

# Comprehensive Program Review

## FINAL SUMMARY REPORT

# Associate Certificate in Complex Trauma (CTRAAS)

School of Health, Community and Social Justice – Centre for Counselling  
& Community Safety

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## 1. Self-Study Report Summary

### Conclusions

The Associate Certificate in Complex Trauma (CTRAAS) has achieved significant accomplishments over the last five years. Program staff and the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Innovation (CTLI) have worked diligently to make continuous improvements to the program based on feedback from students, instructors, and previous program reviews. These efforts have resulted in enhanced online and face-to-face courses, ensuring student success and satisfaction. The curriculum is constantly updated to provide the most current clinical and evidence-based material on effective complex trauma intervention and treatment.

The program's impact on graduates has been profound, with close to 100 graduates positively influencing the lives of hundreds, if not thousands of people, through their work. Students receive individual attention and coaching due to small class sizes and applied learning methods, enabling them to graduate with immediately applicable skills. Graduates find meaningful employment with 100% employed in full-time permanent jobs, and many pursuing additional learning opportunities after completing the program.

While the program fulfills its intended purpose, it has faced challenges with declining enrolment over the past few years, perhaps in part due marketing challenges, changes to the program name and COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. To address these challenges the program plans to work with JIBC Communications and Marketing to relaunch the program under the latest program name, articulating the program's unique value proposition, improving the program webpages, and exploring ways to market directly to an expanded target market.

To increase marketing channels and improve professional visibility, there are plans to establish and strengthen relationships with industry stakeholders, relevant ministry and licensing organizations, as well as to explore transfer credit agreements with other post-secondary institutions. To improve connections with external groups, the program area will consider offering special events with renowned practitioners in the field, as it has done successfully in the past, and consider adding industry members to the division-wide Community and Social Justice Program Advisory Committee (PAC), and/or re-enacting the program-specific PAC.

In addition, there are several actions that have been identified to help remove barriers for students and thereby improve student success or enrolments including; reviewing prerequisite requirements, providing readings ahead of time, clarifying expectations for the capstone course by articulating program learning outcomes and reducing student workloads, if the revised learning outcomes warrant this.

Resources and institutional support will be crucial for addressing the program's growth and development plans, including enhancing marketing efforts, focusing on diversity, inclusion, Indigenization, and improving accessibility and enhancing universal design.

Despite facing various challenges, the program remains highly valued by students and faculty, and its demand is expected to increase, given societal stresses that heighten the program's relevance. The program's continuation contributes to making a positive impact on individuals' lives and communities, ultimately contributing to a safer and more just society.

## Recommendations

The following is the list of recommendations from the Self-Study Report. The recommendations were grouped into the following categories: Marketing, Connections to Sector, Program Articulation, Student Experience, and Quality of Instructional Design. The final recommendations are summarized in Section 4 - Final Recommendations & Action Plan and reflect minor edits to the items listed below in addition to recommendations from the External Review Team.

### *Marketing*

- Consider arranging special events with popular speakers on the topic of complex trauma as a marketing opportunity.
- Collaborate with Communications and Marketing to develop a strategic marketing and advertising plan to launch this as a new program.
- Expand the target market from ages 25-34 to include those 35-49.
- Consider alternative marketing methods to social media to reach the expanded age range.
- Target professional organizations, individual counsellors, and agencies directly with marketing materials and ads. Advertise through professional associations like BCACC (Clinical Counsellors), and BCASW (Social Workers).
- Connect with and market to those who recently completed master's degrees in education, social work, or counselling.
- Add more information to the program website including direct contact information, number of days of training, program format and delivery (blended), class dates, minimum educational requirements, and information on the suitability of this training for those working full time.

### *Connections to Sector*

- Consider arranging special events with popular speakers on the topic of complex trauma as a way to connect with the sector.
- Consider adding industry members to the division-wide Community and Social Justice Program Advisory Committee (PAC), and/or re-enacting the program-specific PAC.
- Re-establish connections with stakeholders and with the organizations that were consulted during the development of the program.
- Connect with professional associations like the BC Association of Clinical Counsellor (BCACC), and BC Association of Social Workers (BCASW) for advertising opportunities.
- Re-establish a partnership with BCACC to become an approved training provider once again and market directly to their members.
- Improve communications with potential employers and students around the credential's value.

