

CAST (Child Advocacy Studies) Program Approval

Gundersen National Child Protection Training Center

Executive Summary

The Child Advocacy Studies Program (CAST) is a post-secondary curriculum that was developed in response to the needs first outlined in Victor Vieth's seminal document, *Unto the Third Generation: A Call to End Child Abuse in the United States within 120 Years* (revised and expanded, 2007)¹. In his paper Vieth argued that education, particularly education of future generations of front line child protection professionals, should begin with their college experience. Vieth cited numerous studies confirming that current front-line professionals received most of their most valuable education "on the job" making them ill-equipped to succeed for the first several years of their working lives. This lack of preparation not only resulted in poorly investigated or ignored reports of child maltreatment, but was cited as a significant factor in "burnout."

The goal of the CAST program is to improve the knowledge and skill sets of those individuals who will interact regularly with children through their adult work. Development of this knowledge will enable these professionals to recognize, react and respond appropriately in circumstances where children are being maltreated or may be at risk for maltreatment.

Virtually all students will have some contact with children during their lifetime and would thus benefit from at least the introductory course. The full program is intended to equip front-line professionals with both the theoretical and practical skills essential to a successful investigation and resolution of suspected maltreatment.

Investigation of child abuse is a complex arena that engages professionals from a multiplicity of fields including, but not limited to, medical and mental health care, law enforcement, child protective services, prosecutors and civil attorneys, judges and victim advocates. Teachers, day care providers, youth-serving agency staff, clergy and church volunteers are just a sampling of those whose daily work or community service provides opportunities to protect and intervene if they recognize signs of maltreatment.

Gundersen National Child Protection Training Center (GNCPTC) and Winona State University have worked diligently since the inception of CAST to continue curricula development and refinements in response to the ever-changing cultural, social and technological environments of the new millennium; this includes expanding the reach of the program into additional career fields in graduate and post-graduate programs. The principle cornerstone of CAST is teaching and encouraging best practice in a manner that addresses the child's needs and best interest first and foremost.

To achieve the objective of ending child abuse within three generations, GNCPTC seeks to establish and nurture ongoing partnerships and coalitions with organizations, agencies and

¹ Vieth, Victor, Hamline Journal of Law and Public Policy; first published in 2006, volume 12 of the JOURNAL OF AGGRESSION, MALTREATMENT & TRAUMA

education institutions, public and private, throughout the United States and internationally. Each of these partnerships and coalitions are driven by an affirmative answer to the two following questions:

1. Is it good for children?
2. Is it ethical?

Desiring to maintain the best practice model, informed by research and practical experience, GNCPTC has engaged its current educational partners in the development of a program approval process for the CAST curricula. The goal of the program approval is to establish a baseline of knowledge in the core competencies for students completing a course of study in the CAST curricula. At its most basic level, students with a CAST certificate will be substantially better prepared for a front-line career than at any time in the past.

Institutions with approved CAST programs have shown themselves to be leaders in their community by their adoption of the curriculum. These institutions will further establish their leadership by addressing the epidemic of child maltreatment as it affects its victims across the lifespan. CAST institutions will provide appropriate training for staff on mandatory reporting requirements with regular supplements of continuing education as reinforcement of the importance of reporting maltreatment. These institutions' administrative policies display support for individuals who make good faith reports of suspected maltreatment. When possible, these colleges and universities assist community organizations in providing such training for local mandated reporters.

CAST institutions also recognize that reporting of suspected child maltreatment should not be confined solely to those who are statutorily mandated reporters; rather, the duty to protect children is incumbent on all members of a well-ordered, moral society and most especially those who have dedicated their lives to education of youth at whatever stage. These institutions acknowledge that maltreatment in childhood, regardless of its form, severity or duration, can have lifelong impact on an individual². Staff, students, faculty or others who report such histories will be provided with support and/or service referral. When possible, the institutions themselves provide therapeutic intervention.

The colleges and universities aligning themselves with the CAST curricula demonstrate a commitment to child protection which extends beyond the classroom to their internal policies regarding mandated reporting, including children on campus for daycare, early college experience or other activities such as mentoring programs, athletic camps or any situations where minors may be present.

Program Mission & Goals

² Felitti VJ, Anda RF, Nordenberg D, Williamson DF, Spitz AM, Edwards V, Koss MP, et al. The relationship of adult health status to childhood abuse and household dysfunction. American Journal of Preventive Medicine. 1998; 14:245-258

The CAST mission is to disseminate an effective model curricula for undergraduate and graduate college students entering child protection fields. With the benefit of a child advocacy curriculum, future child protection professionals receive practical hands-on training before they are on the job. Professionals of tomorrow will know how to handle cases of child abuse appropriately, and recognize the signs and symptoms of abused children more efficiently.

