00-10:30	Maya Cook, PhD	2	3
12/1/2026 12/8/2026	Organizational Skills Training	9:00-11:00	Elana Spira, PhD	2	4
2/2/2027 2/9/2027	Developmental Disabilities: Current Research and Modifications for Therapeutic Intervention	9:00-10:30	Kenn Mann, PsyD	2	3
3/9/2027	Therapist Self-Disclosure: Research and Clinical Experience	9:00-10:30	Kenneth Mann, PsyD	1	1.5
3/30/27	Grief Special Topics: Ambiguous Loss, Disenfranchised Grief	9:00-11:00	Sedef Orsel, LCSW	1	2
4/6/2027 4/13/2027	Trauma Treatments Across the Lifespan	9:00-10:30	Hanna Cohen, PsyD	2	3
4/20/2027	The Intersection of DD & Trauma	9:00-10:30	Min Cao, PhD; Elana Braun, PsyD		
5/4/2027 5/11/2027 5/18/2027	Assessing and Treating Clients with Co-Occurring Mental Health & Substance Use Conditions	9:00-10:30	Sharayah Hoffman, CASAC-A	3	4.5

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Core Curriculum

ASSESSING AND TREATING CLIENTS WITH CO-OCCURRING MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CONDITIONS

Clients seeking mental health treatment may also have a coexisting substance abuse problem. This may be apparent at intake or emerge during treatment. Symptoms of one disorder are often mistaken for the other. Treatment of individuals who present with co-occurring mental health and substance use issues can present a myriad of challenges for providers. Among the challenges faced by providers treating individuals with co-occurring conditions are: 1) recognizing substance use when it is present; 2) completing appropriate assessment of a client's substance use; 3) helping clients recognize the problematic nature of their use for the overall wellbeing; 4) determining what level of care is appropriate for the client; 5) selecting appropriate interventions to decrease substance use; and 6) helping clients reduce their risk for slips and relapses in their substance use and cope effectively with them when they occur. This training will help providers to be more prepared for the challenges associated with providing treatment to such individuals. Providers will learn how to conduct an assessment of substance use, how to decide what level of treatment is appropriate for specific individuals, assess individuals' readiness for change, apply evidenced-based approaches to increasing individuals' motivation for change, assess the functional purposes and impacts of substance use, select and utilize appropriate treatments for individuals with co-occurring conditions, and help individuals reduce the impacts of relapse.

Method: Live In Person. Lecture, discussion, and role-play.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will understand the theoretical basis for co-occurring treatment, including stages of change, functional purposes of substance use, and complications caused with concurrent substance use and mental health conditions.
- Participants will learn interventions aimed at increasing motivation to address substance use.
- Participants will learn to evaluate the functional purposes of substance use and select appropriate interventions to address those purposes.

COMMON FACTORS OF EVIDENCE BASED TRAUMA TREATMENTS

This course will focus on using Judith Herman, MD's three stages of trauma treatment. This course will explore the common factors of evidence-based trauma treatments including Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Skills Training for Affective and Interpersonal Regulation-Narrative Story Telling (STAIR-NST) and Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT). We will also discuss common pre-treatment beliefs and assessment. The course will include lecture and case discussion.

Method: Lecture, discussion

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will learn how to identify at least one prerequisite for successful trauma treatment.

- Participants will learn about Dr. Herman's stages of treatment as a framework for understanding the common factors of evidence based trauma treatment.
- Participants will learn about assessing for trauma using formalized PTSD measures

CRISIS DE-ESCALATION

Working with clients who display aggressive behaviors can present with a host of challenges. One of those challenges is how to remain calm while interacting with a dysregulated person. Crisis de-escalation focuses on providing clinicians, support staff and administrators the necessary tools to prevent de-escalation potential crisis with clients.

Method: In person, lecture, discussion, and role-play.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will understand the importance of organizational climate and culture, setting conditions and crisis prevention, co-regulation and self-regulation, the stress model of crisis and types of aggression.
- Identify phases of the phases of a crisis.
- Understanding the importance of self-awareness
- Appreciate the importance of relationship
- Participants will learn interventions aimed at decreasing a crisis Behavioral support, managing the environment, prompting, hurdle help, proximity, redirection and distraction, emotional first AID, time away and co-regulation.
- Participants will learn to avoid power struggles and to do a Life Space Interview.

DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS

Differential diagnosis is at the heart of every initial clinical encounter and is the beginning of every treatment plan. In community mental health centers, diagnostic clarity is often impacted by chronic psychosocial stressors and complex clinical presentations, and clinicians are tasked with bridging the gap between accurate diagnostic assessment and practical community care. This course aims to help bridge this gap by providing a streamlined, six step blueprint for diagnostic assessment from the *DSM-5-TR Handbook of Differential Diagnosis* and introducing clinicians to additional available diagnostic tools, such as the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-5 (SCID-5). Through lecture and interactive case vignettes, participants will learn how to systematically rule out competing diagnoses and navigate overlapping symptom presentations most commonly seen in community mental health care settings.

Method: Lecture; discussion.

Learning Objectives:

- Apply a systematic differential diagnosis framework to distinguish between overlapping symptom clusters and presentations (e.g., trauma vs. mood vs. neurodevelopmental).
- Navigate DSM-5-TR Diagnostic Decision Trees and integrate structured assessment logic (such as the SCID-5) to efficiently assess presentations most commonly seen in community mental health settings.
- Practice formulating a differential diagnostic case conceptualization using clinical vignettes that balance accurate diagnostic assessment and weigh the impact of psychosocial stressors.

INTRO TO DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOR THERAPY (DBT)

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is an evidence-based treatment originally designed for individuals with suicidal or self-harm behaviors. It has come to be an evidence-based treatment for borderline personality (BPD). However, many other clients and disorders have been shown to benefit from DBT, such as depression, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, or alcohol and drug use disorders. It can be applied as a behavioral therapy to any target behavior that the client would want to change. DBT is built on balancing acceptance and change. Its use of dialectics like this one, the teaching of mindfulness as a core skill, and its group curriculum of mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotion regulation, and interpersonal effectiveness skills that have distinguished DBT as a skills-based therapy.

Method: Lecture, discussion, and role-play.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the theory and concepts of dialectics.
- Be familiar with the purpose and structure of a DBT Consultation Team.
- Understand how DBT assesses, monitors, and provides treatment through a behavioral treatment lens.
- Be familiar with the structure of a DBT skills group session.
- Understand the DBT skills in their modules of Mindfulness, Distress Tolerance, Emotion Regulation, and Interpersonal Effectiveness (and Walking the Middle Path for adolescents).
- Understand and be able to use a diary card with your client.
- Become familiar with behavioral chain analysis and solution analysis.

ZERO SUICIDE: SAFER SUICIDE CARE

This course, compiled and presented by the WJCS Zero Suicide Implementation Team, is designed to provide clinicians with guidance and training on assessing for and treating suicide risk factors. The 2.5 hour course will include best practices for using the CSSRS tool to assess suicide risk, completing detailed and effective safety plans, tools for lethal means assessment and reduction, and how and where to access additional support within and outside of the agency.

Method: Lecture, discussion

Learning Objectives:

- Attendees will learn to utilize the CSSRS Screen Version to ask about suicide risk and formulate a suicide risk assessment
- Attendees will learn best practices for completing effective and meaningful safety plans
- Attendees will learn 3+ ways to reduce access to lethal means for clients at risk of overdose or suicide
- Attendees will improve understanding of how to access additional supports within WJCS and in the Westchester community

ELECTIVE COURSES

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY FOR INSOMNIA (CBTi)

Insomnia is defined as poor sleep that is associated with distress and/or daytime consequences, including impairment in functioning or mood. Insomnia can lead to poor mental health, or can be a consequence of poor mental health. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for insomnia (CBTi) is an empirically validated brief psychotherapy with evidence of long-term improvements in sleep for people with and without psychiatric comorbidities. CBTi addresses behavioral components to sleep (e.g. stimulus control, sleep restriction therapy), cognitive components (beliefs about sleep and sleep related anxiety), and physiological components (reducing hyperarousal). In this course, participants will be introduced to the rationale for CBTi, learn the tools involved in implementing it, and become familiar with how to manage common comorbidities and challenges in implementation.

Method: Live Online, Lecture, discussion.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the sleep cycle and common patterns of normal and disordered sleep
- Understand Spielman's model and the difference between predisposing, precipitating and perpetuating factors in insomnia.
- Identify which clients would be appropriate candidates for CBTi
- Learn how to teach stimulus control and sleep restriction therapy to clients

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES: CURRENT RESEARCH AND MODIFICATIONS FOR THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION

Almost all clinicians who are in a general practice setting either in the community, school or hospital, are working with at least some clients who have a developmental disability. With Autism in particular there has been significant new research findings that can help our ability to understand and conceptualize how to approach treatment planning. This course is designed to review this research and its implications. In addition, as research is documenting more evidence based interventions with all developmentally disabled individuals, this course seeks to outline the adaptations and modifications needed to facilitate the implementation of these techniques in clinical practice.