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## Final Summary Report (FSR)

### *Associate Certificate in Complex Trauma*



- Strengthen relationships with related associations and organizations to amplify the value of the program within the industry and in general.
- Explore opportunities for funding or grants for those working in the public sector.
- Continue to nurture the relationship with the Ministry of Children and Family Development to explore other contract training opportunities for both active courses within the terminated graduate certificate and those in the current Associate Certificate in Complex Trauma.

#### *Program's Articulation and Credential Recognition Processes*

- Apply to have BCACC qualify our courses as continuing education credits.

#### *Student Experience*

- Explore why prospective students are not following through with enrolments after their applications have been accepted and explore whether providing more information on the program website would address this.
- Review prerequisite requirements for COUN-5208: Somatic Work and COUN-5212: Intervention and Skill Building and how these are communicated to potential students. Consider allowing flexibility with these requirements to improve student completion rates for the program.
- Consider offering the online foundation course COUN-5200 more than once per year to increase the pool of learners who could continue on to the remaining face-to-face courses.
- Consider removing program enrolment as a prerequisite for COUN-5200.
- Examine the number of assignments and readings as they relate to the learning and program outcomes to ensure appropriate alignment with the level and length of the courses.

#### *Quality of Instructional Design*

- Clarify/improve faculty's understanding of the correlation between the curriculum and learners' development of essential skills and further investigate whether the curriculum is developing these skills.
- Review opportunities for more feedback from instructors to students in COUN-5200 and COUN-5220.
- Review and clarify the learning outcomes and assignment expectations for COUN-5220 the self-directed integrated project to improve clarity for students.
- The program learning outcomes can be further articulated while reviewing learning outcomes of the capstone course above: COUN-5220: Complex Trauma Integrated Project.

## Future Directions

As listed in the Self-Study Report, below are the areas the program planned to focus on for the short range (< 6 months), mid-range (6 mo. – 2 years), and long range (>2 years). See the final revised list in Section 4 - Final Recommendations & Action Plan.

- a) short range (< 6 months)
  - develop a strategic marketing plan to launch the new program with an expanded target age range specifically focused on professional organizations, counsellors, and agencies.

- improve information on the program webpage.
  - arrange accreditation with BCACC for professional development credits.
  - re-instate a PAC and re-establish sector relationships.
  - explore funding through grants and scholarships.
- b) mid-range (6 mo. – 2 years)
- arrange special events to attract those in the field to the JIBC.
  - foster sector connections
  - market directly to professional associations and those who have recently completed master's degrees.
- c) long range (>2 years)
- explore contract training opportunities for the graduate courses in Sexual Abuse Intervention.

## 2. External Review Team (ERT) Report Summary

In June 2023, a three-member external review team met with various stakeholders, including JIBC staff, students, graduates, and faculty related to the Associate Certificate in Complex Trauma (CTRAAS), reviewed the Complex Trauma Self-Study report, and then captured their findings in the ERT Report.

The review team found that the program is highly needed and acknowledged the qualifications and expertise of the faculty members. They understood that the program was experiencing low enrollments, possibly due to limited marketing and promotion. The course content was not thoroughly examined, but it was deemed to be based on current best practices and evidence-informed approaches.

Based on the review, the ERT made several comments and recommendations. The ERT report stated that students expressed positive feedback, highlighting the practicality and quality of in-person classes and the usefulness of course materials. However, students suggested greater inclusion of diverse voices, particularly Indigenous perspectives, cultural humility, and a deeper exploration of intergenerational trauma could be beneficial. Students also emphasized the importance of incorporating content on complex trauma in children and youth, integrating more material on sexual abuse intervention from past courses in the original Graduate Certificate program, and addressing clients' practical needs alongside trauma-focused interventions.

