



Graduate Certificate in Leading Transformative Mental Health in Schools

Program Handbook

2026-2027

Table of Contents

Graduate Certificate in Leading Transformative Mental Health in Schools	3
Program Faculty	4
Course Sequence	7
Program Schedule	9
Course Structure	10
Graded Materials	12

About this Handbook

The Graduate Certificate in Leading Transformative Mental Health in Schools Handbook is in effect for the academic year 2026-2027. It supplements the material in the William James College Graduate Student Handbook (included in the registrar's page at <http://www.williamjames.edu/academics/registrar/index.cfm>), providing information that is specific to the Leading Transformative Mental Health in Schools program. If there are apparent inconsistencies between this Handbook and the Graduate Student Handbook or other program information, please consult the Department Chair for clarification.

All policies and procedures of William James College are subject to change in response to the evolving needs or demands of the institution and its programs. Appropriate notification of any such changes will be made.

Graduate Certificate in Leading Transformative Mental Health in Schools

William James College's Center for Behavioral Health, Equity, and Leadership in Schools and the Department of Organizational and Leadership Psychology present a Graduate Certificate in Leading Transformative Mental Health in Schools. This evidence-informed, blended program supports teachers in building inclusive and equitable learning environments. Classes are asynchronous and housed on the Canvas learning management system. Consistent with all William James College offerings, the program features an experiential learning approach, integrating didactic teaching with practicum experience within a supportive learning community.

Courses focus on critical issues in behavioral health, transformative social emotional learning, classroom practices, and teacher leadership. A key feature of the program is that leadership training will be incorporated to guide teachers in supporting each other and in transforming the school environment to create systemic change. Participating in cohorts, teachers will be supported to be change agents in their schools. There is a strong emphasis on creating a collaborative learning environment where teachers feel supported to focus on taking risks and trying new approaches.

Following a systemic lens, district teams will work together to use a data-driven approach, learn about and practice prevention and promotion strategies, integrate social emotional learning into the school culture, identify skills required to support adult and student mental health, and become effective leaders and mentors with their peers and within their overall systems.

The Graduate Certificate in Leading Transformative Mental Health in Schools is a blended program. Blended programs incorporate both online and on-campus study. Participants take part in weekly online assignments, discussions, and collaborative projects with the Certificate Program faculty members and classmates. Also, participants must attend five intensive in person days in residence at the William James College campus during the program.

Program Faculty

Andrea Ellis is a passionate child advocate and educator dedicated to creating spaces and developing leaders that are committed to excellent equitable educational experiences for Black and Brown students. Andrea is a regional presenter for several education organizations and districts and is called upon to work with consulting companies that need specific expertise and training for their clients. Andrea's consulting company, E2Serve LLC focuses on capacity building for leaders, organizations and educators in all settings. She works with not only schools and districts but also with faith-based groups, mental health agencies, non-profit organizations, and individuals that have a shared vision of creating educational experiences that black and brown children deserve. She is a professional life coach, strategic planner and presenter. But most importantly, a black woman who knows her assignment and is unapologetic about fulfilling it. Andrea enters all of her work and relationships using her life, experiences, obstacles, and triumphs as a blueprint for others to benefit from. It is her belief that others don't need to jump off the same cliff as her to see what will happen.

Luba Falk Feigenberg is a psychologist, educator, and researcher whose work focuses on individual and organizational growth and change. She is passionate about supporting learning processes that promote reflective practice and a culture of inquiry. At the core of her work is a commitment to equity, accessibility, and social justice. Luba's extensive professional experience includes leadership, research, and program management roles in nonprofit, education, human services, and community health care. A licensed school counselor, she has taught courses in child development, research methods, and program evaluation at Boston College, Tufts University, and Harvard University. Currently, she runs a consulting company, Reframe Evaluation, where she supports mission-driven leaders to use evaluation to tell the story of their work. She is an adjunct faculty at the William James College Center for Behavioral Health, Equity, and Leadership in Schools and the Co-director of the Graduate Certificate in Transformative Mental Health.

