

Movie List for CASA Continuing Education with Optima Categories [Rev. 8/2020]

13 Reasons Why [*Optima: Mental Health Issues*] [Stars: Dylan Minnette, Katherine Langford, Christian Navarro] [TV Series 49 episodes and counting]

Follows teenager Clay Jensen, in his quest to uncover the story behind his classmate and crush, Hannah, and her decision to end her life. [from a Literary Novel see Reading List]

A Girl Like Her [*Optima: Communicating with Children and Families, Education, Mental Health Issues*] [Stars: Lexi Ainsworth, Hunter King, Jimmy Bennett] [1 hr 31 min]

Jessica Burns enlists the help of her best friend, Brian, in order to document the relentless harassment she has received from her former friend, Avery Keller, one of South Brookdale High School's most popular students.

A Million Little Pieces [*Optima: Substance Abuse*] [Stars: Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Billy Bob Thornton, Odessa Young] [1 hr 53 minutes]

A drug dependent young man faces his past and his inner demons after he is interned in an institution for addicted.

An American Crime [*Optima: Child Abuse and Neglect*] [Stars: Ellen Page, Hayley McFarland, Nick Searcy] [Run time: 1 hr 38 minutes]

The true story of suburban housewife Gertrude Baniszewski, who kept a teenage girl locked in the basement of her Indiana home during the 1960s.

Antwone Fisher [*Optima: Administration of the System, Child Abuse and Neglect, Cultural Competency, Independent Living and Emancipation*] [2hr]

Antwone Fisher, a young navy man, is forced to see a psychiatrist after a violent outburst against a fellow crewman. During the course of treatment a painful past is revealed and a new hope begins. [from Literary Novel *Finding Fish* see Reading List]

Bastard Out of Carolina [*Optima: Child Abuse and Neglect*] [Stars: Jennifer Jason Leigh, Ron Eldard, Glenn Headly] [Run time: 1 hr 38 minutes]

A mother and daughter find their lives adversely affected when a new man enters the picture. Will their family ever be what they expect?

Beautiful Boy [*Optima*: Substance Abuse, Family Strengths, Communication, and Reunification] [Stars: Steve Carell, Maura Tierney, Jack Dylan Grazer] [2 hr] Based on the best-selling pair of memoirs from father and son David and Nic Sheff, *Beautiful Boy* chronicles the heartbreaking and inspiring experience of survival, relapse and recovery in a family coping with addiction over many years.

Big Little Lies [*Optima*: Domestic Violence] [Stars: Reese Witherspoon, Nicole Kidman, Shailene Woodley] [Run time: 14 1 hr episodes] The apparently perfect lives of upper-class mothers, at a prestigious elementary school, unravel to the point of murder when a single-mother moves to their quaint Californian beach town.

The Burning Bed [*Optima*: Domestic Violence] [Stars: Farrah Fawcett, Paul Le Mat, Richard Masur] [Run time: 1 hr 35 minutes] An abused battered wife has had enough of husband beating up on her. Everywhere she turns for help, there's not much anyone will do. After he rapes her one night, she sets the bed on fire with him in it asleep.

Cake [*Optima*: Mental Illness, Substance Abuse] [Stars: Jennifer Aniston, Adriana Barraza, Anna Kendrick] [1 hr 43 minutes] The acerbic, hilarious Claire Bennett becomes fascinated by the suicide of a woman in her chronic pain support group. As she uncovers the details of Nina's suicide and develops a poignant relationship with Nina's husband, she also grapples with her own, very raw personal tragedy.

Carissa [*Optima*: Independent Life and Emancipation] [Stars: Ron Jenkins, Carissa Phelps, Roganne Wegermann] [23 minutes] Today, Carissa Phelps is earning a law degree and a business degree at UCLA. But when she was twelve, she was homeless and forced into prostitution in Fresno. [from Memoir on Reading List *Runaway Girl: Escaping Life on the Streets*]

Coach Carter [Optima: Education] [Stars: Samuel L. Jackson, Rick Gonzalez, Robert Richard] [2 hr 16 min] Controversy surrounds high school basketball coach Ken Carter after he benches his entire team for breaking their academic contract with him.

Congratulations, You're On Your Own: Life After Foster Care [Optima: Independent Living and Emancipation] [57 min] This documentary follow young adult going through the proves of finding their way after foster care. Through youth telling their stories, and also by hearing from professionals in the field, it explains how children enter the foster care system, what happens while they are there, and especially the hardships they face as they transition out of it.

