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School Counseling at Hansen Elementary

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School Counseling at Hansen Elementary

Addi Seybert, Psychology Major



Introduction

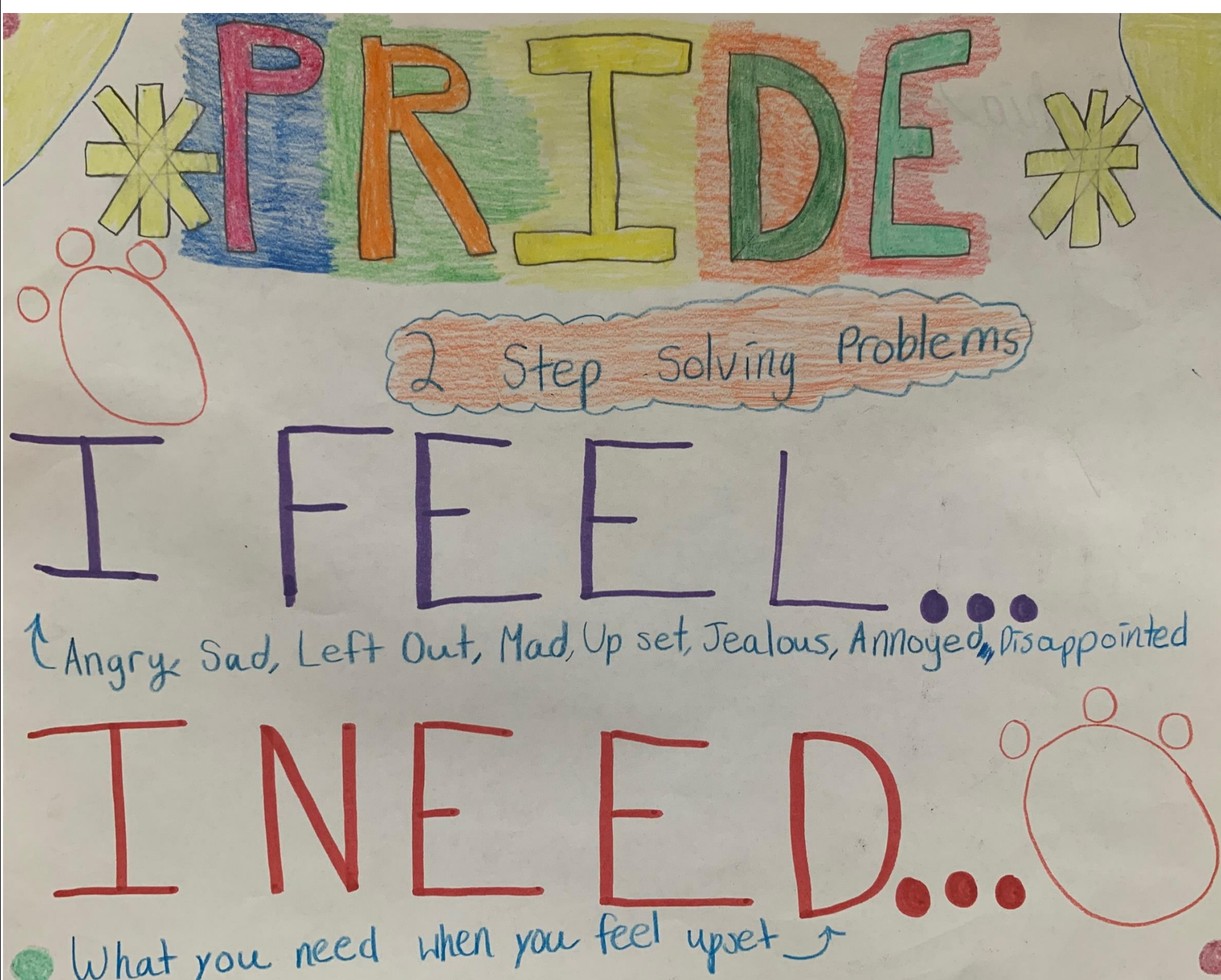
Over the course of the Spring 2020 semester, I partnered with Hansen Elementary to fulfill my Psychology Cooperative Education internship. While there, I worked closely with the school counselor (Jen Alexander) to teach children K-6 about things such as emotional well-being, conflict resolution, making goals, and building healthy, lasting relationships. As one of the undergraduate interns, I was able to meet with students one-on-one as well as assist faculty in classroom lessons. Aside from working with students, I was also able to research trauma-sensitivity and its importance in the education system. My role at Hansen Elementary has opened my eyes to the world of school counseling and has inspired me to pursue a career in the field.

