Middle School Counseling

A majority of the counseling I observed for middle school aged students focused on conflict resolution. Examples of this included friendship difficulties, bullying incidents, and issues with peers. Part of the school counseling role at this school is to identify students who qualify for ADSIS services. ADSIS stands for Alternative Delivery of Specialized Instructional Services and is for students who need extra academic supports in a specific subject area or students who need specific behavioral supports.

Character Education

One of my favorite parts of my internship was helping teacher character building lessons to classes of 7th and 8th graders. Each week one lesson was taught to an 8th grade class at the Caledonia Middle School, one was taught at St. John's Lutheran school, and one was taught at St. Mary's Catholic school. Topics of these lessons included leadership, active listening skills, career exploration, and other topics teaching middle school students how to develop and build character. Each lesson was laid out on a website called Character Strong. Most of these lessons included videos of real-world applications as well as activities to practice the skills as a class.

Caledonia Middle School/High School

I completed my internship through the psychology department at Winona State University. The site I was placed at was Caledonia Middle School/High School and I worked under the supervision of school counselor Brent Schroeder. Caledonia is a small town in southeast Minnesota. The middle school and high school are in the same building but in separate wings. The high school has 283 total students, and the middle school has 156.

Through this internship experience I was able to learn counseling techniques for individuals and groups of students, help teach character development lessons, attend meetings, learn what goes on behind the scenes in school counseling and explore whether this career path is right for me.

Integrating Psychological Science and Internship

In psychology, Albert Bandura’s Social Learning Theory tells us that we learn behaviors by observing and imitating the behaviors of others.

In middle school and high school, peers often have the most influence on each other’s behaviors. Students often give in to peer pressure and follow the actions of their friends, whether those actions are positive or negative. A good example of positive influence is when students join clubs or sports teams at school. This is a positive environment where students can learn from positive role models like older students and coaches. However, students can often fall into the wrong friend groups and engage in behaviors they otherwise wouldn’t have. An example of this is when a group of students were caught vaping in one of the high school bathrooms. They learned this negative behavior from their friends. Social learning can also happen by observing parents. When students have parent and/or other adults in their life that encourage them to put effort into school and get involved, they are more likely to do so.

School Counseling Psychology Internship

Sarah Gathje
Winona State University

High School Counseling

Most of the high school counseling focused on academics and college or post-high school preparation. However, some students came in for counseling about issues with family and peers. All juniors and seniors had to come in for an interview about their progress in their classes and plan for post-high school. Younger students came in to plan out their class schedules for next year. A unique circumstance I encountered was creating a crisis plan for a student who was having thoughts of suicide.

Professional Development

I was able to attend several meetings with counselors and staff from other schools around the area. Counselor Collaborative meetings with school counselors and social workers from Houston County were an opportunity to discuss various topics and issues happening across districts and gave staff an opportunity to collaborate and ask for advice from each other. PLCs (professional learning communities) give teachers and staff an opportunity to share ideas and collaborate about events within the school. The Spring School Counselor Workshop was held at UWL and gave high school counselors information for students about the college and allowed counselors to develop connections.

Character Strong

THE SEVEN-HAP LEADERSHIP TRIANGLE

LEADERSHIP

INFLUENCE

SERVICE & SACRIFICE

LOVE

Builds

Ears

Requires

Wax

Select

Attention

Retention

Motor

reproduction

Motivation

Observe

Analyze

Problem Solving

Science

Math

Outdoors

Animals

Hands on

Creativity

Music

Drama

Design

Self expression

Data

Procedures

Studied

Detail

Lead

Decisions

Action

Business

Risk taking

Persuade

Communicate

Service

Helping

Culpe

ENTREPRENEUR

INVESTIGATIVE

ARTISTIC