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### School Counseling at Cedar Falls High School

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# School Counseling Internship at Cedar Falls High

Chloe Thostenson

Psychology Major, Family Studies and Mental Health Minors



## Introduction

Mission for Cedar Falls High School:

- “Educating each student to be a lifelong learner and a caring, responsible citizen”.
- Andrew Eisenman, the counselor who I job shadowed, introduced me as an “intern completing a cooperative education course”.



## Programs

- APECS: credit recovery program that is sped up and is the last option
- CAPS (Center for Advanced Professional Studies)
- Power Hour: time set aside for mental health projects and presentations
- PowerSchool: program that helps with scheduling classes
- Schedulicity: helps set up calendar availability for the students
- Skills: special needs program which focuses on goals and management with extra support system

## Plans

- IEP: Individualized Education Program which includes services for unique disabilities
- 504 plan: designed to help and ensure and protect student’s physical and mental impairments

## Staff I Worked With

- Lindsey Spears: Associate Principal
- Erin Gardner: School Counselor (A-E)
- Andrew Eisenman: School Counselor (F-K)
- Susan Langan: School Counselor (L-R)
- Carrie Dieken (R-Z)
- Tracy Javellana: School Counseling Secretary
- Kristin Urbanek: Instructional Coach



## Methods Learned

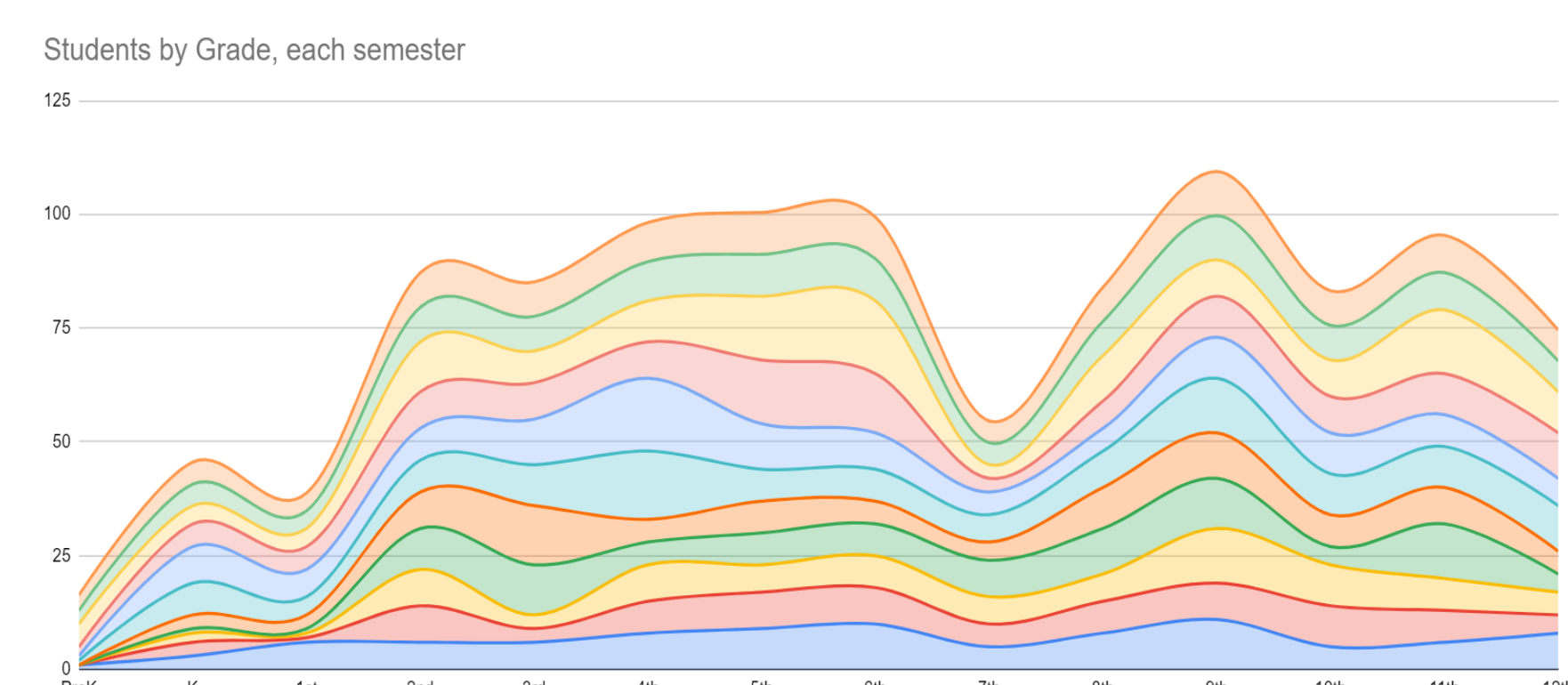
Mr. Eisenman gave me tips on how to talk to the students in a supportive manner. For instance, when talking to students about trauma, restating their issue/topic, talking about the strengths, and using phrases such as “tell me more about that” can be helpful in keeping the conversation going and creating a healthy environment. Moreover, I also learned to avoid using the word “sorry” as it has a way of taking away ownership for their trauma and cutting the conversation short.