Nadja Lopez is the Executive Director of the William James College Center for Behavioral Health, Equity, and Leadership in Schools. Throughout her career, Nadja has focused on translating research and clinical practice into accessible school and community-based approaches aimed at promoting youth mental health. Nadja completed her graduate work at the University of Miami, Florida, and her pre- and post-doctoral work at Boston Children's Hospital, where she worked until 2011. She has worked directly with thousands of educators, parents, and community leaders, directed philanthropy-based initiatives focusing on prevention of adolescent depression and suicide, served as Co-Director of a Graduate Certificate in School Climate and Social Emotional Learning for educators, and was the Training Director for an internship program at William James College. Her primary clinical and research interests focus on the treatment of anxiety and depression in children and adolescents, school climate and social emotional learning, culturally responsive treatment and teaching, and systems change. Nadja has written multiple publications to support student mental health, including her book *Anxiety and Depression in the Classroom: A Guide to Promoting Self-Regulation in Young Students*. She is also the co-editor of the book *The Parent's Guide to Psychological First Aid*.

Core Principles of the Program: Big Ideas

These Big Ideas serve as the guiding principles of this graduate certificate program. Throughout each course, participants will learn theory and practice related to each principle in more detail.

1. The strategy is you.
2. Choose curiosity over certainty.
3. Learning, unlearning, and relearning are lifelong processes.
4. Teachers are leaders and agents of change.
5. Perspectives from psychology, education, and leadership are interconnected and fundamental to addressing behavioral health.
6. Reflective practice is essential to ongoing learning and growth.
7. School climate is critical for student and adult learning and wellbeing.
8. Data tell the story of student and adult mental health and learning.
9. Emotions are critical to learning.
10. Prevention and promotion are more sustainable than reactive approaches.

Program Learning Objectives and Outcomes

1. Explain neuroscience and the role of mental health in learning
2. Apply school-based interventions to address emotional challenges in students in simulated classroom settings and cases.
3. Develop and practice skills to embed equity, inclusion, and belonging in instructional practice
4. Reflect on their practice, knowledge, and attitudes and use that to create action plans for improving instructional practices
5. Develop and practice leadership and training skills to promote new learning among school colleagues
6. Engage in interactive activities to learn and network with other teachers in Massachusetts

Core Competencies

These are the core competencies participants will learn and practice throughout the program. Participants will also be expected to reflect on their own learning of these competencies through a variety of activities and assignments.

1. Set the conditions for equitable learning and collaboration.
2. Learn, analyze and practice co-regulation.
3. Create and maintain effective teams that promote systemic change.
4. Engage in courageous conversations with students and colleagues.
5. Practice public speaking and presentation skills.
6. Gather, interpret, and use data for action planning.
7. Learn and use a tiers of risk framework for assessing and responding to critical incidents.
8. Apply clinical science and neuroscience to understand and respond to emotions and behaviors and inform instructional practice.
9. Build strategic skills for giving and receiving feedback.
10. Create systems for accountability.



Course Sequence

Program Orientation: Asynchronous module available two weeks prior to classes starting.

LT600: Use of Self in Transforming Mental Health: Adult Social-Emotional Competencies and Cultural Humility

- Luba Falk Feigenberg, Ed.D.
- Nadja N. Lopez, Ph.D.
- Andrea Ellis, MA

This course sets the foundation for the year-long process of team building, reflection, and action planning. This process begins with the self. Teachers will focus on their own sociocultural identities, social emotional competencies, areas of privilege and marginalization, and how these constructs have influenced their values, beliefs, biases, and teaching practices. In addition, theoretical constructs associated with clinical and organizational psychology, and how those constructs influence school climate, student mental health, and systems change will be discussed. This course establishes the key concepts, mindsets, and practices needed for the next courses, which look at classroom and system.

Course Objectives:

1. Participants will assess, evaluate, and demonstrate self-awareness about ways in which their own experiences with privilege and oppression have influenced their values, beliefs, biases and teaching practices.
2. Participants will develop a foundational knowledge of terms, definitions, and phrases surrounding the aspects of diversity and difference which encompass age, disability, social class, race/ethnicity, religion/spirituality, gender/sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity.
3. Participants will synthesize a foundational knowledge of components of multicultural education, including knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structures.

LT601: Clinical Concepts for Equitable Instructional Practice in the Classroom

- Luba Falk Feigenberg, Ed.D.
- Nadja N. Lopez, Ph.D.