A Cry for Help: The Tracey Thurman Story [*Optima*: Domestic Violence] [Stars: Nancy McKeon, Dale Midkiff, Graham Jarvis] [1h 36min] A victim of domestic violence winds up in an ongoing struggle to get the police to take her seriously, until the abuse escalates to the worst extreme.

Dangerous Minds [Optima: Education, Independent Living and Emancipation] [Stars: Michelle Pfeiffer, George Dzundza, Courtney B. Vance] [1 hr 39 min] An ex-Marine turned teacher struggles to connect with her students in an inner city school.

Domestic Violence [*Optima*: Domestic Violence] [Director: Frederick Wiseman/Documentary] [3 hrs 16 min]

Renowned documentarian Frederick Wiseman turns his observational camera on The Spring, a Florida shelter for battered women and children. For one-hundred and ninety-six minutes, Wiseman profiles the women and children that have been victim to domestic violence, showing them endure therapeutic, thoughtful lectures and learn from the tireless social workers employed at The Spring that their sanctuary has been found.

Domestic Violence 2 [*Optima*: Domestic Violence] [Director: Frederick Wiseman/Documentary][3 hrs 16 min]

The opening scene in this film is of an arrest in Hillsborough County Florida where a woman has scratched her husband while he was trying to restrain her from getting back in her car and leaving after an argument. The officers explain that she has committed a battery and thereby

earned herself an inescapable arrest and overnight stay in jail because by law they have no discretion. This sets the stage for two hours of court proceedings before three different judges, each trying to apply the Florida domestic violence laws. Though it gets repetitive, it also is fascinating to try to figure out what to do with such issues as restraining orders, parental visits, child support and punishment as each witness testifies, and to see how the judges react.

Fireflies in the Garden [*Optima: Communicating with Children and Families, Domestic Violence, Grief/Loss Effects of Child Development*] [Stars: Ryan Reynolds, Willem Dafoe, Emily Watson] [2 hrs] The Taylor family is devastated by an accident that takes place on the day their matriarch is due to graduate from college -- decades after leaving to raise her children.

Foster [*Optima: Administration of Child Welfare*] [*Documentary*][1 hr 53 min]
Oscar®-winning filmmakers Deborah Oppenheimer and Mark Jonathan Harris (Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport) reunite for a revealing first-hand look at the foster care system as seen through the eyes of those who know it best. With extraordinary access to the inner workings of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Oppenheimer and Harris go beyond the sensational headlines and stereotypes to take an unprecedented look at an often-misunderstood world and upend some of the most enduring myths about foster care and those involved in the system.

The Florida Project [*Optima: Child Abuse and Neglect, Cultural Competency*] [Stars: Brooklynn Prince, Bria Vinaite, Willem Dafoe] [1 hr 51 min] Set over one summer, the film follows precocious six-year-old Moonee as she courts mischief and adventure with her ragtag playmates and bonds with her rebellious but caring mother, all while living in the shadows of Walt Disney World.

Freedom Writers [*Optima: Child Abuse and Neglect, Domestic Violence, Education, Family Strengths, Preservation, Reunification, Independent Living and Emancipation*] [Stars: Hilary Swank, Imelda Staunton, Patrick Dempsey] [2 hrs 3 min] A young teacher inspires her class of at-risk students to learn tolerance, apply themselves and pursue education beyond high school.

Friday Night Lights Film [*Optima*: Domestic Violence, Family Strengths, Preservation, Reunification] [Stars: Billy Bob Thornton, Jay Hernandez, Derek Luke] [1 hr 58 min] Based on H.G. Bissinger's book, which profiled the economically depressed town of Odessa, Texas and their heroic high school football team, The Permian High Panthers.

Friday Night Lights TV show [*Optima*: Communicating with Children and Families, Domestic Violence, Education, Family Strengths, Preservation, Reunification] [Stars: Kyle Chandler, Connie Britton] [76 episodes] A drama that follows the lives of the Dillon Panthers, one of the nation's best high school football teams, and their head coach Eric Taylor.

Gimme Shelter [*Optima*: Child Abuse and Neglect] [Stars: Vanessa Hudgens, Rosario Dawson, Brendan Fraser] [1 hr 41 min] A pregnant teenager flees her abusive mother in search of her father, only to be rejected by her stepmother and forced to survive on the streets until a compassionate stranger offers a hopeful alternative.

