

SURVIVING AND THRIVING AS A SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

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Overview



"OK, I'm now going to read out loud every single slide to you, word for word, until you all wish you'd just die."

School Psychologists



What my friends think I do



What my mom thinks I do



What society thinks I do



What I think I do



What the school thinks I do



What I actually do

What are Your Top Job Challenges?

School Psychologists



Fall

Spring

Best Practices and Reality...

"Vera Wang"

- NASP best practices
- Graduate school learning
- Textbook information
- Research
- Ideal conditions

"Simply Vera"

- NASP best practices *under the circumstances*
- Application of grad school, text books, and research to reality
- Does not sacrifice quality or ethics

Learning Objectives & Agenda

- 1) Learn how to successfully navigate large caseloads and streamline workflow in the assessment process (90 mins)
- 2) Learn practical strategies for improving prevention and intervention service delivery at school sites using consultation skills. (90 mins)

LUNCH 12-1

- 3) Obtain practical tips for challenging individual, group, or crisis counseling situations (90 mins)
 - 4) Develop strategies and methods for preventing burnout and improving job satisfaction (60 mins)
- CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND QUESTIONS (15 mins)

ASSESSMENT

Streamlining your workflow

Practical Strategies for Your Role in Assessment

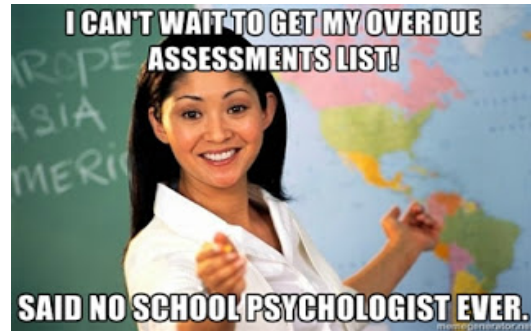
• Common Challenges:

- High caseload
- Juggling multiple school sites
- Time management
- Coordinating multiple roles and getting derailed from your plans for the day
- Litigious parents and advocates
- Inappropriate referrals
- Having to write reports at home
- Others?

Practical Strategies for Assessment

- 1) Organizing your caseload
- 2) Planning your daily and weekly schedule
- 3) Tips for effective report writing

Organizing Your Caseload



Organizing Your Caseload

- AT THE BEGINNING OF YEAR:
- Develop a Master Assessment Log (Excel)
 - Student name, DOB, School, Date AP signed, Due Date, Type of assessment, eligibility, date IEP held, outcome, etc.
 - Sort by due date or school, then due date
 - Keep for your reference

Organizing Your Caseload

- Make Your Yearly Assessment Calendar
 - Master Triennial Calendar
 - Check for accuracy of logs
 - Reconcile due dates with special edu staff and move triennial to annual date
 - Move up triennials during slower months
 - Try to clear April and May from tris to make way for inevitable flood of initials, mani-demis
 - You can add initials to this master list

Last Name	First Name	DOB	School	Request Received (Initials)	AP Sent	60 Days/Tri	Type of	Date IEP notice	IEP Held	Notes
Jenkins	Joe	6/6/00	Elementary Happy	9/9/15	9/10/15	9/15/15	10/19/15	Initial	SLD/OHI	10/5/15 10/15/15 Parent no show, Rescheduled
Smith	Sally	5/5/00	Happy Middle	N/A	9/10/15		10/7/15	TRI	ED	Sent AP 9/10/15, called parent 9/20/15, resent AP 9/20/15
McFly	Marty	8/8/00	Happy High	9/9/15	9/10/15	9/11/15	10/19/15	Autism		Attempted test dates: 9/11/15; 9/13/15

Overdue	September	October
Harry Jenkins (Elem)	9/12: Steven Ellison (Middle)	10/1: Judy McAllister (Middle)
Javen Smith (High)	9/13: Cosme Martinez (Middle)	10/5: Leigh Lamont (Elem)
	9/15: Sebastian Ratigan (Elem)	10/6: Amber Jones (Elem)
		10/22: Karen McGea (High)
November	December	January
	12/8: Beth Tenneson (High)	1/5: Sabrina Gonzales (High)
	12/9: Mary Brookdale (Elem)	1/7: Monica Almaguel (Elem)
	12/12: Victor Martinez (High)	1/10: DeAngelo Jones (Middle)
February	March	April
John Roscoe (Middle)	3/3: Samantha Hoyt (Elem)	4/1: Esmeralda Yee (Middle)
	3/5: Jack Banks (High)	4/4: Diego Vasquez (High)
	3/7: Allie Murphy (Middle)	4/6: Marquez Baily (High)
	3/14: Dalia Martinez (Middle)	4/8: LaShandra Smith (High)
		4/30: George Lee (Elem)
May	June	July/August
Oliver Meyers (Elem)	6/4: Ava Banks (Elem)	
	6/7: Dylan Ruff (Middle)	