Evidence-based prevention and intervention practices are needed in schools to improve school culture and address the social and emotional development of students and school staff. This course specifically addresses: the neuroscience of learning; how symptoms of mental illness impact learning; and best practices for equitable classroom instruction. The intersection of learning, behavioral health, and co-regulation will be deeply examined to discuss and practice classroom interventions that promote student learning and thriving.

Course Objectives:

1. Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of the various aspects of student mental health and its impact on learning and behavior in the classroom.
2. Participants will learn and apply practical strategies for managing student emotional challenges, fostering a restorative culture, and promoting a supportive learning environment.
3. Participants will develop skills to effectively engage and collaborate with families and communities, particularly those from underrepresented and diverse backgrounds.
4. Participants will enhance cultural competence and inclusivity in the classroom, addressing the needs of immigrant, refugee, and underrepresented students.
5. Participants will understand and apply trauma-informed educational practices to support students affected by trauma and other adverse experiences.
6. Participants will implement approaches to support students with diverse learning needs, including those with mental health disorders and other challenges.
7. Participants will be empowered to become agents of change in their schools, creating nurturing, equitable, and supportive spaces that enhance student well-being and academic success.

LT602: Inclusive Teacher Leadership

- Andrea Ellis, MA
- Luba Falk Feigenberg, Ed.D.
- Nadja N. Lopez, Ph.D.

This course focuses on building knowledge and skills to support teachers to be change agents within an ecological and systems-based perspective. The course draws from executive and leadership coaching, organizational and consulting psychology, and facilitation. Teachers will also learn skills and practices for presentation and public speaking.

Course Objectives:

1. Participants will examine an ecological systems framework and demonstrate how this relates to systems of power and privilege in their schools and districts.
2. Participants will examine the concept of change in systems and integrate strategies into their practice to facilitate systems change.
3. Participants will identify coaching and consultation models that will enable them to analyze current practices and formulate action steps to effect individual and systems change.
4. Participants will practice activities and approaches to communicate and collaborate with parents, key stakeholders, and other community partners.
5. Participants will create plans around to how effectively integrate these coaching and consultation skills into their strategic planning.

FP401, FP402: Practicum Courses

- Luba Falk Feigenberg, Ed.D.
- Nadja N. Lopez, Ph.D.

During practicum, participants will meet in their school-based teams to implement what they have learned in the classes into their work together and development of an action plan. The practicum also focuses on the processes of self-reflection and evaluation; skill building around specific programming; and observation, collaboration, and feedback.

Course Objectives:

1. Participants will practice the skills learned in their courses following specific activity assignments.
2. Participants will engage in self-reflection and document this process via journal entries and assignment forms.
3. Participants will work in cohort teams to build collaborative practices and develop an action plan.

Program Schedule

Orientation

Prior to classes beginning, students complete 2 hours of recorded orientation materials, including an overview of course content, expectations, and instructor introductions.

Fall 2026

Dates	Use of Self (3 credits)	Practicum I (3 credits)
Week of 8/24	Module 1	
Week of 8/31	Module 1	Cohort Meeting
Week of 9/7	Module 2	
Week of 9/14	Module 3	
Week of 9/21	Module 4: Day in Residence (9/19)	
Week of 9/28	Module 5	Cohort + Coach
Week of 10/5	Module 6	
Week of 10/12	Module 7	Cohort Meeting
Week of 10/19	Module 8	
Week of 10/26	Module 9	Cohort Meeting
Week of 11/2	Module 10	
Week of 11/9	Module 11	Cohort + Coach
Week of 11/16	Module 12	
Week of 11/23	<i>No classes – November break</i>	
Week of 11/30	Module 13	Cohort Meeting
Week of 12/7	Module 14: Day in Residence (12/11)	

Spring 2027

Dates	Clinical Concepts (4 credits)	Practicum I (3 credits)
Week of 1/11	Module 1	Cohort Meeting

