



Spotswood Elementary School

Placement Description

Public Elementary School placement that offers practical foundational experience working with students.

Intern or Field Placement Responsibilities/Opportunities

- One on one mentoring with students
- Co-leading small group counseling
- Meetings with parents and teachers
- Classroom assistance and curricular planning

Contact Information

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Read about students' experiences at this site below:



At Spotswood Elementary School their mission is to provide the framework for lifetime learning by making sure that their students are in a secure, nurturing atmosphere where high standards inspire them to do their best. Ms. Adamek and Mrs. Wenger are the two school counselors at Spotswood, they offer an extensive range of counseling services tailored to meet the individual needs of each student. Services such as one-on-one sessions, small groups, and guidance lessons. Beyond those services, they do so much more to create a safe school environment that helps inspire students to achieve their goals whether that be socially, emotionally, or educationally.

During my time at Spotswood Elementary, Ms. Adamek gave me every opportunity to make the most of my experience and I am so grateful for it. While I was there I led three small groups, observed one-on-one sessions, co-facilitated small groups, and helped prepare for and participate in guidance lessons. Two of my small groups were focused on The Zones of Regulation which is a curriculum to help students with self-regulation in the classroom. These particular groups presented a unique set of challenges that pushed me beyond my comfort zone. Nevertheless, they served as significant learning experiences, imparting crucial lessons in patience and the skill of scaffolding to accommodate the diverse needs of every student. My third small group was working with a group of girls to help them incorporate more English into their language. In this group, I worked to build confidence in speaking in English through an array of fun games that incorporated the vocabulary they have been using throughout the school year. It was so fun and rewarding to watch as their confidence grew as the semester went on.

During one-on-one sessions, Ms. Adamek always asked for the student's consent for me to observe. More often than not, the students would say yes, giving me an abundance of opportunities to learn to work one-on-one with a vast range of students. This experience taught me that there is no one right way to counsel. Depending on the student and the severity of the situation you may need to take different approaches. For example, while some students may readily open up about what's happening in their lives, others may require the counselor to invest time in building a rapport before they feel comfortable enough to share. I am so grateful to have observed Ms. Adamek one-on-one with her students. She has a keen insight into identifying individual student needs, which in turn has helped me to better recognize which students need what and when.

When co-facilitating small groups with Ms. Adamek, the activities ranged from casual lunches with students to address friendship issues, to more structured sessions incorporating engaging activities. I particularly loved our lunch groups because it was a great way for me to get to know students that had not met before. One group that I was consistently a part of was working with students to help with self-efficacy. In this group, we would meet once a week during lunch to do activities that would help to promote self-love, confidence, and self-image. This particular small group was larger than the ones I typically lead on my own, offering me a fresh perspective on the varied applications of small group settings.

My time at Spotswood Elementary has been amazing. Ms. Adamek went out of her way



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to make sure that I was involved in everything I could be involved in. She helped me create my groups, got me in touch with other faculty, and included me in IST meetings. She truly gave me so many opportunities to be successful. With all of her support, I was able to learn so much about the field of school counseling and was able to put my skills to good use. In terms of advantages Ms. Adamek has been in the field of school counseling for 30 years, she is extremely insightful and her expertise has been extremely beneficial, teaching me so much. Another significant advantage worth mentioning is the fact that Spotswood Elementary has a very good student support team. This allows Ms. Adamek and Ms. Wenger to focus primarily on their roles as a school counselor, thus allowing me to understand their roles fully. Everything about this site has been amazing. I loved building strong relationships with my students and other faculty members. Building those relationships was the most rewarding part of this placement and I was truly so sad to leave. Spotswood Elementary is such a welcoming environment, having the opportunity to spend my last semester of college there was the highlight of my senior year.

I learned so much at Spotswood. First and foremost I learned what school counselors do. When I first began my field placement I didn't know what being a school counselor entailed. After a semester there I learned that school counselors do so much more than I ever knew and I got to partake in those roles. From observing, co-facilitating, and leading I learned how to collaborate with my fellow faculty members, effectively communicate with students, and build strong relationships with students. Very early on in my site experience, I realized that I loved the roles of a school counselor. I was originally applying to graduate school for school psychology but once I was a week into my time at Spotswood I began applying for school counseling programs. Thanks to my experience at Spotswood I found my true passion and I will be attending graduate school in the fall for my master's in counseling services with a concentration in school counseling.

For my implementation project, I implemented my Zones of Regulation groups. This topic was very important to me as very early on I began to notice the impact emotion-regulation and self-regulation have on a student's social-emotional and educational development. For my groups, I used primarily The Zones of Regulation curriculum which was based on four zones: red, green, blue, and yellow. These activities aimed to help my students identify their emotions and the emotions of others, as well as recognize what emotions are appropriate for a classroom setting. I implemented these groups with a social work practicum student from JMU. We ordered the curriculum to best fit our students jumping around the book to the activities that made the most sense for our students' development. With my one group, we had to implement outside materials beyond the curriculum to adapt to this particular student's capabilities. These activities were more game-based. Overall, the implementation of these groups was less successful than I had hoped. However, I am hopeful that one day, more emotional-regulation skills will be added to the school curriculum to help aid the success of these activities.