Method: Lecture, discussion, and video clips

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will be able to identify the current diagnostic trends with ASD and its implication for treatment planning.
- Participants will be able to explain two contemporary advances in understanding the etiology of ASD.
- Participants will be able to describe a common differential diagnosis with these clients and explain how to move toward making an accurate assessment of the client.

- After considering the range of modifications that can be made in therapeutic interventions with these clients, participants will be able to identify an adaptation that they could employ or that they have recently used that illustrates these principles.
- Participants will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the construct of intersectionality as it relates to this population and consider how this might influence their work with these clients.

DISSOCIATION

This course will focus on Frank Putnam MD's conceptualization of dissociation. Participants will learn basic skills in how to identify dissociation, assess dissociation and treat people with dissociative disorders. The course will include lecture and case discussion.

Method: Lecture, discussion

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will learn how to identify dissociation.
- Participants will learn two theories about dissociation and how it emerges as a trauma coping skill.
- Participants will learn basic treatment concepts for work with people with dissociative disorders

GRIEF SPECIAL TOPICS: AMBIGUOUS LOSS, DISENFRANCHISED GRIEF

Losses are ever-present in our lives, yet those that don't involve death are often overlooked by clients, clinicians, and communities. Join us and deepen your grief-informed practice by considering the many ways your clients experience loss. This training clarifies core concepts such as Ambiguous Loss and Disenfranchised Grief and examines real-world examples across a broad spectrum of client experiences (including trauma, adoption, foster care, divorce, estrangement, immigration, deportation, forced migration, incarceration, brain injury, mental illness, developmental disabilities, gender and sexuality, aging, and caregiving). You will learn practical intervention strategies and principles for working with clients facing ambiguous losses and disenfranchised grief

Method: Lecture, discussion

Learning Objectives:

- Define Ambiguous Loss and Disenfranchised Grief, and recognize examples of each in the clients you serve.
- Explain similarities and differences between ambiguous loss and loss to death.
- Learn cognitive, emotional, and relational approaches to help clients experience loss in new ways, promoting healing and hope.
- Utilize dialectical strategies and an evolved understanding of "hope" in the context of ambiguous loss.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND RISK EVALUATION/CHILDREN

Participants will learn to perform a thorough mental health assessment of, and risk evaluation for, child clients. This class will address the goals and methods of initial evaluations, and the information that should be obtained. Risk evaluations will be discussed, including eliciting and identifying risk and protective factors, making appropriate responses, and preparing documentation that protects the client, clinician, and agency.

Method: Live In Person. Lecture; discussion.

Learning Objectives:

- To perform a thorough mental health assessment for child clients.
- To elicit and identify risk and protective factors, make evidence-based responses, and prepare appropriate documentation.

ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING

Many children with ADHD have difficulties with organization, time management and planning skills. Difficulties in these organizational skills cause significant problems with daily functioning at home and school, and lead to conflict within the family. This course will focus on the assessment of organizational skills difficulties in children, the rationale for treatment, and the development of an evidence-based treatment for enhancing children's organizational functioning, called Organizational Skills Training (OST). Participants will learn about the essential components of OST and how to use the published treatment manual to address their clients' organizational difficulties.

Method: Live In Person. Didactic; role plays; handouts

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the importance of organization, time management, and planning (OTMP) skills
- Understand the impact of deficits in OTMP skills on children with ADHD
- Understand the rationale for the development of OST
- Learn how to use OST to teach children with ADHD key organizational skills/routines

SELF-DISCLOSURE IN PSYCHOTHERAPY: RESEARCH, CLINICAL JUDGMENT, AND ETHICAL PRACTICE

Therapist self-disclosure is a complex and often nuanced aspect of psychotherapy that can either deepen therapeutic engagement or inadvertently disrupt it. This workshop provides clinicians with a comprehensive, research-informed framework for understanding when, why, and how therapist self-disclosure may be used effectively in clinical practice. The workshop will incorporate case examples and interactive discussion, allowing participants to apply decision-making models to real-world clinical dilemmas. Attendees will leave with increased confidence in responding to client questions about the therapist's personal life, identities, and experiences while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.

Method: Lecture, discussion

Learning Objectives:

- Define multiple forms of therapist self-disclosure and distinguish between intentional, unavoidable, and inadvertent disclosure in psychotherapy.
- Summarize current psychotherapy research regarding the potential benefits and risks of therapist self-disclosure across treatment settings and client populations.
- Identify ethical and boundary considerations relevant to therapist self-disclosure in professional practice.
- Evaluate how client factors, including diagnosis, attachment style, trauma history, culture, developmental level, and neurodivergence, may influence responses to therapist disclosure.
- Assess the potential impact of therapist disclosure within telehealth, social media, and contemporary digital practice environments.
- Integrate ethical, cultural, and relational considerations into decisions regarding therapist transparency and professional boundaries.

