



## STRATEGIES FOR TRAUMA AWARENESS AND RESILIENCE (STAR) LEVEL 1 PAX 540

Summer Peacebuilding Institute (SPI) 2026

June 8-12

### INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

**Lisa Collins, EDD**

Email: [lisa.collins@emu.edu](mailto:lisa.collins@emu.edu)

[Lisa.y.collins@gmail.com](mailto:Lisa.y.collins@gmail.com)

Email to set an appointment.

**Hyojin Chang, MA**

Email: [hyojin.chang@emu.edu](mailto:hyojin.chang@emu.edu)

Email to set an appointment.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Whether working in advocacy, healthcare, education, government, care-giving, activism, or in any kind of leadership or community building capacity, stressors add up - particularly in the midst (and aftermath) of pandemic. Research and experience demonstrate that unaddressed trauma often leads to conflict and violence against self or with others, as trauma-affected people act out against others or become self-destructive. STAR combines theory with experiential learning to increase awareness of the impacts of trauma on the body, brain, beliefs and behaviors. The course offers tools for addressing trauma and breaking cycles of violence.

STAR's multi-disciplinary framework draws on several fields of theory and practice to support healthy, resilient individuals and communities: trauma and resilience studies (including neurobiology), restorative justice, conflict transformation, human security, and spirituality. STAR centers participants' experience and insights, while offering activities, resources, and a theoretical model to support a journey toward understanding and interrupting cycles of violence at the individual, communal and societal levels.

### COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

This course invites participants to:

- Explore and share **language and resources about resilience and trauma** - definitions, causes/origins, diverse impacts on body, brain, beliefs and behaviors.
- Understand how **trauma response can contribute to cycles of violence** at different levels: self, relationships, organizations, communities, nations, the Earth.
- Identify and practice tools and **strategies to strengthen resilience and break free from cycles of violence** at personal and collective levels.
- **Deepen commitment to self-care and collective care** as core practices for (re)generating healthy power amidst vulnerability and uncertainty.

## REQUIRED TEXTS AND OTHER RESOURCES:

The following are reading materials and texts, required for all participants taking the course for credit. Note that non-credit participants are encouraged (though not required) to read the texts.

Please read **before** the class:

1. [\\*Yoder, Carolyn. \*The Little Book of Trauma Healing, Revised and Updated\*, New York, NY: Good Books, Inc. 2020 \(ISBN 1680996037\)](#)
2. \*Levins Morales, Aurora: *Medicine Stories*. Excerpt for pre-reading can be found at [https://collectiveliberation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Morales\\_False\\_Memories.pdf](https://collectiveliberation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Morales_False_Memories.pdf)
3. Mansfield, Katie [blog]. Why are we talking about trauma? <https://emu.edu/now/peacebuilder/2019/10/why-are-we-talking-about-trauma/>

Additional readings:

\*indicates required reading

4. **Articles included on course Moodle page** (can be accessed 2 weeks before start of course). Note – not all are required reading.
5. \*Yoder, Carolyn. *The Little Book of Trauma Healing, Revised and Updated*, New York, NY: Good Books, Inc. 2020 (ISBN 1680996037) (to be read before class) retail \$6.
6. \*Ginwright, Shawn. “**Transforming Trauma into Hope and Power**” (Chapter 2) in *Hope and Healing in Urban Education: How Urban Activists and Teachers are Reclaiming Matters of the Heart*. New York: Routledge, 2016. (ISBN 113879757X) retail \$43. Chapter posted on Moodle.
7. \*Brave Heart, Maria Yellow Horse. 2000. “**Wakiksuyapi: Carrying the Historical Trauma of the Lakota**.” Tulane University School of Social Work. (to be read before class, posted on Moodle)
8. \*Levine, Peter: *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1997. (ISBN 155643233X) retail \$12. NOTE: STAR draws deeply on the work of Peter Levine, and when I recently re-read it, I winced at some of the quotes and references. Because many of the ideas are foundational to our discussion of trauma, it is still a required text – I welcome conversation about this.
9. \*Zehr, Howard: *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* (ISBN 1561488232) retail \$6. If you have already read this book, we recommend picking up Oudshoorn, Judah, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice for Sexual Abuse: Hope through Trauma*, Good Books, 2015. (ISBN 1680990551) retail \$6 and/or *The Little Book of Race and Restorative Justice* by Fania Davis, 2019. (ISBN 978-1680993431) retail \$6.
10. \*Haines, Steve. *Trauma is Really Strange*. Art by Sophie Standing. Singing Dragon, 2016. (ISBN 9781848192935) retail \$12.
11. \*Yazzie, Robert (Honorable Chief Justice). (1994). ‘**Life comes from it**’: Navajo justice concepts. *New Mexico Law Review*, 24, Spring 1994, 175-190. (to be read before exploration of RJ, posted on Moodle)

## Recommended readings

12. Van der Kolk, Bessel. *The Body Keeps the Score*.\*\* New York, NY: Viking Penguin, 2014. ISBN 0143127748 Chapters 4,5,6. (to be read before class) retail \$11. Detailed background on impacts of trauma on body and brain. \*\*Note this text includes some graphic discussions of traumatic events, including sexual violence.