My overall experience at Spotswood was better than I ever could have imagined. I truly got the most out of my time there. I am so grateful to both Ms. Adamek and Mrs. Wenger for everything they have done this semester. Whoever their next field placement student may be, they should know they're incredibly fortunate to have such great supervisors who truly care



about their experience.

Spring 2022- Jaime Sjonell

This semester, I had the opportunity to have my field placement at Spotswood Elementary School located in Harrisonburg, VA. Their mission statement states, “At Spotswood Elementary School, we believe in fostering an environment in which students, staff, and families are nurtured, educated and inspired”, and this is evident as soon as you walk through Spotswood’s doors. I was amazed about how the faculty cared about each of their students, making Spotswood a safe and welcoming place for students to come. My supervisor at Spotswood was Angie Adamek, one of Spotswood’s school counselors. While doing my field placement at Spotswood, I had the opportunity to partake in individual counseling, group counseling, classroom guidance sessions, working with many of the faculty and students at the school, morning circles, and doing many administrative tasks.

My experience working at Spotswood has been nothing short of great. Going into this placement, I already knew that I would be attending graduate school to become a school counselor, making Angie excited to teach me all the things that elementary school counselors do on a daily basis. Prior to this experience, I had little knowledge on what elementary school counselors do as I did not recall having one when I was that age. I spent most of my days working directly with Angie and the other school counselor, Taylor. I was able to spend most of my time working with groups of students to help them with concepts such as managing stress, anger, and friendships. Along with this, I observed and assisted in guidance sessions where individual classes came in and we taught many of the same concepts. This has been a great experience as sitting in and contributing in these groups and guidance sessions allowed me to develop closer relationships with students and learn more about concepts that I will be teaching in my future career. I also attended morning meetings with one of our fifth-grade classes every Wednesday, where I developed close relationships with many of the students. An advantage I had during my time at Spotswood was being able to observe most individual sessions, group sessions, and guidance sessions. Angie never made me do anything I was uncomfortable with, such as leading large groups of students during their guidance sessions. I mostly observed and participated which was great for me. Along with this, if I had a specific interest, Angie made sure I was able to participate in it, making my time at Spotswood very enjoyable. I was very eager to develop relationships with more students than just the ones we met in large groups. Angie encouraged me to participate in running club after school which has been one of my favorite memories at Spotswood. During running club, I was able to meet so many more students and see them in an informal environment. This allowed me to develop these close relationships and recognize the other duties of school counselors that may not be in the job description.

I have learned a lot about being a school counselor during this field placement. I learned more about counseling as I have not taken many psychology courses at JMU that was directly related to counseling. I also learned how there is not one answer to help students alleviate their stress and problems they encounter. Watching Angie use different techniques and vocabulary to



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address student's needs helped me learn various ways a school counselor can help individual students. I also learned about the various duties and tasks that school counselors have that I was not aware of prior to this experience. I originally believed they just provided individual therapy to students, and I am now aware that there is so much more to the role than just meeting with individual students. One thing I did not anticipate learning is the importance of practicing my own self-care. There are many things about being a school counselor that can be emotionally draining and some of the stories I heard often left me very upset as I couldn't help the students in the way I would have wanted. As we preach the importance of self-care to our students, Angie also made it known I need to be practicing it as well, as the job can often leave you feeling upset and discouraged. The JMU Psychology department also helped prepare me for my time at Spotswood, especially the course Abnormal Psychology. I was able to meet with students with learning disabilities and specific disorders that I learned in this course and see first-hand how they are helped within a school setting. This prior knowledge helped me know how to speak with these students and the importance of patience. Another course that helped me in preparation for this placement was my internship at the JMU counseling center as in this course, I learned more about group therapy and its benefits. Seeing how group therapy is integrated into an elementary school allowed me to see so many of its benefits. When these groups first started, you would see how some students were uncomfortable in the setting and not sharing a lot about themselves. By the end, nearly all the students had grown comfortable with each other and are able to see how they share many of the same struggles as other students in the group. This was great to see as I saw so many students come out of their shell and seem to benefit from the ideas we were teaching them.

At Spotswood, I had the opportunity to help lead many group sessions, most notably stress groups that we held multiple times for different students. This inspired me to do more research on how to help children and adolescents cope with different stressors, making this my main focus for my contribution project. I researched a lot of different stressors that students at this age face academically, at home, and in their environment and developed worksheets for teachers and school counselors to use to help their students alleviate stressors they deem out of their control. By developing more worksheets and ideas, we were able to incorporate some of my ideas into our sessions, making me excited to see how the work I did is helping students manage their stress.

Working at Spotswood has given me the confidence and experience I needed to know this was the field I wanted to pursue. Prior to my time here, I was unaware of what elementary school counselors did, and saw myself becoming a high-school counselor instead. After these few months, I have been inspired to pursue elementary school counseling as this experience has made me excited to enter the field. I was sad to leave Spotswood, its students and Angie, however, I left with feelings of excitement to one day be able to do this on my own and remember this experience as the reason I wanted to pursue this field in the first place. I owe this newfound confidence and passion to the students and faculty at Spotswood Elementary School.



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