Educational Goals

1. To end child abuse by establishing better recognition, reporting and response to child maltreatment situations and the multi-cultural factors that may be involved within various communities/populations.
2. To facilitate best practice in the form of multi-disciplinary response to reports of child maltreatment encompassing cultural sensitivity.
3. To foster interdisciplinary cooperation by providing understanding of the various role of multi-disciplinary team members.
4. To engage relevant community organizations and institutions in prevention efforts.
5. To educate the community on the dynamics of abuse to foster understanding of survivor responses and needs.
6. To educate the community on the dynamics of offender behaviors to foster greater awareness of grooming behaviors and to safeguard against such behaviors.
7. To establish prevention programs encompassing various forms of maltreatment in response to an increased understanding of the reality of poly-victimization.
8. To educate the community on the impact of childhood maltreatment across the lifespan.
9. To provide mandatory reporting training for all mandated reporter fields at minimum, with an optimal goal of training availability for all community members.
10. To encourage and foster support within all organizations and institutions for mandated reporters to comply with statutory obligations unhindered and absent fear of retaliation or ostracization.

Educational Populations

1. Undergraduate students involved in fields including but not limited to social work, sociology, psychology and criminology, pre-med, pre-law, forensics, anthropology, education, nursing and related medical fields (respiratory therapy, physical therapy, etc.), sports medicine/training and early childhood education.
2. Graduate programs including law, medicine and theology (seminary) with future focus on other fields such as dentistry, veterinary medicine, etc.
3. Continuing education for any and all of the above as well as juvenile probation officers, volunteers in community or youth-serving organizations, church program volunteers and athletics.

Core Competencies (adapted from the Ambuel, B, K Trent, P Lenahan, P Cronholm, D Downing, M Jelley, A Lewis-O'Connor, M McGraw, A Marjavi, L Mouden, J Wherry, M Callahan, J Humphreys, R Block, Competencies Needed by Health Professionals for Addressing

Exposure to Violence and Abuse in Patient Care, Academy on Violence and Abuse, Eden Prairie, MN, April 2011

Individual Learner Competency	Educational Objectives Learners Should be able to:
A. Demonstrate general knowledge of violence and abuse	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand the definitions of neglect, abuse and violence including psychological, emotional and spiritual maltreatment2. Understand the interpersonal dynamics of violence and abuse, and the varied and changing types of violence and abuse3. Know risk factors for various categories of child abuse in the general population and identify high-risk populations4. Distinguish between myths and facts about responses to various categories of child maltreatment within the victim population5. Distinguish between myths and facts about responses to various categories of child maltreatment within the victimized child's environment6. Recognize and understand the physical and behavioral health effects of violence, neglect and abuse, including mental health impacts7. Understand the barriers to help-seeking for victimized children8. Understand the social and cultural context of violence and other child maltreatment, including factors such as gender, sexual orientation, social class, ethnicity, religion, developmental stage, immigrant or refugee history, and local, regional and national variations9. Understand individual and population-based model for intervention and primary prevention of child

	<p>maltreatment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Acknowledge pre-existing values, attitudes, beliefs and experiences related to maltreatment among multi-disciplinary team members and how these affect interactions with victimized and at-risk children and their families. 11. Recognize the short- and long-term impact of child maltreatment as identified by the ACE Studies 12. Recognize the resiliency factors that contribute to an individual's ability to cope with childhood maltreatment
<p>B. Demonstrate skills appropriate to one's profession and specialty, including the ability to identify, assess, intervene and prevent violence, neglect and abuse</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to reports of child maltreatment consistent with best practice, including child advocacy centers as available but always with a child-centered approach 2. Understand the child's motivation for disclosure at this point in time and whether the disclosure was purposeful or accidental 3. Utilize best practice in the investigation of maltreatment reports, including use of appropriately-trained forensic interviewers within a multi-disciplinary team response 4. Identify opportunities to evaluate the credibility of all witnesses and seek corroborative evidence of reports of maltreatment 5. Understand the scope of corroborative evidence beyond "hard science" items such as DNA 6. Engage nonoffending caregivers in providing appropriate support for children reporting maltreatment 7. Utilize available resources to ensure a safe environment for children reporting maltreatment 8. Engage appropriate professionals to ensure the child's physical, mental and