Girl, Interrupted [Optima: Communicating with Children and Family, Mental Health][Stars: Winona Ryder, Angelina Jolie] [2hr 7 min]
Based on Susannah Kasen's best-selling memoir wherein Susannah finds a new perspective through a relationship with her fellow inpatient in a mental hospital.

The Glass Castle [*Optima*: Child Abuse and Neglect, Cultural Competency] [Stars: Brie Larson, Woody Harrelson, Naomi Watts] [2 hrs 7min] A young girl comes of age in a dysfunctional family of nonconformist nomads with a mother who's an eccentric artist and an alcoholic father who would stir the children's imagination with hope as a distraction to their poverty.

Gone Baby Gone [*Optima*: Child Abuse and Neglect][Stars: Morgan Freeman, Ed Harris, Casey Affleck] [1 hr 54 min]
Two Boston area detectives investigate a little girl's kidnapping, which ultimately turns into a crisis both professionally and personally.

The Heart is Deceitful above All Things [*Optima: Administration of Child Welfare, Child Abuse and Neglect, Cultural Competency, Domestic Violence, Mental Health, Substance Abuse*][Stars: Asia Argento, Dylan Sprouse, Cole Sprouse] [1 hr 38 min]
Seven-year-old Jeremiah is pulled from his foster home and thrown into a troubled life on the road with his teenage mother, Sarah.

I am Somebody's Child: The Regina Louise Story [*Optima: Administration of the Child Welfare, Child Abuse and Neglect*] [Stars: Ginnifer Goodwin, Angela Fairley, Sherri Saum] [1 hr 27 min]
Regina Louise, an abandoned black child, is placed in a home where she demonstrates anger issues. Jeanne Kerr, a white counselor, empathizes with her and they form a bond which leads to a petition for adoption. The home's director, a black woman, informs her that she will fight the petition, believing that a black child could not be raised by a white woman; the judge agrees. Regina is sent to a private institution and Jeanne's attempts to communicate with her are hindered. When Regina comes of age the institution releases her, with no financial or other support; however, they turn over all of Jeanne's letters which had been withheld from her. Regina pursues an education and begins a search for the woman she always thought of as her mother.

Instant Family [*Optima: Administration of Child Welfare, Child Abuse and Neglect, Communication with Children and Families, Family Strengths, Preservation, Reunification.*] [Stars: Mark Wahlberg, Rose Byrne, Isabela Merced] [1 hr 58 min]A couple find themselves in over their heads when they foster three children.

I, Tonya [*Optima: Child Abuse and Neglect, Domestic Violence, Mental Health Issues*] [Stars: Margot Robbie, Sebastian Stan, Allison Janney] [1 hr 59 min]Competitive ice skater Tonya Harding rises amongst the ranks at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships, but her future in the activity is thrown into doubt when her ex-husband intervenes.

Joe the King [Optima: *Child Abuse and Neglect, Cultural Competency*] [Stars: Noah Fleiss, Karen Young, Camryn Manheim] [1 hr 33 min] A disadvantaged, abused, neglected, exploited but basically decent kid slips into criminality while trying to cope with his harsh, inescapable reality.

Joker [Optima: *Child Abuse and Neglect, Cultural Competency, Grief/Loss Effects on Child Development, Mental Health*] [Stars: Joaquin Phoenix, Robert De Niro] [2 hr 2 min] In Gotham City, mentally troubled comedian Arthur Fleck is disregarded and mistreated by society. He then embarks on a downward spiral of revolution and bloody crime. This path brings him face-to-face with his alter-ego: the Joker.

The Journey of Grief [Optima: *Grief/Loss Effects of Child Development*] [1 hr 5min] Doug Manning's presentation about the grief journey captured in a personal one-on-one experience. Sit with Doug as he discusses the elements of the grief experience, the important aspects of a healthy approach to grieving and what grief companions can do to be a helpful part of the journey. A wonderful resource for groups, individuals, counselors, churches and funeral homes.

Just Ask My Children [Optima: *Administration of Child Welfare, Child Abuse and Neglect*] [Stars: Virginia Madsen, Jeffrey Nordling, Graham Beckel] [1 hr 31 min]
A couple is accused of sodomy and pedophilia by two little girls. Soon they find their beloved sons taken away from them and themselves thrown in jail.

The Kid with a Bike [Optima: *Child Abuse and Neglect*] [Stars: Thomas Doret, Cécile de France, Jérémie Renier] [1 hr 27 min]
Abandoned by his father, a young boy is left in a state-run youth farm. In a random act of kindness, the town hair-dresser agrees to foster him on week-ends.