13. Doerrfeld, Cori. *The Rabbit Listened*. New York: Dial Books, 2018. Children's book. ISBN 073522935X. Retail \$11.
14. Holmes, Margaret M. *A Terrible Thing Happened*. Magination Press, 2000. Children's book. ISBN 1557987017. Retail \$10. (Available in Spanish in March 2021!)
15. McLaren, K. *The Language of Emotions (Revised and Updated)*. Boulder, CO: SoundsTrue, 2023. ISBN 978-1649630438. Retail \$21. Especially chapters 7 Unintentional Healers, and 8 the Role of Emotions in the Resolution of Trauma.

### REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS:

**Engaging in a course focused on trauma, whether for academic credit or for training purposes, can be challenging.** We invite all participants to

- **Show up to all sessions, as the learning is designed as a cumulative and iterative and community-based experience.** We value your presence and insights.
- **Limit other commitments during the STAR week.** This learning experience often requires a lot of energy and rest.
- **Identify and lean on your resilience network.** We will take time early in the course to identify who are some of the resource people you might lean on as you take the STAR learning journey.

### Taking the course for Professional Education/Training

Homework assignments are designed to complement and enhance the in-person STAR experience. **These are not required of training participants**, though you may find they enrich your experience. If you choose to do the assignments, they are just for you – no need to submit to instructor.

### Taking the course for 2 Academic Credits

Note that assignments are designed to enhance the learning experience you get in STAR.

**Please show up to all sessions. Presence in class will account for 40% of your grade.**

Assignments below add up to 60% of your grade.

Assignment	Due date/ do date	(% of grade)
<b>SHOWING UP</b>	<b>All sessions</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Lead a centering, releasing or energizing activity</b> Each day will include centering/grounding upon arrival, an energizer when we return from lunch, and a brief energetic release/brush-off before departure. For-credit participants are invited to lead at least one of these.	<b>At least once during the STAR week</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Reflect on STAR activities (choose 4)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Chaos and connection activity</li> <li>2) River of Life</li> <li>3) Parts of the brain</li> <li>4) Symbols of resilience circle</li> <li>5) Stone exercise</li> <li>6) Cycle of Violence mini-dramas</li> <li>7) Peace, Mercy, Justice, Truth</li> </ol>	You might want to draft thoughts in your workbook after doing each activity.  <b>Turn in by June 26 Friday</b>	<b>12</b>

Assignment	Due date/ do date	(% of grade)
<p>8) Using the Model as Reflection Tool</p> <p><b>(Activity reflection assignment, continued)</b></p> <p><b>For each activity (choose 4 of the 8 above), complete the following prompts (with no more than 1 page, single spaced for each activity):</b></p> <p><b>I noticed</b> (physical or emotional reaction in yourself and/or the group)...</p> <p><b>I liked...</b></p> <p><b>I learned...</b></p> <p><b>I question/wonder...</b></p>		
<p><b>Reflect on RJ in practice</b></p> <p>Draft your answers to questions based on the Restorative Justice film(s) you viewed; add 1-2 notes based on learning from debrief with classmates during the RJ film discussion session. (1-2 pages single-spaced)</p>	<p><b>Turn in by June 26 Friday</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>
<p><b>20 Questions</b></p> <p>Often STAR generates more questions than answers. Questions are great! Please turn in twenty questions you carry away from STAR. You can write these as stream-of-consciousness, as a list, in paragraph or poetic form, as you like. Feel free to answer them in your lifetime, or to write 200 questions, but for this assignment, <b>please share with me just 20 questions.</b></p>	<p><b>Turn in by June 26 Friday</b></p>	<p><b>7</b></p>

