



Trauma Therapist Career Brief

BACJ-related certificates and concentrations: Victims and Victim Services concentration

BACJ-related courses:

- CRJU 4170 – Victimology (3 credit hours)
- CRJU 3285 – Trauma in the Criminal Justice System (3 credit hours)
- CRJU 3250 - Violence in Society (3 credit hours)
- CRJU 3280 - Trauma Among Correctional Populations (3 credit hours)
- CRJU 4140 - Domestic Violence and Crime (3 credit hours)
- CRJU 4150 - Sex Offender and Offenses (3 credit hours)
- HDFR 1080 - Lifespan Issues in Family Violence (3 credit hours)
- PSYC 3611 - Psychology of Women (3 credit hours)
- SOCY 4460 - Hate Groups and Group Violence (3 credit hours)
- SOCY 4780 - Violence in Relationships (3 credit hours)
- HDFR 4004 - Family and Comm. Prog. II Grant Writing/Fundraising (3 credit hours)
- HDFR 4090 - Helping Profession Skills in HDFR (3 credit hours)
- HDFR 4260 - Family Systems and Social Justice (3 credit hours)
- HDFR 4860 - Trauma Informed Care for Diverse Populations and Co-occurring Disorders (3 credit hours)
- CRJU 4600 - Special Topics (3 credit hours) - some of these topics are trauma-related such as Human trafficking.

Complementary/recommended minors: Spanish, Psychology, Sociology, Human Development & Family Relations, English Writing, Communication, Law Studies

Recommended extracurricular activities and experiences: Alpha Phi Sigma Criminal Justice Honor Society, study abroad, other community involvement and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) experiences such as a student association or club, volunteering in the community, or other experiences that expose you to communities and cultivate a service-minded perspective. Some agencies or nonprofits have volunteer victim advocate positions available to gain experience before seeking a paid position.

Internship: Many victim services organizations offer internships and many law enforcement agencies have victim services units, these would be a great introduction for a trauma therapist internship. Also, any internship in underserved communities and social work may provide good exposure.

Duties and Responsibilities: Victimization within and outside of the criminal justice system is a component of trauma therapy whether the trauma was a precursor to offending behaviors, a result of a

victimization, or the result of an experience within the criminal justice system. Trauma therapy involves using psychological concepts to help patients process traumatic experiences in a safe and nonjudgmental environment as well as resultant mental health difficulties such as depression, anxiety, and substance use. You will evaluate and assess their needs, discuss patient goals, conduct therapy sessions to assist the patient to work through mental health challenges, and develop treatment plans to manage triggers and prevent re-traumatization.

Work Environment and Schedule: This may vary from standard 8am-5pm office hours to nontraditional hours during the day or night, and may be in-office or out-of-office. Telehealth is becoming increasingly popular and your therapy may involve connecting virtually with clients.

Career Path/Promotion: This career path is often an independent one, you may work for a therapy collective, in a mental health facility, in a medical office, or have your own practice. Typically promotion isn't available unless you work in an environment that has a supervisory structure in which case management or supervisory positions may be available but may also limit your time and ability as a therapist.

Education, Training and Certification: Bachelor's degree in psychology or social work but a minor in criminal justice will aid in therapy for justice-involved or victim populations. Additional trauma-informed training is important. A Master's degree is also required as is specific certifications such as Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) to provide therapy.

Special Considerations: People may be drawn to therapy occupations because of their own traumatic experiences. It's incredibly important to strongly consider one's own healing, health and self-care relative to providing support for others. Being exposed to traumatic events on a daily basis, and being expected to provide support, is an incredibly important but taxing position. Please consider your own history and well-being, and ability to provide support to others if you are still healing from your victimization.

Skills and Competencies: listening, empathy, patience, needs assessment and action, interpersonal communication skills, trauma-informed practices, maintaining confidentiality.

Colorado Salary Averages:

Bottom 10%: \$55,437

Top 10%: \$69,513

Median: \$62,779

Median Salary in U.S. as of 2021: \$61,548