## Connections to Psychology

A concept I was able to apply from Psychology is learned helplessness, which is a mental state that is rooted through repeated aversive stimuli. Effects of such helplessness can lead to a decline in efforts to try again, a pessimistic mindset, and even depressive reactions with learning how to cope in a positive manner. Many students coming from traumatic homes and experiences have difficulty getting back in the groove of things and need that extra support from the school, whether it be from their teachers, counselors, and specialized programs.

## My Duties

- Sitting in on weekly meetings with the counselors
- Helping students with mental health check-ins and schedules.
- Giving advice to students for their “after high school” plan sheets and creating instructional presentations.
- Meeting with parents and their children about attendance issues and/or “at risk” students.
- Offering possible alterations to increase their attendance through IEP’s, 504 plans, SKILLS, and/or APECS
- Organizing the high school’s mental health reports dating back to 2016 for the Black Hawk Mental Health Center. These yearly reports will be helpful in foreseeing if we need any additional counselors for the increase in upcoming students through utilizing the trends.
- Here are one of the graphs I created that represents the students who used the mental health services at CFHS as well as their grade level:



## Sleep and Depression

Depression is a well-known mental health issue that dramatically impacts various age groups. Many students at Cedar Falls High School had issues with attendance purely based on not getting enough sleep and/or issues with mental health. While there are a multitude of factors for the root of depression, the following studies aim to test the external factors, specifically the sleeping patterns of adolescents and how they affect depression.

Roberts et al. (2014) examined sleep deprivation in relation to depression with a group of participants ranging from 11 to 17 years. The researchers measured depression through both the “DSM-IV criteria” and the “National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children, Version IV (DISC-IV)”. Sleep deprivation was recorded through various sleep questionnaires, especially administered through the “SleepEVAL” (short sleep was considered to be less than 6 hours for either just weeknights or both weekend and weeknight). Both variables were examined through two waves. This research found a correlation between sleep deprivation and an increase in depressive symptoms by a factor of more than 3 in reference to their computed graphs.

Another study recorded by Orchard et al. (2020) also assessed whether sleep deprivation has an effect on depressive symptoms through an “Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children” (ALSPAC) that was used with children born in 1991-1992. Participants were grouped through mental health criteria (independent variable): no diagnosis of anxiety or depression, one or more anxiety disorders, and a met diagnostic criteria for depression. The dependent variables were, “...sleep onset time and wake-up time on school days and weekends, total sleep time on school days and weekends, and chronotype” (Orchard et al., 2020). A multivariate analysis of variance was then used to create a cross-sectional study to compare the participants. The study found that, “Adolescents reported more difficulty getting up on school days if they were depressed (35% reported that it was ‘hard’ to get up) or anxious (31% reported that it was ‘hard’ to get up), compared to adolescents with no anxiety/depression (18% reported that it was ‘hard’ to get up)” (Orchard et al., 2020)



## Future Career Goals

My next step in my education is to go to the University of Iowa for its graduate clinical science program. I am also considering getting my Ph.D. and specializing in another clinical psychology program but am planning on finalizing a decision or pursuing it near the end of my master's. I’m still open to career opportunities and have considered the following:

- Masters:
  - Industrial and organizational psychologist
  - Mental health therapist
  - Counseling psychologist
- Ph.D.
  - Clinical psychologist
  - School psychologist

## Picture with CFHS Students



## Advice to Future Interns

Bring a notebook , a pencil, and a positive mindset. This was the best way to stay focused and keep track of all of the acronyms and programs as well as the students’ names to become more personable! Also try to be open to new experiences and work field opportunities!

## Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Mr. Eisenman, Dr. Carolyn Hildebrandt, and the staff of Cedar Falls High School for this opportunity! I have learned so much already and am thankful for the opportunity to explore different career options.

## References

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