Hansen's Mission

- A curriculum that is differentiated and engages all students in 21st century, real-world, meaningful, rigorous and relevant learning opportunities where all students have the opportunity to achieve at high levels.
- Students and staff that are goal oriented, innovative, collaborative, problem solvers, and critical thinkers.
- A safe, nurturing environment where all students are successful, well-rounded individuals who respect and accept diversity striving to be the best versions of themselves.

Hansen Pride

- Positive and Accountable
- Ready to Learn
- Insist on My Personal Best
- Dependable and Respectful
- Encourage Others to do the Right Thing

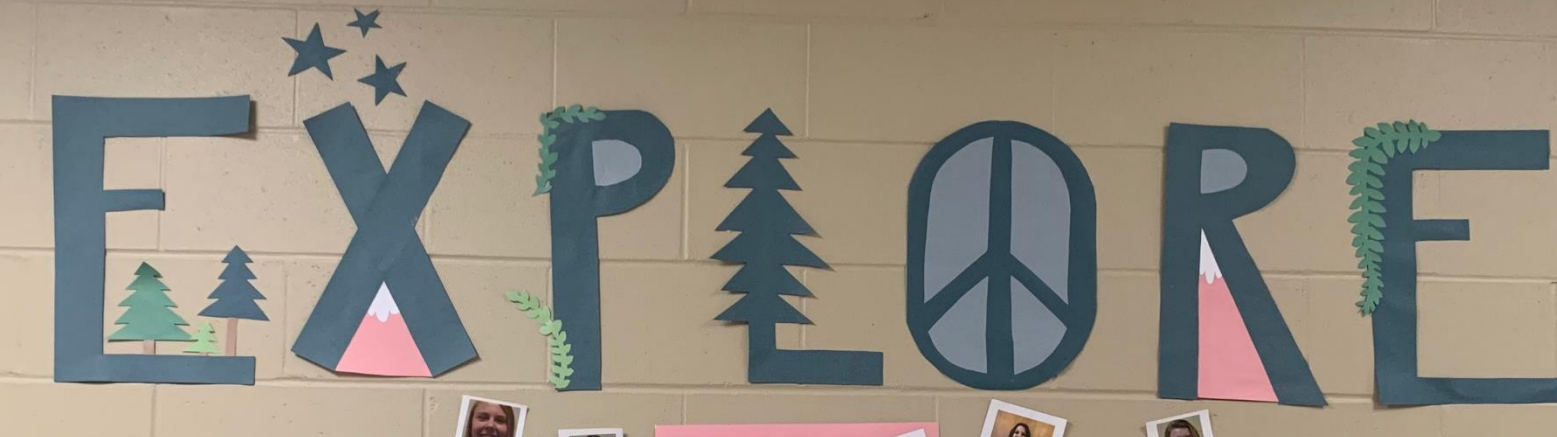


The Stats

- Unpaid undergraduate internship
- Approximately 7 hours a week for 15 weeks
- ~105 cumulative hours in total
- 9 students, K-6