	<p>spiritual well-being following a disclosure of maltreatment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural or developmental factors affecting the child reporting maltreatment 10. Provide honest, ethical responses to children including the need to disclose reports of abuse and the limits of any confidentiality, including recording of any statements made by the child 11. Prioritize the child's safety as the most significant aspect of the report, as well as the safety of other at-risk children 12. Understand the typology of offenders, particularly sex offenders and the grooming process, which includes adults in positions of authority with the child 13. Recognize circumstances that could result in a child's decision to recant the disclosure
<p>C. Communicate effectively with the child and family</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convey the most accurate information possible with regard to next steps following the report 2. Answer any and all questions as thoroughly as possible 3. Understand the family dynamics and why and what information is vital to them, recognizing that they may be unable to process with just one recitation 4. Provide contact information for a team member who will be a primary source of ongoing information 5. Provide periodic and frequent updates in the initial stages of the investigation 6. Discuss thoroughly any anticipated court action and how the process works 7. Communicate in the language most comfortable for the family to ensure clear understanding 8. Recognize that the child is entitled to understand his/her rights as a victim

	<p>and, depending upon age, should be able to express his/her wishes and have these taken into consideration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Provide realistic projections on outcome and engage victim assistance to help families with decision-making if need or requested 10. Provide resources for services, including mental health referrals 11. Discuss risk assessment and steps to help ensure safety and appropriate support and services for the maltreated child
<p>D. Communicate effectively within the multi-disciplinary team</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand and respect the legislative and agency mandates of each team member, recognizing that all members share the common goal of ensuring the well-being of children 2. Know the scope of your own authority and that of your team members to ensure the best utilization of time and resources when investigating cases of maltreatment 3. Recognize that vicarious trauma (compassion fatigue) is a risk for individuals working in child protection and how to respond when it's observed in team members (or yourself) 4. Maintain appropriate boundaries and treat other team members respectfully when disagreements occur 5. Keep other team members apprised of significant occurrences during the progression of the investigation or litigation as appropriate 6. Share educational resources and training within the team 7. Engage community members in helping the team understand cultural or unique population dynamics
<p>E. Communicate effectively with the community</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage community stakeholders in organizations, cultural centers and faith

	<p>institutions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Provide relevant and developmentally and culturally sensitive education and training 3. Encourage understanding of the MDT processes to foster a positive attitude toward reporting 4. Educate community institutions on how they can help provide resiliency for victims 5. Recognize the importance of community engagement in reporting and responding to maltreatment, as well as prevention efforts 6. Accept the responsibility of being a leader in educating those within the personal orbit of each MDT member
<p>F. Understand the ethics involved in child maltreatment cases</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognize that ethical response in cases of child maltreatment is more than compliance with confidentiality laws, policies or guidelines 2. Ethical response includes consideration of the best interest of the child as its cornerstone 3. Know the state law governing various rules of confidentiality with respect to reporting of child maltreatment and its exceptions 4. Know the state law governing various rules of confidentiality with respect to medical and mental health treatment of both victims and offenders 5. Do not lie to children involved in cases of maltreatment 6. Understand the rules of evidence and constraints on prosecutors to comply with disclosure of evidence and constraints on comments to media outlets 7. Be aware of the ethical positions of each discipline involved in the MDT

Application Process and Fees

The fee to apply for approval is \$500 and should accompany the application. Once the application is reviewed, a conditional approval of a maximum of 12 months will be granted until a site visit can occur. The cost for a site visit will be \$500 plus expenses for 2 site monitors. Upon completion of a successful site visit a final approval will be granted within 30 days. Site visits will be repeated every 5 years. The \$500 fee will recur annually for as long as the approval is desired. GNCPTC will use the fees to sustain CAST conferences, to support research on CAST and otherwise develop resources that will aid in growing CAST nationally and internationally.

A complete application for CAST approval will include:

A completed CAST approval questionnaire

Copies of all current syllabi that include learning objectives and assessment techniques

Description of institutional core competencies

Curricula Vitae of all faculty members

Institutional policies related to mandated reporting of child maltreatment

Additional information deemed relevant by institution

Please forward all applications to

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Clinical Assistant Professor/CAST Coordinator
College of Public Affairs and Administration
University of Illinois Springfield
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Springfield, IL 62703**

CAST Approval Application

1. Institutional course overview.
 - a. Institutional type sponsoring CAST program (University or Community College, seminary, law school, etc.):
 - b. How has CAST developed at your institution? Is it offered as a certificate, minor, major, on-line program or graduate program? How many students are currently enrolled in CAST? Discuss annual enrollment of program and any obstacles to enrollment.
 - c. Provide a list of the CAST courses that your institution has offered since inception and the textbooks and supplemental readings used for each.
 - d. What research, if any, is your institution doing on the effectiveness of CAST?
 - e. As you look to the future, what is the greatest challenge in sustaining and growing CAST at your institution?