THE INTERSECTION OF TRAUMA & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Individuals with developmental disabilities often present to treatment with additional diagnostic statuses. There is well-established research evidence that individuals with developmental disabilities are up to 3 times more likely to experience a traumatic event in their life compared to typically developing peers (Hibbard & Desch, 2007; Reiter et al., 2007). Yet, many mental health professionals who work in specialty clinics dedicated to the treatment of *either* trauma or developmental disabilities often receive little to no training on working with clients with comorbid presentations – namely, clients who present with both a history of trauma and one or more developmental disabilities. In order to enable clinicians to better serve this unique client population, this course will: provide information on how trauma may present differently in the developmental disability population compared to neurotypicals, encourage participants to think critically about how traumatic experiences might be experienced through the lens of a person with developmental disabilities, and identify ways in which current evidence-based interventions for trauma could be adapted for this population of clients.

Method: Lecture, discussion, case presentation

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will gain a basic understanding of how trauma symptoms present in clients with developmental disabilities
- Participants will gain a better understanding of how trauma may be experienced differently through the lens of a person with developmental disability compared to a neurotypical peer.
- Participants will identify at least one way in which evidence-based trauma intervention can be adapted for the developmental disability population

THEORIES AND PRACTICES TO SUPPORT CLINICIANS WORKING WITH GRIEVING CLIENTS

Grief is a natural reaction to loss and everyone will experience grief at some point in their lives. Unfortunately, despite the naturalness of grief, many people struggle to process their feelings after the loss of a loved one or are impeded in their processing by other barriers. In particular, COVID-19 and subsequent isolation have both increased the number of individuals experiencing death and grief and decreased access to typical grieving resources like community support and ritual. More and more clinicians are receiving referrals for grieving clients asking for support in their bereavement process.

The current course aims to provide clinicians with a grounding in psychoeducation and theory behind grief responses in order to increase clinician confidence in working with clients who are experiencing bereavement. Additionally, this course will provide clinicians with examples of and hands-on practice with activities they can use in session to help support clients on their journey through grief and healing. At the close of each day of the course, space will be provided for clinicians to process their thoughts and feelings related to working with grieving clients in an effort to normalize conversation about death and dying and dispel some of the discomfort or concern about supporting grieving clients.

Method: Lecture, discussion, and hands-on activities.

Learning Objectives:

- Dispel bereavement “myths” that may impede clinicians from working with grieving clients and provide education on current theories of grief

- Learn steps for assessing functioning of grieving clients
- Differentiate “normal” grieving and Prolonged Grief Disorder
- Understand and be able to provide psychoeducation to clients about the concepts of disenfranchised grief, ambiguous loss, continuing bonds, and grief reminders
- Learn about and practice therapeutic modalities and activities to do with grieving clients
- Process countertransference related to death, dying, and grief

TRAUMA TREATMENT ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Clinicians are likely to encounter survivors of trauma in their practice. In addition to clients who meet criteria for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders from single traumatic events, survivors of complex and early developmental attachment trauma may also present more complex clinical pictures. This course will address diagnostic criteria for PTSD and approaches to assessment of traumatic stress-related disorders, and will introduce participants to several trauma-focused treatments, increasing participants’ awareness of the predominant evidence-based frameworks and of how to select appropriate treatments. Specifically, participants will be introduced to the triphasic model of treatment for complex trauma and to several evidenced-based approaches to treatment of traumatic stress-related disorders for both adults and children, including Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Prolonged Exposure (PE), and Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). In addition, the course will address common challenges in treatment of trauma survivors, including discussion of the impacts on clinicians of working with a traumatized population. Participants will be able to openly discuss cases in their practice to explore and gain practice in integrating trauma-informed and trauma-focused strategies.

Method: Lecture, discussion.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the diagnostic criteria for PTSD.
- Become familiar with screening measures for trauma and stressor-related disorders.
- Understand the rationale for trauma-focused treatments and primary mechanisms of change across treatments.
- Become familiar with common trauma therapies for children and adults, such as Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Prolonged Exposure (PE), and Trauma-Focused CBT (TF-CBT).
- Increase awareness about common barriers in trauma treatment, as well as how to address them, and about impacts on clinicians related to working with traumatized populations.

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