Organizing Your Caseload

- IN THE SPRING
 - Prepare yourself for initial referrals that will come around Spring Break
 - Do a February check-in with intervention team about students who have had 2 or 3 interventions meetings.
 - Around Spring Break, distribute research on retention from NASP website

Planning Your Week and Days

- Number one trait of a successful school psychologist is....
- Plan by the week, not the day
- Plan it out on Friday afternoons or first thing Monday
- Organize your weekly to do list by school sites plus administrative tasks "other"
- Within each school site, put assessment role first, then add category for "other"

Middle SchoolAssessment:

- 1) Harry J. (TRI overdue) – observe, background hx, DAS-II, NEPSY-2
- 2) Sebastian R. (TRI due 9/15)- observe, background hx, BASC-3, WISC-V

Other:

- 1) Check in with Darius
- 2) Observe Michaela in Science
- 3) Counseling—Jim 10:30 Monday

High SchoolAssessment

Karen M. (TRI, due 10/22). Review prior testing to see if a review or full evaluation needed

Other:

- 1) Meet with counselor re: Group Therapy referrals
- 2) Check in with Dimitri re: crisis at home
- 3) Consult with Beth T.'s special education teacher and parent to see if we can move up triennial from December to November.

Office Work/Administrative Tasks

- 1) Turn in timesheet by 9/15
- 2) Get protocols: VMI-6, BASC in Spanish, more WISC-V coding sheets
- 3) Enter new case management data on Excel spreadsheet

Planning Your Day

- Spend first 20 minutes planning your day
- Add new to-dos when you arrive in the morning
- Highlight top 3 things you must accomplish
- FIND YOUR SACRED TWO HOURS! “I should be testing or writing”
- Find a hiding spot

Middle SchoolAssessment:

- 1) Harry J. (TRI overdue) – observe, write background hx, DAS-II, NEPSY-2
- 2) Sebastian R. (TRI due 9/15)- observe, write background hx, BASC, WISC-V

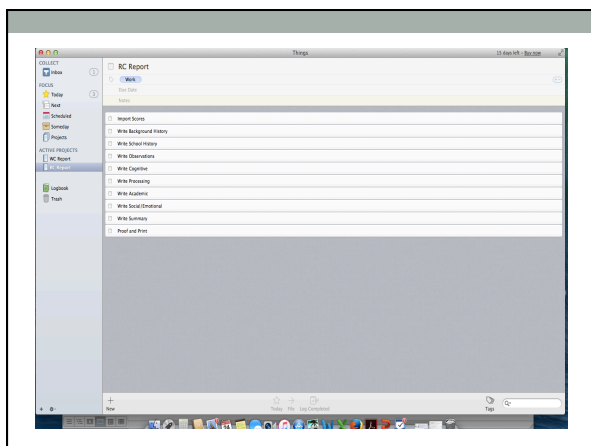
Other:

- 1) Check in with Darius
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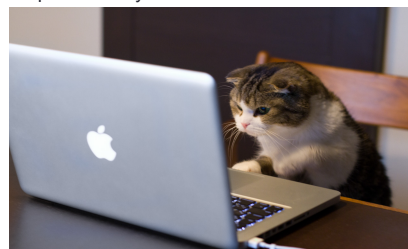
Electronic Options for Scheduling

- Google Cal, Outlook, iCal (sync with other key IEP members)
- Host assessment schedule info on Google Drive (with initials for confidentiality)
- Calify (integrates calendars, open consultation times)
- Doodle (scheduling meetings)
- “Things” for iProducts
- Others?



Report Writing Tips

- From a student, when asked what a school psychologist does: "A School Psychologist is someone who types on the computer all day" ☺



Report Writing Tips

- Deciding if it's a Vera Wang or Simply Vera report
- Get great templates from colleagues
- Make a blank scores template
- Make a recommendations template
- Write up background information first—can guide your test selection

Report Writing Tips

- Write up test observations right after first testing session
- For triennials, write "See prior report dated M/YY for detailed background hx" and provide only updated information
- Agree to X amount of take home reports per semester, after that, talk to your supervisor
- OTHERS???

