EDHD 635
Adolescents At Risk
Tuesdays (4:15pm) Online
Spring 2016

Instructor: Megan Hurley, Ph D.
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Phone: cell: (301)910-2381* (always feel free to leave a message)
Office Hours: By appointment

**Course Description:** EDHD 635 is a graduate level course designed to allow students in the Master’s of Education program to study current research on diversity and risk behaviors that impact adolescent student learning and achievement. The course will begin with an overview of general issues, and then focus on topic specific issues that put adolescents at risk for academic failure and other negative trajectories. The theme of diversity will be woven throughout the discussions of the various topics. Research will be discussed in a format for application of knowledge into the everyday classroom interactions and activities.

**Course Objectives:**
1. Gain understanding about the psychological and social issues secondary education minority students face.
2. Gain understanding about strategies (personal and academic) that target at-risk and diverse secondary student populations
3. Define an area of personal interest and apply research results into classroom experiences. Present this information orally and in written form.

**Format of the class:** Class will be online, using Canvas.

For online classes: The class will be involved in discussions from a core set of readings/chapters listed in the syllabus. Each week, one student will be responsible for “getting us started”. This will require the student leader to briefly summarize the readings and create 4 thought questions. These questions should focus on personal classroom experience with the current topic, and tying in the content of the readings. I will periodically post interviews/articles/websites related to the topic for the class to include in our discussions.

The leader MUST send me (via email) the summaries/questions by 12pm on Tuesdays. I will post the leader’s summary and questions, so that weekly the material will be ready by Tuesday at 4pm.
Online classes will be available for students to read and respond for one week. The material will be available on the class day (Tuesdays) by 4pm. The material will become read only on the following Monday evening at 5pm. Thus for each online class you will have about a week in which to read and respond. It will be helpful if you check into the class more than once a week (if, for example, you read and respond on Tuesday evening and do not check again, you will miss the comments and contributions of the other class members who do so later in the week).

Instructor Support: I will be available via email (meganhurley32@hotmail.com), and will respond or set up a time for phone contact or skype ASAP. Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns about the course throughout the semester.

**Measurement of Performance (MSGE):**

**Discussion leading:** Each student will select a topic for which they will lead the class discussion. The lead student will provide the group with a written summary of the topic as it relates to the readings. Leaders will also create discussion questions and email them to the instructor by Tuesday (day of class) at 12pm. Each class member will do this one time during the semester. (33% of final grade)

**Research/reflection paper:** Students will build upon what we have discussed in class and write a paper dealing with an appropriate topic and how it impacts their teaching. They will discuss the root of the problem (based on research read), how it is currently handled in the schools now and what new strategies they have learned from the course (through class discussions, readings, guest speakers and searches for additional information). Students will include a specific implementation plan/reflection for this topic in the classroom. This paper will be due at the end of the semester and students will briefly share their conclusions at the last class meeting. A detailed instruction sheet will be given out after the first few weeks of the class. (34% of final grade)

**Weekly Participation:**

Students will be asked to check into the online class at least twice weekly. Participation requires reading the questions/summaries posted each week. Also students should read all prior posts so that a more engaging discussion can occur. The instructor will contact a student if posting contributions are too curt or lacking sustenance. A scoring rubric will be shared the first week of class. (33% of final grade)

**Point distribution:**

Discussion Leading = 100 points

Research/reflection paper = 100 points
Weekly class participation = 100 points (9 points for 11 sessions, 1 point for discussion leading session)

**Final Grades:** point totals will be compared to this chart to determine final grades.

A = 300 – 270  B = 269 – 240  C = 239 – 210  D = 209 - 180

(F = below 180)

**CLASS POLICIES**

Academic integrity: The University of Maryland, College Park has a student-administered Honor Code and Honor Pledge. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit [http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html](http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html). This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. The code prohibits students from cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. Instances of this include submitting someone else’s work as your own, submitting your own work completed for another class without permission, or failing to properly cite information other than your own (found in journals, books, online, or otherwise). Any form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and any sign of academic dishonesty will be reported to the appropriate University officials.

Special needs: If you have a registered disability that will require accommodation, please see the instructor so necessary arrangements can be made. If you have a disability and have not yet registered with the University, please contact Disability Support Services in the Shoemaker Building (301.314.7682, or 301.405.7683 TTD) as soon as possible.

