COURSE TITLE: **HELPING ANXIOUS STUDENTS**

WA CLOCK HRS: **30**
OREGON PDUs: **30**
PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48: **30**

NO. OF CREDITS: **3 QUARTER CREDITS**
[semester equivalent = 2.00 credits]

INSTRUCTOR: **Lori Gibson**
loribgibson@hotmail.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Imagine looking out on your classroom and knowing that every student has a clear, receptive mind, is engaged, and is ready to learn. Unfortunately, this is rarely what we see in our classrooms. Instead, too many students seem preoccupied, isolated, withdrawn, nervous or overwhelmed.

It is estimated that 1 out of every 5 students in America suffers from a diagnosable anxiety disorder. And it is further suggested that, unchecked, anxiety can result in school failure, social isolation and missed opportunities. The purpose of this course is for educators to increase their understanding of anxiety and learn how to support students, and their parents, who are dealing with this disorder.

This independent study course is appropriate for Pre-K -12 teachers, administrators, support staff and parents. Note: The book*, Growing Up Brave,* was written for parents, however it is an excellent resource for understanding and supporting our anxious students and their parents.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

1. Known a definition of anxiety and be able to provide an overview of the differences between normal and excessive fears/anxiety.
2. Known what “growing up brave” means according to the work and research of Dr. Donna Pincus.
3. Understood the general outlines of six (6) major childhood/adolescent anxiety disorders and their symptoms.
4. Known how significant anxiety can negatively impact a student’s academic, social and physical development.
5. Identified the three (3) components that make up the “cycle of anxiety” and how they interact to perpetuate anxiety in anxious children and adolescents. How the “cycle of anxiety” works and typically perpetuates an increase or at least maintenance of the child or adolescent’s anxiety.
6. An overview of some of the research-based interventions/ treatments that can work to help children/adolescents lessen anxiety and promote bravery.
7. Learned some of the ways that educators can best support anxious students (and their parents) in the school setting.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

The use of artificial intelligence is not permitted. Assignment responses found to be generated by AI will not be accepted.

HOURS EARNED:
Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participants their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours.

UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION

REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT
Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%

CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)
Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering, determine with your district personnel, department head, or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

REQUIRED TEXT
Required text, *Growing Up Brave* by Donna B. Pincus, 2012, is available used from Amazon.com for approximately $8.

None. All reading is online.

MATERIALS FEE
Text, Growing Up Brave, is approximately $8 from Amazon.

ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION
Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments.
Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

Assignment #1: Introduction

- Please read the **Introduction** in the course text and write a 250 – 500 word response in which you:
- Briefly introduce yourself, your current work situation and why you chose this course.
- Summarize the three (3) reasons Dr. Pincus gives for why she believes that studying anxiety issues in children/adolescents is critical at this time.

Assignment #2: The Brave Child

- Please read **Chapter 1: The Brave Child** from the text. 250 – 500 words.
- Describe what Dr. Pincus means by “growing up brave.”
- Describe what “reading the signals” means and the importance of this for early intervention.

Assignment #3: What’s Normal - What’s Not

- Please read **Chapter 2: What’s Normal, What’s Not** from the text. 250 – 500 words.
- Identify and describe some of the “red flags” that would indicate a student may have excessive anxiety that needs to be addressed.
- Briefly identify and describe each of the six (6) disorders found in children/adolescents.

Assignment #4: Excessive Anxiety
The purpose of this assignment is to identify and reflect on the potential consequences of excessive anxiety. Based on your reading so far (especially pgs. 16-23), and if applicable to your own experiences with students who struggle with excessive anxiety, address the following in 250 – 500 words.

- How excessive fears and anxiety can negatively impact students' academic, social and physical development.

Assignment #5: The Cycle of Anxiety
Please read **Chapter 6: The Cycle of Anxiety** from the course text. In a 250 – 500 word paper:

- Briefly summarize each of the three (3) components that make up the "cycle of anxiety."
- Discuss how the cycle "feeds on itself" to either maintain or increases the anxiety.

Assignment #6: Examining Anxious Thoughts

- Please read **Chapter 7: Examining Anxious Thoughts, Chapter 8: Accepting Physical Feelings** and **Chapter 9: Changing Avoidant Behaviors.** The purpose is to describe how specific interventions can break the "cycle of anxiety" and reduce anxiety in the student. In 250 – 500 words, write include the following for each of the three (3) components of the cycle:
- Briefly identify and describe the overall strategy for examining anxious thoughts. The goal is cognitive restructuring and how the author says it can reduce anxiety and . (ie, promote "growing up brave."
- Briefly identify and describe the overall strategy discussed for the component. (ie, The first component is "anxious thoughts." The overall strategy for this component is to have the student become aware of each of their anxious thoughts and then examine each one to see if it has merit based on actual facts.)
- Choose at least two (2) examples of intervention strategies and describe how they can be used to teach the anxious child/adolescent coping skills that can reduce their anxiety.