Other Assessment Tips

- Keep track of where you are with each assessment with a filing system by “stage of assessment”
- Color code each school site with folders
- Break down Assessment writing to sections and “chip away” each day
- Or, use one day a week for report writing
- Use the 30/30 App to stay on task with report writing and learn time estimation skills

Oprah Giveaway Time!

- Post a tip about streamlining workflow on Facebook page at www.facebook.com/schoolpsych “Notes From the School Psychologist” Page
- Or on Twitter [@studentsgrow](https://twitter.com/studentsgrow)
- Enters you in the giveaway

Share, Stop, and Jot

- Things to try on Monday to streamline workflow and/or write quality reports:

MORNING BREAK

Return in 30 minutes

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Tips for effective consultation

Practical Strategies for Prevention and Intervention Using Consultation Skills

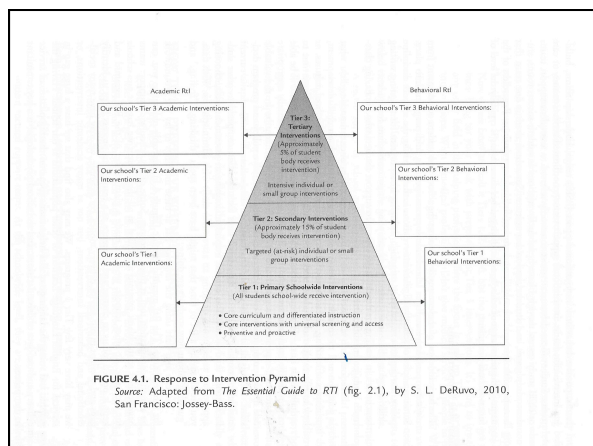


How to be preventative when you have no time!

- Sit in on a leadership or school-wide support team meeting once a month
- Be an active member of your student-focused support team (e.g. SST, Rtl)
- Improve your consultation skills to get others to put on preventative lenses

School-wide Teams

- Different school sites have different teams: Rtl Teams, Coordinated Services Teams, Leadership Teams, Discipline Teams, etc.
- Unit of analysis is the school site, not an individual student
- Keep focus on the ecosystem and big picture
- Your role is as a champion for developmentally appropriate practice and data-based decision making
- Identify service gaps for groups of students (e.g. ELLS, certain ethnic groups)
- Infuse language of Rtl and prevention into discussions



Individual Support Teams (SSTs)

- Attend as many as humanly possible.
- Role is consultative, wear your child development and data guru hats
- Help team understand and subscribe to the “mismatch model”—what can we change in the environment, curriculum, or instruction to help versus the “labeling model”
- When special edu comes up prematurely, ask, “If we had a label for the child’s challenges, would it change the intervention?”

Individual Support Teams (SSTs)

- With every no, offer a yes.
- Focus on the student’s strengths
 - Every child is someone’s baby
 - Offer to find more strengths (www.authenticchappiness.sas.upenn.edu)
- If your SST team isn’t working, troubleshoot
 - Tier 1 gaps
 - Tier 2 gaps (Not enough good interventions or special edu is the only game in town)
 - Mindset of team of SST as a “hoop” to jump through

Tips for Effective Consultation: Change the Lens

- Teacher wants kid assessed for special education because he is acting out in class, throwing objects, cursing at the teacher, spitting, etc. He is surely ED! What are some things the teacher might say?

He does X, Y, and Z [bad things] all the time!
 He is out of control, he cannot be in my classroom
 Nothing I do works, I’ve tried everything

Tips for Effective Consultation

- Build relationships with staff to reduce resistance to consultation
- Keep focus on the child
- If teacher is anxious about being judged, or has low confidence, downplay your role as expert and approach things as an “experiment”
- Be “Wonder-ful”

Tips for Effective Consultation

- Bring the global to the specific
- For behavioral consultation, offer to visit classroom before giving concrete suggestions
- For academic consultation, offer to look over child’s data with teacher

Negative Ned or Naysayer Nancy

- Volunteer to play the role of a teacher who is fed up with a kid?

Oprah Giveaway Time

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Share, Stop, and Jot

- Things to try on Monday for intervention/prevention for effective consultation :

LUNCH BREAK!

Whewwwwww!
Return in one hour please!