King's Faith [Optima: *Communicating with Children and Families, Family Strengths, Preservation, Reunification*] [Stars: Crawford Wilson, Lynn Whitfield, James McDaniel] [1 hr 48 min]

When eighteen-year-old Brendan King attempts to leave his turbulent gang life behind him, his past continues to threaten his new-found faith, family, and future.

Magnolia [*Optima: Child Abuse and Neglect, Domestic Violence, Mental Health Issues*] [Stars: Tom Cruise, Jason Robards, Julianne Moore] [3 hrs 8 min]
An epic mosaic of interrelated characters in search of love, forgiveness, and meaning in the San Fernando Valley.

Martian Child [*Optima: Administration of Child Welfare*] [Stars: John Cusack, Amanda Peet, Bobby Coleman] [1 hr 46 min]
A science-fiction writer, recently widowed, considers whether to adopt a hyper-imaginative 6-year-old abandoned and socially rejected boy who says he's really from Mars.

Mockingbird Don't Sing [*Optima: Child Abuse and Neglect*] [Stars: Melissa Errico, Michael Lerner, Joe Regalbuto] [1 hr 38 min] Based on the actual events of one of the most horrific cases of child abuse ever to be documented, this haunting drama tells the tale of a young girl that was locked in a room for over 12 years.

Mystic River [*Optima: Child Abuse and Neglect, Domestic Violence, Grief/Loss Effects of Child Development, Mental Health*] [2h 17min] We bury our sins; we wash them clean. Academy Award winner Clint Eastwood directs Sean Penn and Tim Robbins in Oscar-winning performances in this tale of a seemingly senseless murder.

Nova "Addiction" [*Optima: Substance Abuse*][52 min] Discover how opioid addiction affects the brain and how evidence-based treatments are saving lives.

Oranges and Sunshine [*Optima: Administration of Child Welfare*] [Stars: Emily Watson, Aisling Loftus, Stuart Wolfenden] [1 hr 45 min]

Set in 1980s Nottingham, social worker Margaret Humphreys holds the British government accountable for child migration schemes and reunites the children involved -- now adults living mostly in Australia -- with their parents in Britain.

Postcard to Daddy (documentary) [*Optima: Child Abuse and Neglect*] [Stars: Margret Bartholomé, Anja Stock-Hüttl, Christian Stock] [1 hr 26 min] Subtitled. As a child, Michael Stock was sexually abused - by his own father. 25 years later he is still looking for inner peace. In conversations with his family and friends and his own reflections, he paints an ever clearer, if contradictory picture of what happened and of the consequences for each of the family members. Old family films seem to show a happy family - excerpts from Michael's first feature film hint at his extreme adult life, overshadowed by his lifelong trauma. Yet in spite of the intense drama, the film doesn't have an atmosphere of anger and hatred but rather a surprising air of hope and love of life. Michael's aim is not to accuse the "perpetrator" but to understand. In the end, he takes his video "Postcard" to his father. With the camera running, he confronts him with his past.

Precious [*Child Abuse and Neglect, Cultural Competency*][Stars: Gabourey Sidibe, Mo'Nique, Paula Patton] [1 hr 50 min]
In New York City's Harlem circa 1987, an overweight, abused, illiterate teen who is pregnant with her second child is invited to enroll in an alternative school in hopes that her life can head in a new direction. From the novel *Push* by Sapphire.

Radio Flyer [*Child Abuse and Neglect*] [Stars: Lorraine Bracco, John Heard, Adam Baldwin][1 hr 54 min]
A father recounts a dark period of his childhood when he and his little brother lived in the suburbs.

Room [Optima: Child Abuse and Neglect, Grief/Loss Effects on Child Development, Mental Health] [Stars: Brie Larson, Jacob Tremblay, Sean Bridgers] [1 hr 58 min] Held captive for 7 years

in an enclosed space, a woman and her young son finally gain their freedom, allowing the boy to experience the outside world for the first time.

Running with Scissors [Child Abuse and Neglect, Substance Abuse] [Stars: Joseph Cross, Annette Bening, Brian Cox] [1 hr 56 min]

Young Augusten Burroughs absorbs experiences that could make for a shocking memoir: the son of an alcoholic father and an unstable mother, he's handed off to his mother's therapist, Dr. Finch, and spends his adolescent years as a member of Finch's bizarre extended family.