<p><b>8 reading responses</b> (choose 8)</p> <p>Write a 1-page (single-spaced) response to <b>8 of the following</b> (choose 4 in addition to the 4 asterisked/bolded readings).</p> <p>Choose 3-4 sentences/main ideas from the essay, chapter(s), or talk. What ideas are powerful for you, stretch you, raise questions or inspire you? Feel free to write in the form of questions.</p> <p>Is there different credits</p>	<p>You are encouraged to read Levins-Morales before STAR.</p> <p>You are encouraged to read Cabrera</p>	<p><b>24</b></p>
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<p>1) *Levins-Morales' essay "False Memories."</p> <p>2) *Cabrera's "Living and Surviving in a Multiply Wounded Country."</p> <p>3) *Yazzie's "Life Comes from It."</p> <p>4) Haga's chapter "On Violence"</p> <p>5) Ginwright, <i>Hope and Healing in Urban Education</i>, Chapter 2.</p> <p>6) Van der Kolk, <i>The Body Keeps the Score</i>, chapters 4-6.</p> <p>7) Haines, <i>Trauma is Really Strange</i>.</p> <p>8) *Yoder, <i>Little Book of Trauma Healing</i>, Chapter 4: Cycles of Violence and Unaddressed Trauma.</p> <p>9) Yamada, "Invisibility is an Unnatural Disaster" – chapter in <i>This Bridge Called My Back</i>.</p> <p>10) Sujatha baliga's talk: "Have you been angry long enough?"</p> <p>11) McNab, "Thoughts on Forgiveness."</p> <p>12) Turner, "Creating safety for ourselves."</p> <p>13) Dzurinko, McCants &amp; Stith, "Campaign for Nonviolent Schools."</p> <p>14) Piepzna-Samarasinha, "Care Webs"</p> <p>15) Laura Van Dernoot Lipsky's TED Talk: "Beyond the Cliff"</p> <p>16) Feel free to <b>choose another reading</b> or input from Moodle not listed here.</p>	<p>on the first night of STAR.</p> <p>Read others as you make time.</p> <p><b>Turn in all responses by July 17 Friday</b></p>	
<p><b>Turn in:</b> Responses should be single-spaced and may be submitted as a single document.</p>		
<p><b>A letter (2-5 pages double spaced)</b></p> <p><b>Write a letter to yourself, a friend, family member, enemy, your institution/organization, your community, your country, or the planet. This letter is designed to be shared in order to break free from a cycle of harm.</b></p> <p>A full-credit assignment will include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. your ideas(s) for building safety, support, voice and choice;</li> <li>2. acknowledgment of what has happened/is happening (naming a specific harm or harms, ways you/your community have/has experienced cycles of violence, including how you/others have experienced harm and/or caused harm);</li> <li>3. possible ways to reconnect (in self or with others), including addressing justice needs;</li> <li>4. ways you are recognizing and building your resilience, individually and with others in your micro-climate.</li> <li>5. Specific references to at least 5 of the required texts (draw on your reading responses if you'd like!)</li> </ol>	<p><b>Turn in by August 7 Friday</b></p> <p>9</p>	

## SCHEDULE AND TOPICS:

The schedule distributed before the training (and in hard copy on the first day), the Moodle page, and the STAR Level 1 Workbook lay out the flow/sequence of topics we will cover.

Participants are expected to attend all sessions of STAR, beginning Monday morning and finishing around 4pm on Friday.

Timeline for assignments (for-credit students only):

<b>During STAR</b>	Lead an activity (grounding, centering, energizing or releasing)
<b>June 26, Friday</b>	1) Reflections on 4 STAR activities 2) Reflection on RJ practice example(s) 3) 20 Questions
<b>July 17, Friday</b>	8 reading responses
<b>Aug 7, Friday</b>	Letter

## GRADING CRITERIA AND OTHER POLICIES:

### SPI ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is expected that individuals registering for an SPI session will attend the entire course (barring unforeseen travel delays or emergencies). Please contact SPI directly at [spi@emu.edu](mailto:spi@emu.edu) before registering if you know you will have to miss any days of a course. SPI certificates are provided to participants only if they miss no more than one class day unless prior arrangements have been made with the SPI team and confirmed with the instructor. For-credit participants are expected to attend all class sessions unless they are given permission from the instructor to miss a session. SPI courses rely on active student participation in a learning community. If a participant misses class repeatedly and this disrupts the learning for others, they will be asked to leave the course and no money will be refunded for remaining course time.

### Grading Criteria and Other Policies:

SPI provides all students taking the course for graduate credit some supplemental information that will serve as a resource after SPI when students are working on course assignments. This includes information on library resources, EMU's academic integrity policy, and guidelines for writing graduate papers, information regarding the grading scale and course deadlines, and then some suggestions we have for you in order to make your experience of taking SPI courses for graduate credit as successful as possible! These documents are all available online.