The ERT concluded that faculty members supported the program and valued its focus on foundational elements of complex trauma, and they suggested enhancing program visibility, exploring regional cohort models, and attracting new graduates from counselling programs.

To improve the program's reach and effectiveness, the review team had several recommendations including clarifying the value proposition underlying the program to improve marketing efforts, revitalizing the Program Advisory Committee, and building relationships with community practitioners, focusing on diversity and inclusion, offering regional programming, implementing payment plans, and enhancing interactive elements in online courses. Additionally, to improve the student experience they suggest timing in-person classes to avoid conflicts with police training scenarios.

The report concludes that the Associate Certificate in Complex Trauma program is highly regarded by students and faculty. It addresses significant societal challenges and provides valuable knowledge and clinical skills.

Overall, the external review team recognized the importance of the Associate Certificate in Complex Trauma program and believes that with appropriate modifications, it can continue to benefit individuals impacted by complex trauma by improving the knowledge and clinical skills of professionals in the field.

### 3. Self-Study Team Response to ERT Report

The ERT provided valuable recommendations to improve the Associate Certificate in Complex Trauma, and the Self-Study Team (SST) has responded to their recommendations below.

First off, the ERT suggested providing clarity on the program's value proposition by researching and defining the target audience. The SST acknowledges this suggestion will be helpful to improve marketing efforts and plans to carry out their recommendations to research specific course material from other graduate Counseling Programs in BC to distinguish this program further as well as highlighting the practical skills developed in the program.

The ERT emphasized the need to focus on interdisciplinary practice to attract more interest, and the SST agrees, adding that creating student personas for marketing purposes, with students from various disciplines, could help potential students see the benefits of the program for them.

The ERT also recommended revitalizing the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) and building relationships with community practitioners and relevant organizations. The SST agrees this would be a valuable process and will explore either adding industry representation to the CSJD PAC or creating a specific PAC for this program. In addition to the organizations recommended by the ERT, the program area will reach out to faculty from the University of Victoria and the University of Northern BC, given they offer some training in complex trauma in their programs.

A focus on diversity and inclusion in instructors, guest presenters, discussions and course materials was also suggested. The SST acknowledges the importance of focusing on diversity and inclusion, including increasing diversity among faculty, and commits to addressing this imbalance in future recruiting efforts. In addition, the program area will continue to review course materials and specifically the assessment tools used with the aim of replacing them since they do not align with the program area's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion or Indigenization goals. The SST also acknowledges that including more Indigenous perspectives and a deeper exploration of intergenerational trauma would also be beneficial.

The suggestion to reintegrate specific sexual abuse and intervention support as an elective was appreciated and would require additional resources to develop and update the content. In addition, the enrolment numbers would not support an elective at this time. This suggestion may be more feasible in the future when enrollments increase. Similarly, the recommendation to focus on children and youth, possibly as an elective, could be addressed through the inclusion of new faculty with expertise in working with this population.



To make the program more accessible, the ERT suggested providing regional offerings and developing community partnerships in Northern BC, to reduce the financial burden on students who need to travel for courses. While CSJ has explored community partnerships in the past, this business model is no longer encouraged due to limited resources. Regional offerings could also negatively impact enrolment numbers at the New Westminster campus jeopardizing these offerings.

The suggestion to consider a payment plan option to reduce the financial burden on students was appreciated, and since students can enroll and pay for courses individually, a payment plan option would not be much different from what is currently in place.

The SST does appreciate the intention of the recommendations related to regional offerings and payment plans and commits to making financial assistance information related to grants and bursaries more readily available to assist with the financial burden students face.

The SST agrees with the suggestion to better prepare students for success by clearly communicating the time commitment required for the program readings and assignments and commits to providing more information on the program webpages as well as providing readings sooner than is the current practise, to give learners more time to complete them.

Regarding the suggestion to schedule face-to-face courses at times when Police training and their simulated scenarios are not occurring, the program area agrees to reach out to Scheduling to discuss the need to book classrooms away from Police Training whenever possible. In addition, the program area has decided to include information on the live scenarios in welcome emails, to prepare students in advance.