Religious observances: The University of Maryland policy on religious observances states that students not be penalized in any way for participation in religious observances. Students shall be allowed, whenever possible, to make up academic assignments that are missed due to such absences. However, the student must contact the instructor before the absence with a written notification of the projected absence, and arrangements will be made for make-up work or examinations.

Course evaluations: As a member of our academic community, students have a number of important responsibilities. One of these responsibilities is to submit course evaluations each term though CourseEvalUM in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. All information submitted to CourseEvalUM is confidential. Campus will notify you when CourseEvalUM is open for you to complete your evaluations for fall semester courses. Please go directly to the website
(www.courseevalum.umd.edu) to complete your evaluations. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing online, at Testudo, the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

**Missed single class due to illness:** Once during a semester, a student’s self-authored note will be accepted as an excuse for missing a minor scheduled grading event in a single class session if the note documents the date of the illness, acknowledgement from the student that information provided in the note is correct, and a statement that the student understands that providing false information is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected to attempt to inform the instructor of the illness prior to the date of the missed class.

**Major scheduled grading events:** Major Scheduled Grading Events (MSGE) are indicated on the syllabus. The conditions for accepting a self-signed note do not apply to these events. Written, signed documentation by a health care professional, or other professional in the case of non-medical reasons (see below) of a University-approved excuse for the student’s absence must be supplied. This documentation must include verification of treatment dates and the time period for which the student was unable to meet course requirements. Providers should not include diagnostic information. Without this documentation, opportunities to make up missed assignments or assessments will not be provided.

**Non-consecutive, medically necessitated absences from multiple class sessions:** Students who throughout the semester miss multiple, non-consecutive class sessions due to medical problems must provide written documentation from a health care professional that their attendance on those days was prohibited for medical reasons.

**Non-medical excused absences:** According to University policy, non-medical excused absences for missed assignments or assessments may include illness of a dependent, religious observance, involvement in University activities at the request of University officials, or circumstances that are beyond the control of the student. Students asking for excused absence for any of those reasons must also supply appropriate written documentation of the cause and make every attempt to inform the instructor prior to the date of the missed class.

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**Required Readings**
Readings are available online, or are provided by the instructor.

**Readings:** Students will read the articles and links listed in the syllabus. Please contact the instructor if there are questions or concerns about any reading. These readings, plus prior readings from the program will serve as the basis for discussion.
**Topic 1: General:**


**Topic 2: Parent Involvement**


**Topic 3: Gang membership:**


**Topic 4: Sexual Diversity**


**Topic 5: Poverty, neglect and run away teens**


**Topic 6: Mental health Issues: Depression, Anxiety, peer pressure**


**Topic 7: Substance abuse: smoking and alcohol**


**Topic 8: Substance Abuse: Illegal drugs**


**Topic 9: Emotional and Behavioral Disorders**


**Topic 10: Sexual activity**


**Topic 11: Adolescent Parenting**


**Topic 12: Anxiety, panic, peer pressure**


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**Schedule* for topics and readings:**

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**Poor reading skills tied to risk of teen pregnancy**

URL of this page: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_132608.html (*this news item will not be available after 03/27/2013)

Thursday, December 27, 2012

By Genevra Pittman

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - Seventh grade girls who have trouble reading are more likely to get pregnant in high school than average or above-average readers, according to a new study from Philadelphia.

Researchers found that pattern stuck even after they took into account the girls' race and poverty in their neighborhoods - both of which are tied to teen pregnancy rates.

"We certainly know that social disadvantages definitely play a part in teen pregnancy risk, and certainly poor educational achievement is one of those factors," said Dr. Krishna Upadhya, a reproductive health and teen pregnancy researcher from Johns Hopkins Children's Center in Baltimore.

Poor academic skills may play into how teens see their future economic opportunities and influence the risks they take - even if those aren't conscious decisions, explained Upadhya, who wasn't involved in the new research.

Dr. Ian Bennett from the University of Pennsylvania and his colleagues looked up standardized test reading scores for 12,339 seventh grade girls from 92 different Philadelphia public schools and tracked them over the next six years.

During that period, 1,616 of the teenagers had a baby, including 201 that gave birth two or three times.

Hispanic and African American girls were more likely than white girls to get pregnant. But education appeared to play a role, as well.

Among girls who scored below average on their reading tests, 21 percent went on to have a baby as a teenager. That compared to 12 percent who had average scores and five percent of girls who scored above average on the standardized tests.

