Course Announcement
Berkshire County School Counselor Association

Professional Seminar in School Counseling and Student Support
Instructor: Anne French, M.A.

When: Wednesdays 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM, January 8 to May 6, 2020 (April 15 and May 6 are reserved to make up classes lost to cancellation due to weather if necessary; no class on February 19 and April 22 during school vacation weeks and no class on April 29).
Where: Taconic High School, College and Career Center, Pittsfield, MA
How much: $590 for BCGA members, $620 for nonmembers (includes the cost of three graduate credits from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Prefix will say Inservice rather than Education credits which means they may not be applied towards a Master’s at MCLA).
Open to: guidance & school adjustment counselors, school psychologists, teachers, other professional-level educators

Description: School counselors and other student support specialists work in a context of fluctuations in educational, political and cultural trends. Practitioners must develop a strong professional identity and effective skills in order to serve the social and emotional needs of both individual students and the broader school community. Educators see increasing numbers of children with poor emotional regulation and behavioral control, increased numbers of children impacted by trauma, and increased numbers of children diagnosed with significant psychiatric disorders. Societal issues such as poverty, opioid addiction, family violence, etc. continue to be major issues in the Berkshires which impact children’s physical and emotional well-being and performance in school. Professionals can easily become overwhelmed and discouraged by the current climate that seems to demand that educators ‘fix it all and fix it now.’

At the same time, multiple initiatives and established practices in counseling and education provide great promise: the beginning of a pendulum swing back to a focus on educating the whole child; positive behavioral support programs; social and emotional learning curricula; engaging teaching methods such as community service learning; developments in psychopharmacology; and research and new intervention models for issues such as building executive functioning skills, cognitive-behavioral treatment of self-harming behavior, trauma-informed practice, mindfulness practices, school safety and traumatic stress management, etc.

The purpose of this course is to increase knowledge about current models of intervention and educational practice, to provide opportunity for reflection on one’s professional practice, and to develop and strengthen skills to support effective practice within the professional standards in the fields of licensed social work and mental health counseling as well as within educator licensed fields such as guidance, school adjustment counselor and teacher. The context for the course will be a seminar climate characterized by collegial support and expert consultation. Because of the need for ongoing professional development, support and consultation, participants may take this course more than once.

Enrollment will be limited to twenty participants. To reserve a slot, send a nonrefundable deposit of $75.00, check payable to “BCSCA” to Anne French, P.O. Box 809, Hinsdale, MA 01235 along with your contact information including email address. To receive a syllabus in advance, contact Anne via email at: anniefrench@yahoo.com or at 413-329-7442. Please, sign up by December 12 in order to ensure that there is adequate enrollment to run the course.