The Savages [*Communicating with Children and Families, Family Strengths, Preservation, Reunification*] [Stars: Laura Linney, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Philip Bosco] [1 hr 54 min]

A sister and brother face the realities of familial responsibility as they begin to care for their ailing father.

Short Term 12 [*Administration of Child Welfare, Mental Health Issues*] [Stars: Brie Larson, Rami Malek, Kaitlyn Dever, John Gallagher Jr.] [1 hr 36 min]

A 20-something supervising staff member of a residential treatment facility navigates the troubled waters of that world alongside her co-worker and longtime boyfriend.

Sleepwalking [*Child Abuse and Neglect*] [Stars: Charlize Theron, Nick Stahl, AnnaSophia Robb] [1 hr 41 min] The drama follows a twelve-year-old girl's struggle to come to terms with her mother's abandonment.

Stages [Optima: Grief/Loss Effects of Child Development] [10min] After preparing an anniversary dinner for her boyfriend, Bethany comes to realize she must deal with her grief in her own way. A short film dealing with the stages of grief.

Stand and Deliver [Optima: Education, Independent Living and Emancipation] [Stars: Edward James Olmos, Estelle Harris, Mark Phelan] [1 hr 43 min] The story of Jaime Escalante, a high school teacher who successfully inspired his dropout prone students to learn calculus.

The Sweet Hereafter [Optima: Grief/Loss Effects of Child Development] [Stars Ian Holm, Bruce Greenwood, and Sarah Polley] [1h 52min]

A bus crash in a small town brings a lawyer to the town to defend the families, but he discovers that everything is not what it seems.

Sybil [*Child Abuse and Neglect, Mental Health Issues*] [Stars: Joanne Woodward, Sally Field, Brad Davis] [Miniseries 2 episodes] A young woman whose childhood was so harrowing to her that she developed sixteen different personalities is treated by a doctor.

Thirteen [Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse] [1 hr 40 min] [Stars: Evan Rachel Wood, Holly Hunter, Nikki Reed] A thirteen-year-old girl's relationship with her mother is put to the test as she discovers drugs, sex, and petty crime in the company of her cool but troubled best friend.

This Boy's Life [*Child Abuse and Neglect*] [Stars: Robert De Niro, Leonardo DiCaprio, Ellen Barkin] [1 hr 55 min] The story about the relationship between a rebellious 1950s teenager and his abusive stepfather, based on the memoirs of writer and literature Professor Tobias Wolff.

The Yarn Princess [*Administration of Child Welfare, Mental Health Issues*] [Stars: Jean Smart, Robert Pastorelli, Dennis Boutsikaris] [1 hr 40 min] Margaret, who has certain mental disabilities, struggles when her husband, Jake, is diagnosed with schizophrenia and the authorities wish to take her children away from her. She has to prove in a court of law that she is capable of taking care of her family.

Trust [*Child Abuse and Neglect*] [Stars: Clive Owen, Catherine Keener, Liana Liberato] [1 hr 46 min] A teenage girl is targeted by an online sexual predator.

Unbridled [Child Abuse and Neglect] [Stars: Eric Roberts, T.C. Stallings, Téa Mckay] [1 hr 55 min] Based on true to life stories at Equine Assisted Therapy centers including Corral Riding Center in North Carolina, UNBRIDLED tells a tremendous story of redemption and triumph, with a message of unconditional love, with teenage girls overcoming formidable obstacles and living a fulfilling life in spite of adverse circumstances. UNBRIDLED is a story that dives deep in the human heart,

and shines a light on the goodness and altruism of authentic people who view life as greater than themselves. UNBRIDLED is a true to life story that exposes the atrocities of abuse, neglect, and trauma and the healing and redemption experienced by girls and horses who have suffered the same types of abuse. UNBRIDLED centers around the life of 17-year-old Sarah Miller (Tea McKay) who has a secret: secret shame of being an ongoing victim and prisoner of human sex trafficking by her mother's (Dey Young) boyfriend Roger Donigal (Eric Roberts) until Sarah's future boyfriend Kenny Brachner (David Topp) teams up with Detective Mitchell Sangrin (T.C. Stallings, actor from War Room) on an attempt to foil the underground operation and set the captives (including Sarah) free.

White Oleander [Administration of Child Welfare, Child Abuse and Neglect] [Stars: Michelle Pfeiffer, Renée Zellweger, Robin Wright] [1 hr 49 min] A teenager journeys through a series of foster homes after her mother goes to prison for committing a crime of passion. [from Literary Novel see Reading List *White Oleander*]