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

B. LEARNING APPLICATION
In this section, you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you do not have a classroom available to you, please contact the instructor for course modifications. Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. ?Feel free to read and respond to others' comments. Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

Assignment #7: The Attentive Parent
Please read **Chapter 3: The Attentive Parent** in the course text. One of the goals of this course is to learn ways to best support the parents of anxious children/adolescents. In order to do that, it is vital that educators understand the different approaches that parents take and what research says about what is effective and what is not in helping their anxious child. Write 250 – 500 words in which you:

- Identify and briefly describe the two areas where parents can adversely affect their children's coping skills.
- Give a scenario (from your own experience if possible) of a parent with his/her anxious child, highlighting how interactions with the child were helpful or not helpful in reducing the child's anxiety. Be sure to reference content from the chapter in your example.

Assignment #8: The Bravery Ladder
Please choose one of the following assignments based on your particular work situation and interests:

Option A)

Please read **Chapter 10: The Bravery Ladder** in the course text. In 250 - 500 words:

- Describe exposure therapy and why it works in helping anxious kids "grow up brave."

- Reference the “bravery ladder” examples in the chapter that are school related (i.e.: school avoidance, social phobia) by identifying and describing at least three (3) ways that you can support a student who is working through exposure therapy.

Send to instructor: loribgibson@hotmail.com. Subject line to read ‘Helping Anxious #8-A’.

OR

Option B)

Create an intervention based on the course material that you can implement for one or more of your students who is struggling with anxiety issues. Please be sure to include the following in 500 – 750 words:

- Briefly describe the student(s) you choose and explain your rationale for choosing them.
- Identify and describe the intervention that you have chosen to implement and what you are hoping will be the outcome of the intervention.
- Following the implementation of the intervention, please reflect on how it went and give a detailed summary of what went well, what you would do differently the next time you implement the intervention, and any future steps you would like to take in working with this student(s).

Assignment #9: Choose One Option
Please choose one of the following assignments based on your particular work situation and interests:

Option A)

Read **Chapter 11: Halfway to Adulthood.** Write 250 – 500 words that include the following:

- Identify and describe the two kinds of anxiety that are more prevalent in adolescence.
- Create a case study based on an anxious adolescent who is struggling with at least one of the kinds of anxiety you have identified. This case study can be based on a student you know or can be fictional. Include the following:
- The kind(s) of anxiety he/she is struggling with
- How the anxiety is manifested (i.e., symptoms, negative impact on development, etc.)
- Identify at least two (2) of the adolescents’ current coping strategies. For each, please identify whether it is effective or not in reducing their anxiety and what your reasons are for this determination.
- Other interventions/strategies/treatments that could be implemented (include school-based).

OR

Option B)

Read **Chapter 12: Growing Up Brave Through the Years.**

- Sharing your knowledge with colleagues can be an effective way to support anxious students in your school. Create a PowerPoint presentation for your staff based on what you have learned in this course. Please include some of the following in your presentation based on what you feel would be beneficial for your staff and school:
- An overview of anxiety in children/adolescents and how it can impact students at school (i.e., the red flags for educators to be aware of).
- An overview of the three (3) components in the “cycle of anxiety.”
- An overview of treatment options for anxious students (i.e., medication, therapy)
- An overview of strategies that can be used in the classroom and/or school-wide to support anxious students.
- A list of the websites from pg. 249 that you believe would be helpful to your colleagues as a resource for them to share with anxious students and/or parents.

OR

Option C)

- Another assignment of your own design with prior approval from the instructor.

Assignment #10: Lesson PLan
Complete one (1) of the following options:

Option A)

- Adapt a lesson to reflect what you’ve learned in this course.
- Implement your lesson with students in your classroom.

- Write a 250-500 word commentary on what worked well and what could be improved.
- Include any student feedback on your lesson.
- Share what you've learned with other teachers.
- Sample Lesson Plan Template: https://www.hol.edu/about/lesson-template/
- Send your modified lesson and your commentary via email to your instructor.

OR

Option B)

Use this option if you do not have a classroom available.

- Adapt a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course. (Do not implement it.)
- Share what you've learned with other teachers taking.
- Write a 500+ word article concerning any noteworthy success you've had as a teacher with one or more students.
- Please refer to the guidelines on our blog What Works: Teaching at its Best, www.hol.edu/blog, prior to writing your article. (https://www.hol.edu/blog)
- When you submit your article to your instructor, please also email a copy to Renee Leon, THI blog curator and media specialist. (renee@hol.edu)
- Indicate whether or not you are OK with having your article considered for publishing on our website.

Assignment #11: (500 Level ONLY)
Option A)

Interview another educator about this class who has had experiences working with anxious students. Try to ascertain his/her perspective and thoughts on the topic of childhood/adolescent anxiety. As evidence of assignment completion submit a 250 – 500 word summary of your discussion which includes the following:

- The date of the conversation
- The role of the person with whom you spoke (colleague, supervisor, etc.)
- Describe what you learned from their experiences and strategies for supporting anxious students in their classroom or school.
- Reflect on the interview and describe how it will impact your work with anxious students in the future.

Send to instructor: loribgibson@hotmail.com. Subject line to read 'Helping Anxious #11-A'.