COUNSELING

Tips for individual, group, and crisis counseling

Practical Strategies for Counseling

- Types of counseling you may do as a school psychologist:
 - Individual weekly
 - Groups
 - Crisis (individual and group)
 - "Check in" counseling
 - Coaching/psychoeducation
- Types of approaches you may use:
 - Psychodynamic
 - Play-based
 - Cognitive Behavioral (CBT)
 - Solution Focused (SF)



The Blended Approach: Psychodynamic

- You can use principles of psychodynamic therapy without doing lengthy psychoanalysis, using the following techniques:
 - The relationship is the therapeutic element
 - Understand transference and countertransference
 - Non-judgmental observations through the "Notice and explore" technique
 - Good for truant, neglected, and disconnected students
 - You can use this approach to lay the groundwork for other types of therapy techniques later (CBT, CoProSo, SF)

The Blended Approach: Play Therapy

• "We can be sure that all the happenings, pleasant or unpleasant, in the child's life will have *repercussions* on her *dolls*." --Piaget



Infusing Play and Art Therapy into Counseling and Assessment

- Make a makeshift sandtray and include family and school figures (even better to get a schoolhouse)
- Buy a few interactive games (chess, checkers, Uno, Candyland, Jenga)
- Have art supplies handy (making books, Kinetic-School-Drawing)

Play Therapy Basics

- Children's language is play
- Nondirective
- Psychodynamic
- Mirroring and not judging
- Especially great for kids under 8 and kids with language processing difficulties

Infusing Play and Art Therapy into Counseling and Assessment

- Puppets for role play
- Use play and art as a reward at the end of assessment or as a break
- Don't assume middle and high schoolers aren't interested in play (may be more art-based and game-based than free play)

CBT Basics

- Your thoughts control your feelings
- "Your brain believes what you tell it"
- You can "catch" your thoughts
- Be a "thought detective"
- Identify core beliefs and chip away by challenging thoughts

Some favorite CBT Activities

- Rainbow (To counteract black and white thinking, e.g. "Worst Mom in the world")
- Crystal Balls (anxiety and negative predictions)
- Feeling Thermometers
- Coping Cat and PANDY for depression and anxiety (simple drawings of animals with thought bubbles and accompanying feeling)
- Thought records (Event, Thought, Feeling, Strength of Feeling, Replacement Thought, Feeling, Strength of Feeling)

The Blended Approach: Solution Focused Therapy

- Focuses on present and helps students think of realistic solutions to problems
- The Miracle question
- Times when the problem is not there (the power of “sometimes”)
- Visualization of the “Best Student”
- Being the “Boss” (“If I am not the boss of X, someone else will be, and I probably won’t like it”)

A Word about Documentation

- Goals page and “Top Secret” stamp
- “SOAP” Notes
- Keep your records secure and for 7 years past the child’s 18th birthday (or in accordance with your state’s law and/or district’s procedures)
- Document CPS calls

Group Counseling

- Conduct needs assessment
- Decide what type of group to run (problem based, resilience based, curriculum based package, open-ended “process” group)
- Decide who is in your group (don’t form a gang!)
- Try to find a co-facilitator
- Anticipate “messiness” – kids want to drop out, group members ganging up on others, group out of control, someone leaves without permission, group member does not participate.

Crisis Counseling

- Prepare for crisis with your principals and/or crisis teams
- Types of crises—individual and school-wide
- Common individual crises—danger to self, danger to others
- School wide crises—natural disasters, death of student, teacher or family member
- Understand your role on the crisis team before the crisis!

Individual Crisis Counseling and Check ins

- Individual trauma
- Danger to Self
- Danger to Others

Individual Crisis

- You may be asked to pull out a kid to check in with him or her (e.g. Child experienced personal trauma, death, witnessing violence, community crisis that may trigger a previous trauma)
 - Play or talk
 - Acknowledge wherever kid is at emotionally
 - Psychoeducation about trauma reactions (whatever you are feeling is okay)
 - Triage support

Danger to Self

- Four areas of assessment:
 - Current status (I want to talk to you today because [description]. Tell me more about that.)
 - Prior status/attempts (Have you thought about hurting yourself before?)
 - Prior attempts (Have you ever tried to hurt yourself?)
 - Current plan/access (Do you have a plan? Have you thought about how you might do it?)
- Follow up
 - Document (form 11.1 in SPSPG)
 - Consult with principal, supervisor, child crisis about next steps (hospitalization, contact to parents, etc.)