In response to feedback from students and a suggestion to establish a community of practice cohort, the program area is reluctant to pursue this suggestion based on previous experience with this model, lack of resources and current numbers of students, since larger numbers are needed to make this type of resource robust for learners.

## 4. Final Recommendations & Action Plan

Below is the revised list of future directions, that the program area plans to focus on for the short range (< 6 months), mid-range (6 mo. – 2 years), and long range (>2 years). It incorporates areas of focus identified in the ERT Report and goals that have been further developed from the original Self-Study report.

- a) Short range (< 6 months)
  - Collaborate with Communications & Marketing to develop a strategic marketing plan to launch future offerings of this program under the latest program name. Consider the following suggestions:
    - Clarify the unique value proposition of our program by researching course material offered by BC graduate Counselling Programs.

- Develop student personas and gather quotations from students via surveys for use in marketing materials, to highlight the benefits of the courses for various groups of students.
  - Improve information on the program webpage including direct contact information, positioning of the program and unique value proposition, time commitment required for readings and assignments, length and timing of the courses, link to JIBC Financial Aid and Awards and/or more information in general on funding assistance.
  - Continue to explore ways to market to professional organizations, counsellors, and agencies including those who have recently completed master's degrees in education, social work and/or counselling.
  - Consider the target market age range to include 35-49 years old (in addition to 25–34-year-old target market identified by Institutional Research) when developing a marketing strategy based on the personas mentioned above.
  - Program area to provide readings and assignments to students as far in advance as possible, to allow extra time to complete.
  - Program area staff to review deadlines of JIBC Financial Aid and Awards in order to inform students of potential funding opportunities.
  - Inform students ahead of time that JIBC provides training to first responders including Police, Firefighters, Sheriffs, and Paramedics and that they may witness live training scenarios across the JIBC while attending class. Confirm room locations with Scheduling two weeks prior to class dates to ensure classrooms are not located near Police training.
- b) Mid-range (6 mo. – 2 years)
- Reach out to representatives from Ministry of Child Family Development - Child Youth Mental Health, Counselling Programs at UNBC and UVIC, and other possible organizations to develop relationships and explore ways to promote our program in their communities.
  - Explore ways of removing barriers and/or increasing success for learners:
    - Review prerequisite requirements for COUN-5208 Somatic Work.
    - Review prerequisite requirements for COUN-5212 Intervention and Skill Building.
    - Consider offering COUN-5200 Online Foundation Course twice/year to increase the learner pool for other courses.
    - Consider removing program enrolment as a prerequisite for COUN-5200.
    - Articulate program learning outcomes for the Associate Certificate in Complex Trauma (from the original program proposal).
    - Consider enhancing the focus on trauma related to oppression and intergenerational trauma.
    - Review and clarify learning outcomes of the capstone course COUN-5220 Complex Trauma Integrated Project Assignment. Course outcomes should align with program outcomes.
    - Examine the reading list, assignments, application process and grading system as they relate to the program learning outcomes required by the new credential and consider

ways to reduce student workload, improve accessibility, clarify expectations, and enhance universal design.

- Continue to explore why prospective students do not follow through with enrolment after being accepted into the program.
  - Explore Transfer Credits.
  - Monitor changes in provincial counselling regulations when the new provincial college of counselling and psychotherapy is established to ensure the program adheres to any educational regulation requirements. Look for opportunities to provide education upgrades based on the shifts in requirements. With new legislation there may be emerging opportunities to fulfill educational needs or requirements.
  - Consider adding additional industry members to Community and Social Justice PAC or establishing a Program PAC to re-establish sector relationships.
  - Increase diversity of faculty.
  - Explore new assessment tools that are cost effective and inclusive, to reduce the use of the formal assessment tools used.
- c) Long range (>2 years)
- Improve faculty's understanding of the correlation between the curriculum and learners' development of essential skills/JIBC Core competencies.
  - Explore the possibility of holding special events with renowned trauma specialists to attract those in the field to the JIBC and to promote the program.