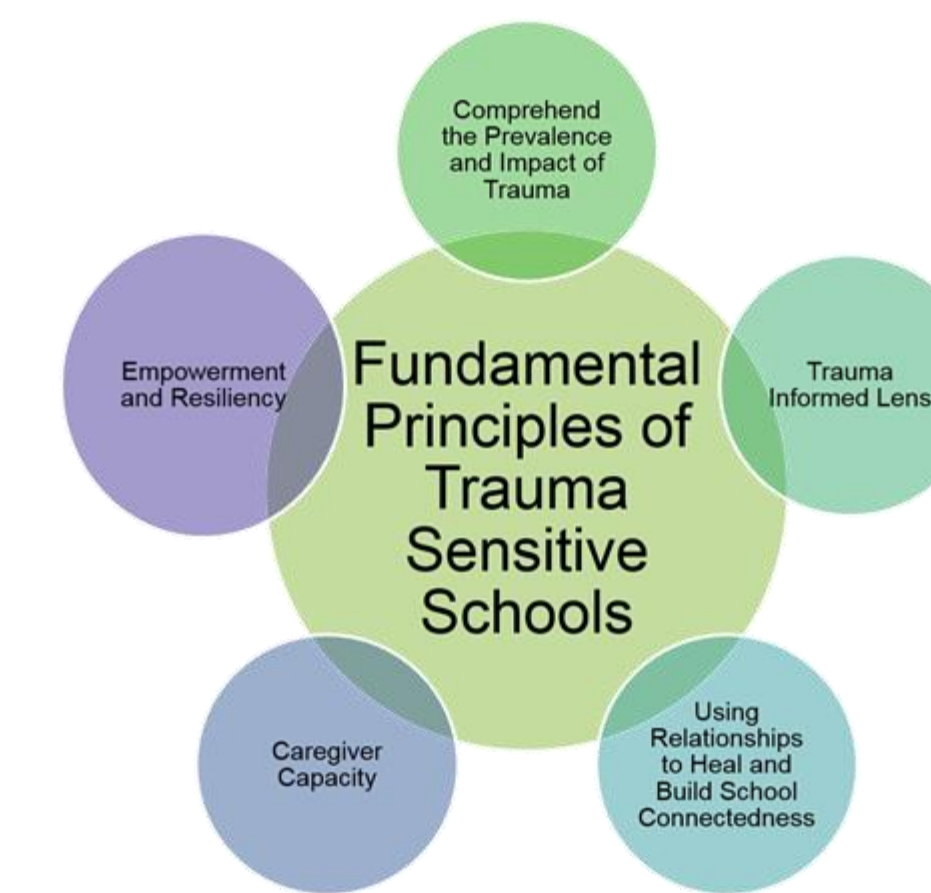
Position Responsibilities

- **Met one-on-one with assigned students**
 - General framework: before meeting, got a run-down of the child's situation (struggles, concerns, strengths) and discussed the best course of action
 - Course of action: What activity would be best for this child specifically?
 - Once baseline was established, I decided how to approach the situation and connect with the child
 - No formal training on how to meet with students
 - Met with 9 kids in total, ranging from 1st grade to 6th grade
 - Each session was different, as each child brings their own experiences and personalities to the table
- **Managed the daily schedule**
 - Ensured everything ran smoothly
 - Filled in weekly schedule
 - One-on-one meetings
 - Parent conferences
 - Classroom visits
 - Lunch and planning periods
- **Communicated with parents about child involvement**
 - Gained permission to work with their children
 - Emailed updates about their children
 - How the sessions were going, any concerns or questions, etc.
- **Sat in on classroom lessons**
 - Helped promote student engagement
 - Made "example projects" for reference
- **Maintained projects around the school**
 - Hung student artwork in the hallways
 - Updated the "New Friends" board with photos of new students and faculty
 - Ensured "River of Feelings" was intact
 - Unboxed food from the food bank and dispersed it to students in need
 - Copied, printed, and sent papers to the print center



Trauma-Sensitive Schools

- **Trauma** - "a distressing experience that threatens a person's actual safety or perceived sense of felt safety to such a degree that it exceeds an individual's capacity to cope in healthy ways"
- 1 in 4 students have been negatively impacted by trauma
- Experiencing such trauma as a child "may directly affect memory, language, emotional, and brain development which interfere with mastery and acquisition of new skills" (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2015)
- **Trauma-sensitive schools** - provide support to all students so they can learn and thrive in the classroom environment, instead of focusing on their trauma
 - Promote resilience and success
- Without a trauma-sensitive approach, students are at risk of poor academic performance and increased potential for future absenteeism and drop-outs



STRIVE Framework

- **Supportive Trauma Interventions for Educators (STRIVE) Framework**
 - Emphasizes the importance of...
 - Responsive adults
 - Children's ability to have choices and self-regulate
 - An environment that encourages safety and trust
 - Based on resiliency instead of risk factors
 - 3 levels of intervention
 - The individual student
 - The teacher
 - The school as a whole
 - Core principles
 - Increasing teachers' understanding and awareness of trauma
 - Providing teachers with concrete strategies and interventions for their classrooms
 - Improving young children's ability to access the curriculum
 - Serves as a much-needed guideline for schools to follow when implementing trauma-sensitivity.
 - It is important for educators to be able to recognize triggers and promote regulation within their classrooms



What I Learned

This internship has taught me how much I truly love working with children. Having a role in instilling lifelong skills, such as communication or maintaining relationships, is so rewarding. Thanks to my experience at Hansen, I have become much more informed on what it means to be trauma-sensitive. All children deserve the chance to succeed, no matter their backgrounds or past experiences. Likewise, no child should have to worry about dealing with their trauma alone. Schools are a safe space for so many kids, and therefore I hope to advocate for more schools to become trauma-sensitive. I also intend to further my experience in the psychological field by pursuing a master's degree in school counseling. This internship has truly been the foundation of my future career, and I cannot wait to get started.



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