Danger to Others

- Three areas of assessment
 - Information about threat
 - Context of threat
 - Current plan and intended victims
- Follow Up
 - Document (form 11.2 SPSPG)
 - Consult with principal/supervisor/law enforcement about threat assessment
 - Contact parents

Coaching/Psychoeducation

- Weekly check-ins as a part of behavior support plan
 - Check in/Check Out rewards
 - Homework checks
 - Morning mood check in

Coaching/Psychoeducation

- Teaching child or group of children about disability or coping strategy
 - Learning differences
 - Executive functioning skills
 - Self-advocacy training
 - Social-emotional learning

Oprah Giveaway Time

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Share, Stop, and Jot

- Things to try on Monday for counseling:

BREAKY BREAK

Return in 30 minutes

SELF CARE

Strategies for stress management

Stress and School Psychology

- We are experts in teaching others self care and stress management, but often fail to apply the principles to ourselves!
- Put your oxygen mask on before helping others...
 - But what happens when you have a “plane” full of people to help and not enough time, energy, or resources???

Techniques for Stress Management

- Happiness Research
 - Mindfulness
 - Resilience to Stress
- Flocking
- Creating healthy boundaries
- The long view...what to do when you've lost your passion for the job

Happiness Research

- Greater Good Science Center in Berkeley
<http://ggia.berkeley.edu>
- Awe
- Compassion
- Connection
- Empathy
- Forgiveness
- Gratitude
- Happiness
- Kindness
- **Mindfulness**
- Optimism
- **Resilience to Stress**
- Self-Compassion

Mindfulness



Mindfulness for School Psychologists

- Taking a few relaxation moments during the day increases your dopamine
- Take lunch and don't eat in toxic teacher's lounges!
 - Mindful eating
- Visit a Kindergarten class or the class of an inspiring teacher
- After work, have an unwinding ritual (exercise—go to the gym, walk your dog, have a cup of tea, watch a mindless tv show, etc.)

Mindfulness Activities

- Body Scan Meditation
- Mindful Breathing
- Compassion Meditation
- Savoring Walk
- Walking Meditation
- Self-Compassion Break
- How would you treat a friend?

Mindfulness Apps

- Breathe2Relax
- Smiling Mind (for kids)
- Headspace

Mindfulness for School Psychs

- Practice Mindfulness with your students
 - Smiling Mind App
 - www.kidsrelaxation.com
 - Snowglobe
 - Spidey Senses

Flocking

- Surprisingly, even though school psychs are around people all day, it can be an isolating profession
- “Fight or flight” is not the only stress response
- “Tending and befriending” is another stress response
- Join the virtual support group at the Notes From the School Psychologist’s Blog page on Facebook (www.facebook.com/schoolpsych).

Resilience to Stress

- Three Good Things
- Forgiveness
- Finding Silver Linings
- Random Acts of Kindness
- Gratitude Journal

Creating Healthy Boundaries

- Defining your role (difficult in the beginning, because you're not always sure what your role is, role can be defined by the ghosts of your predecessors)
- Learning how to say "no" to others
- What not to say ("That's not my job" and "I'm too busy")

Healthy Boundaries

- What to say instead ("I would really like to help with that, but right now I have to give highest priority to my assessments because I have legal timelines to meet. If my referrals slow down and my time is freed up, I'll let you know" or "Right now, my schedule is such that I can't add a new commitment unless I let go of another. What is the priority for you?")
- Learning how to say "no" to yourself!

The Long View: When You Are Burned Out

- Talk to your supervisor about a change in school assignments
- Ask for a change of student population
- Find opportunities for expanded roles
- Supervise an intern

The Long View

- Go to professional developments in fun places to get re-inspired
- Learn a new test to "mix it up" in assessment
- Get a private practice license and work with clients you enjoy
- Take a sabbatical to rejuvenate
- Remind yourself daily why you chose this profession with a mantra or inspirational quote.

Oprah Giveaway Time

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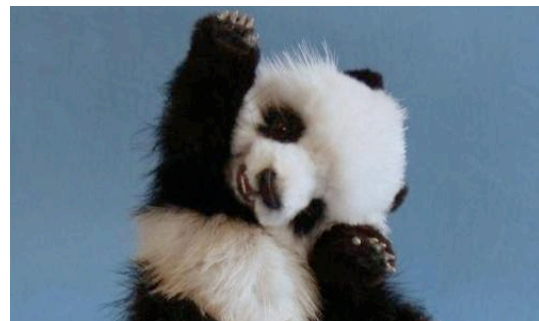
Share, Stop, and Jot

- Things to try on Monday for self care:

DEBRIEFING STRATEGIES FOR SURVIVING AND THRIVING

Questions and Comments?

Questions? Comments?



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