2. What standards, if any, have you set for the faculty teaching CAST? Do your faculty members have front line experience handling cases of child abuse? Research and scholarship in child abuse? Do you have adjunct faculty?
 - a. Outline how faculty address lectures, office hours, needs of students
 - b. Academic background and credibility/experience in topic
 - c. Practical experience in field
 - d. Strengths-based work with students
 - e. Identify research and scholarship in the field, as well as any research and publishing being conducted
 - f. Involvement with front line child protection professionals in the community

3. It is critical for faculty of CAST to be inter-disciplinary (from different programs at the university, different professions, etc.). What efforts have been employed to engage individuals from the many program areas which address the varied disciplines involved in child maltreatment intervention and prevention?
 - a. CAST program should be inclusive of at least two different departments (programs) from the institution and/or comprised of faculty from multiple disciplines (professionals) [program as a whole incorporates at least two disciplines] directly related to working with children and/or providing child maltreatment interventions/prevention
 - b. Do you have an advisory board to give and share information with instructors in the field – shows evidence of collaborating within the university and the community. Does the CAST program have an advisory board unique to the curriculum rather than being incorporated into the board for the program in which CAST may be embedded?
 - c. Is team teaching encouraged?

- d. How much involvement does the advisory board have with students or in providing guest lectures or guest lecturers for classes?
4. Institutional factors.
 - a. Does your institution require faculty to attend professional hours for ongoing professional education specifically related to their work with the CAST program?
 - b. Discuss your institution's commitment to recruit faculty consistent with the purpose of CAST to provide "real life" experiential learning for future front-line professionals.
 - c. Discuss your institution's policies on recruitment of diverse faculty members who reflect the community of your school and community.
5. Research on the effectiveness of CAST is important for determining the efficacy of the program, establishing future employability for students and for funding. What research on the effectiveness of CAST, if any, has research explored and/or conducted?
 - a. Learning outcomes?
 - b. Reasonable efforts to provide descriptive/demographic data to larger group as a whole (students placed/employed, interest from students, number enrolled, number complete program). Receptivity of and responses from employers and efforts to address any noted criticisms.
6. Hands on-experience is an important part of the vision of CAST. As a result, students conduct mock crime scene investigations, family group decision making scenarios, courtroom exercises and the like. Discuss how your institution employs experiential learning.
 - a. Experiential learning is important, however it is accomplished (if no physical space for a mock house at the institution) incorporate ride-a-longs, court observation, attend community meetings/events, shadowing, field trips, community projects or volunteering efforts.
7. Outline your institution's requirements and procedures for reporting suspicions of abuse or neglect. Are members of your institution's staff required to receive mandated reporter training? If so, how often is the training conducted and what standards, if any, are placed on that training (content, number of hours, provider of training, etc.)? Is the ACE research incorporated in this training?
8. How does general curriculum incorporate mandatory reporter training for all relevant disciplines? Does this mandated reporter training incorporate ACE research? Has/ would the institution consider offering CAST 301 as a general elective?

9. Are CAST faculty members required to pass a background check if not already required by their particular institutions? How extensive is the background check? What other safeguards are in place?
10. If CAST students are participating in field experiences, internships and other activities where they are interacting with children are they required to pass a background check? If so, what standards are in place for removing students from CAST based on a background check and what circumstances would require removal? Are students specifically prohibited from registering for CAST classes if they have qualifying criminal history in their background?
11. Outline your CAST program's field placements (externships, internships, capstone experiences, etc.)?
 - a. Evaluation mechanisms
 - b. Minimum hours of 120 hours placement
 - c. Is the program in compliance with other degree program if CAST is in other program?
12. What processes, if any, are in place in your institution that address the needs of students/faculty/staff who may themselves have been victimized as children? Is self-care, as a lifelong skill, part of the instruction of your CAST program?
 - a. Address issue in course catalog and syllabi by warning about sensitive materials and that subject can bring up issues of past trauma
 - b. Provide referral information for support systems & programs in hand-out materials / syllabi
 - c. Provide information on self-care
13. If you are teaching CAST at a community college or as part of an Associate Arts degree, what standards govern the transfer of credits? Are there articulation agreements in place with 4-year institutions that are typical destinations for transfer students? Are there any other partnership or collaboration efforts with these transfer institutions?
14. What collaboration exists with employers of students obtaining their AA as a terminal degree?
15. What continuing education marketing efforts, if any, have been made or are planned to engage current front-line professionals to obtain a certificate or additional course work.
16. Please attach the following for review:
 - i. Faculty CV

- ii. Student evaluations of program
- iii. Faculty evaluations of program
- iv. Number of CAST students by semester since inception of program
- v. The number of CAST students from diverse disciplines (social work, criminal justice, nursing, etc.)