Once race and poverty were taken into consideration, girls with below-average reading skills were two and a half times more likely to have a baby than average-scoring girls, according to findings published in the journal Contraception.

Birth rates among girls ages 15 through 19 were at a record low in the U.S. in 2011 at 31 births for every 1,000 girls, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
But that rate is still much higher in minority and poorer girls than in white, well-off ones, researchers noted.

And in general, it's significantly higher than teen birth rates in other wealthy nations.

Teen pregnancies are a concern because young moms and their babies have more health problems and pregnancy-related complications, and girls who get pregnant are at higher risk of dropping out of school.

Upadhya said the answer to preventing teen pregnancy in less-educated girls isn't simply to add more sex ed to the curriculum.

"This is really about adolescent health and development more broadly, so it's really important for us to make sure that kids are in schools and in quality educational programs and that they have opportunities to grow and develop academically and vocationally," she told Reuters Health.

"That is just as important in preventing teen pregnancy as making sure they know where to get condoms."


Three years after Banita Jacks, how much has changed?

*By Carl Foster, Washington*

As the volunteer executive director of the Little Blue House (LBH) in Ward 1 in the District, I am charged with the responsibility of making sure the children in our programs learn, grow and are safe. I am not sure what guides the D.C. Child and Family Services Agency. Is it to keep the number of kids in foster care down or to protect the children? Has the agency really changed in response to the Banita Jacks murder case?

Recently, one of my kids came to the LBH instead of going to school, saying that his mother told him she didn’t want him anymore and that he should get out. He is only 10 years old. The argument apparently stemmed from a seemingly innocuous question:

“Can I have clean clothes to wear to school?”

“Get out. I don’t want you.”

Now that’s reportable.

I’ve been concerned about this family for some time. Other moms had told me this mother was beaten up by drug dealers. I had no firsthand knowledge of this, so I could not report it to protective services. I witnessed this mom handing a wad of cash to some guy while her kids were asking us for food. There is a blanket hanging just inside the front door of her home that prevents anyone from seeing what’s inside. Suspicious but not reportable.

This time, after listening to the boy, we contacted the child protective services hotline, supposedly much improved since Jacks’s four daughters were found dead in January 2008. No one would describe the person I spoke to as friendly, knowledgeable, helpful or polite. But I got what I wanted: someone to visit that home, someone to look behind that blanket. Or so I thought.

A social worker did call us back to get the address but instead came directly to the LBH to speak to the child. Our social worker sat in on the conversation and reported to me: “This guy has no idea how to talk to a child.” She said he was “leading and badgering,” drawing the boy to a conclusion rather than listening to what he had to say. The boy did what any other kid would do in this situation: He stopped trying to explain what happened and started agreeing to anything just to get out of the room. Then the interviewer accused him of changing his story.

The boy’s mother was waiting when we went to the local elementary school to pick up kids for our after-school program, so I brought her back to the LBH, where she spoke with the investigator. She speaks Spanish, so one of our staff members interpreted for the investigator. How was he planning to talk to her without an interpreter? I wondered.

In the end, the investigator told us he thought everything was just fine with this family. I asked him four times if he planned to visit the home. Each time he said, “It’s part of our investigation,” but I noticed he never said yes. I am confident he did not go. Why do I think this? The next day the boy was waiting when our staff arrived at the LBH at 9 a.m. He was wearing shorts on a very cold morning. I asked if the investigator came to his house; he said no. He had walked to the LBH in the cold even though he knew we were
planning to pick him up. He was upset, but this time he volunteered no information about what happened at home.

Three things are clear to me now:

1. I wasn’t going to get what I wanted. No one was going to take a good look behind that blanket.

2. This story reinforces a call I got last year from another agency director. The director said she called the hotline to report a mom she was sure could harm her child. She was told to look for the child’s father.

3. I sat behind the CFSA director at a Senate hearing last year and heard him tell the senators how the agency’s responses to its abuse and neglect hotline had greatly improved.

Really? How? By disbelieving children and discouraging reports?

*Founded in 1991, the Little Blue House is located in Northwest Washington. The nonprofit agency works to help at-risk youth and families achieve self-sufficiency.*

By Carl Foster, Washington  |  January 1, 2011; 10:41 AM ET
Categories:  **D.C., HotTopic**