OR

Option B)

Interview the parent* of a student who struggles with excessive anxiety about the class you are taking. The purpose of this assignment is to listen to their experience with these issues so as to know better how to support students and their parents. Please organize your interview around one or more of the following ideas (as appropriate):

- Describe their child's anxiety and how it impacts them - personally, family, friendships, activities.
- Describe what their child's experience has been at school in regards to their anxiety.
- What suggestions would they have for educators to better support students with anxiety and/or their parents.
- Other content as you deem appropriate based on the parent you are interviewing.
- As evidence of assignment completion submit a 250 – 500 word summary of your interview, reflections of the experience and how it will impact your work with anxious students and/or their parents.

*(*Please consult with your building principal to make sure that your district approves of this assignment if the parent has a child in your classroom/building and is not from the outside community.)*

Send to instructor: loribgibson@hotmail.com. Subject line to read 'Helping Anxious #11-B'

OR

Option C)

- Another assignment of your own design with prior approval from the instructor.

Send to instructor: loribgibson@hotmail.com. Subject line to read 'Helping Anxious #11-C'

C. INTEGRATION PAPER

Assignment #12: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER
(Please do not write this paper until you've completed all of your other assignments)

Write a 400-500 word Integration Paper answering these 5 questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?

INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:
Instructors will comment on each assignment. If you do not hear from the instructor within a few days of posting your assignment, please get in touch with them immediately.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:
Lori Gibson, M.A., E.S.A., is a dedicated school counselor with a wealth of experience in the field of education. She holds a Master's degree in counseling psychology from Gonzaga University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in both education and psychology from Whitworth University. With a career spanning 31 years, Lori has contributed her expertise to various educational institutions, including North Chicago High School in Illinois, Lake Washington School District and Spokane Public Schools, both in Washington state. For the past 21 years, Lori has been an instructor at The Heritage Institute, where she is deeply passionate about empowering fellow educators to excel in their noble work within schools. In today's evolving educational landscape Lori understands the shift on many fronts - including the mandates to integrate technology, embrace neurodiversity, foster social and emotional growth and dig deep to understand the neurological basis for challenging behaviors. Lori recognizes that our students, pre-K to 12th grade face an array of challenges, from learning, social and emotional gaps due to the ripples of the pandemic, family stressors, poverty, the impact of social media and entitlement issues, among others. She firmly believes that educators must be equipped with the latest research and practical strategies to address these multifaceted needs effectively. In her courses, Lori's primary aim is to provide educators with respectful and encouraging guidance to navigate these challenges. Her courses and workshops are designed to empower teachers and administrators with the knowledge and tools necessary to create a supportive and inclusive environment that prioritizes the well-being and development of every student so they can be about the business of learning!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

HELPING ANXIOUS STUDENTS

Clark, Taylor. *Nerve: Poise Under Pressure, Serenity Under Stress, and the Brave New Science of Fear and Cool.* Hachette Book Group: New York, NY, 2011. 320 pages. ISBN 0316042897
This book is a well-researched look at the psychology of the "nervous trinity" (anxiety, stress and fear). The author's main point is that instead of seeking to not feel anxious – we should have a different approach by embracing our worries and develop the coping skills to move through them. This book is an interesting and fun read and includes inspirational stories of people who have overcome anxiety, as well as the fascinating details about how the brain works during time of extreme stress.

Dacey, John. and Fiore, Lisa. *Your Anxious Child: How Parents and Teachers Can Relieve Anxiety in Children.* Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA, 2000. 256 pages. ISBN 978-0787949976
This is a straight-forward and practical book about childhood anxiety. The framework is very understandable and there are numerous practical and effective strategies. This is a good text to give as a resource to parents of anxious students.

Kriete, Roxanne. *The Morning Meeting Book, Third Edition***.** Center for Responsive Schools: Turner Falls, MA. 2002. 232 pages, ISBN 978-1892989604.
This book is a "must-have" for all K-8 classroom teachers. It clearly explains the purpose of a morning meeting and gives detailed instructions for conducting one . The investment of time that you give to the morning meeting format will pay off in the dividend of a respectful, safe and caring classroom community.

Restak, Richard. *Poe's Heart and the Mountain Climber: Exploring the Effect of Anxiety on Our Brains and Our Culture*. Three Rivers Press. New York, NY, 2005. 256 pages. ISBN 978-1400048519.
This explores in great detail the science of anxiety and stress. It is a fascinating read and provides guidelines on how to manage anxiety. Throughout the book it is clear that Dr. Restak believes anxiety and stress can be beneficial to our lives if we understand and handle them correctly.

Tompkins, Michael. and Martinez, Katherine. *My Anxious Mind: A Teen's Guide to Managing Anxiety and Panic,* 2010. Magination

Press: Washington D.C. 196 pages. ISBN 978-1433804502
This is an excellent resource for upper elementary through college-aged students. It clearly explains the issues of anxiety in a non-judgmental and entertaining way. The book is easy to understand and is full of simple, effective tools that kids can easily implement for themselves.