Week of 1/18	Module 2	
Week of 1/25	Module 3: Day in Residence (1/29)	
Week of 2/1	Module 4	
Week of 2/8	Module 5	Cohort Meeting
Week of 2/15	<i>No classes – February break</i>	
Week of 2/22	Module 6	
Week of 3/1	Module 7	Cohort Meeting + Coach
Week of 3/8	Module 8	
Week of 3/15	Module 9	Cohort Meeting
Week of 3/22	Module 10	
Week of 3/29	Module 11	
Week of 4/5	Module 12	Cohort Meeting
Week of 4/12	Module 13	
Week of 4/19	<i>No classes – April break</i>	
Week of 4/26	Module 14	
Week of 5/3	Module 15: Day in Residence (5/7)	

Fall 2027 [August 23 – December 9]

Dates	Inclusive Teacher Leadership (2 credits)
Week of 8/23	Module 1
Week of 8/30	Module 2
Week of 9/6	Module 3
Week of 9/13	Module 4: Day in Residence (9/17)
Week of 9/20	Module 5
Week of 9/27	Module 6
Week of 10/4	Module 7
Week of 10/11	Module 8
Week of 10/18	Module 9
Week of 10/25	Module 10
Week of 11/1	Module 11
Week of 11/8	Module 12
Week of 11/15	Module 13
Week of 11/22	<i>No classes – November break</i>
Week of 11/29	Module 14
Week of 12/6	Module 15

Course Structure

Days in Residence

Days in Residence are held at William James College from 9am-4pm. All participants are expected to attend for the full day. There are five Days in Residence for the program:

- Friday, September 25, 2026
- Friday, December 11, 2026
- Friday, January 29, 2027
- Friday, May 7, 2027
- Friday, September 17, 2027

Asynchronous Coursework

Coursework requires 4-5 hours per week of participation. Each weekly module will consist of lectures, readings, and time spent working on a particular assignment. All materials relevant to each course are housed on Canvas, the learning management system used by William James College.

- *Lecture* – typically one hour total, divided into segments
- *Course Readings* – includes a variety of chapters, articles, videos, and podcasts. Readings are divided into two categories: required and recommended. Each course syllabus will have a complete listing of required readings. Additional recommended readings will be listed on the Canvas course page.
- *Discussion Boards* – structured opportunities for reflective practice. Reflection is a disciplined and rigorous way of thinking that emphasizes and facilitates an appreciation for the personal and intellectual growth of ourselves and others.
- *Mini-experiments* - assignments to try a new practice in your classroom or school. Specific instructions will be posted on Canvas for each assignment.

Practicum Requirements

- *In-person, On-site Cohort Meetings* – team meetings are a critical component of each practicum course. Teams will meet 6 times each semester (roughly every 2-3 weeks) for an hour. Twice each semester, Instructors from William James College will join the cohort to help facilitate the meeting and provide additional coaching and support. Please note teams are not restricted to the number of meetings indicated – if teams can meet more frequently, they are encouraged to do so.
- *Meeting Materials* – teams will submit materials that demonstrate the work the group is doing in and between meetings. For instance, teams will be expected to submit meeting agendas and notes on Canvas. Resources for all tools and structures will be shared as part of the course.

Graded Materials

Participants will receive individual letter grades for each of the three courses and for the two practica. Specifics about grading practices for each course are delineated in detail in each course syllabus. The instructor will share a list of assignments and the corresponding grading rubrics in the course syllabus. If any individual is having difficulty completing a course, we will follow the WJC protocol of completing a corrective action plan.

Mini-experiments

Each course has specific assignments created to help students develop practical materials and tools to use as part of their work toward integrating behavioral health and equity into their schools and districts. Course instructors will include all instructions and expectations of assignments and detailed grading rubrics in the course syllabi.

Reflection Posts

Reflection Posts that allow students the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and integrate and apply new theoretical knowledge to their practice. Instructors will offer feedback and questions for further reflection.

Self-assessments

At the beginning and end of each course, there will be a self-assessment to complete. These will focus on different aspects of adult social-emotional learning and other leadership competencies. End of semester reflections will focus on individual learning and growth.

Final Assignment & Presentation

The final assignment for the program is the culmination of each team's work over all the courses. Each cohort team will create a comprehensive action plan aimed at improving some aspects of behavioral health to help their school/district better prepare students for academic success. Cohorts will also prepare a presentation to share with their school and/or district leadership to report progress to date and present the team's action plan. The final Day in Residence will be spent preparing and practicing for these presentations. Instructors are available to attend district-based presentations as they are scheduled.