



# Supporting Your Child's Well-Being

Elkridge Elementary School

December 8, 2020

6:30pm

Presenters:

School Counselors - Stephanie Dean, Angie Szalecki

School Psychologist - Jessica Albrecht



# Stephanie Dean, School Counselor

**Supported Grades:** K, 1st, 3rd, 4th

**My role:** Supporting all students through individual, group, and classroom counseling, and collaborating with families and teachers to promote student success at school.

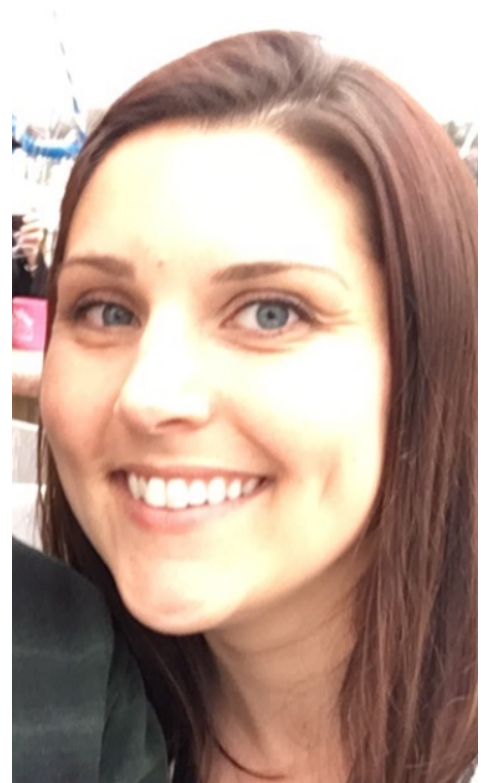
**A little bit about me:** This is my fourth year at EES and my fourth year as a school counselor. I have three dogs and I love to travel. I'm getting married in June of 2021.

**How I am feeling right now:** Scattered and overwhelmed, but enjoying the time I get with students and families on Google Meets.

**Being at home:**

**What is filling my bucket:** Getting dog walks and snuggles when I have a few free minutes.

**What is draining me:** Sitting at a desk and the screen time.



# Angie Szalecki, School Counselor

**Supported Grades:** 2nd and 5th grades at EES

**My role:** Connecting with students and families, small groups, problem solving, and classroom lessons

**A little bit about me:** This is my 2nd year at EES and my 7th year as a school counselor! I was a teacher for 15 years before becoming a counselor. I have 16 year old twins!

**How I am feeling right now:** Excited about helping kids with this new challenge, but stressed about all the new skills we need to learn.

**Being at home:**

What is filling my bucket: Spending more time with family and cats

**What is draining me:** Everyone working from home!



# Jessica Albrecht, School Psychologist

**Supported Grades:** Pre-K-5th

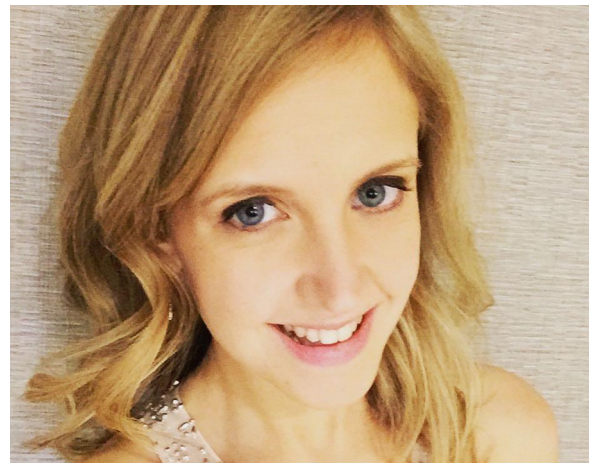
**My role:** Consultation, collaboration, and problem solving with parents and teachers to support students; providing psychological services and counseling; aiding in evaluation and development of IEPs and 504 plans

**A little bit about me:** This is my fourth year as a school psychologist at EES. I love my job and working with the students, families, and staff at EES! I have two dogs and I coach Girls on the Run at Elkridge!

**How I am feeling right now:** A bit overwhelmed, but also amazed and proud of the resiliency and creativity of our teachers, students, and families

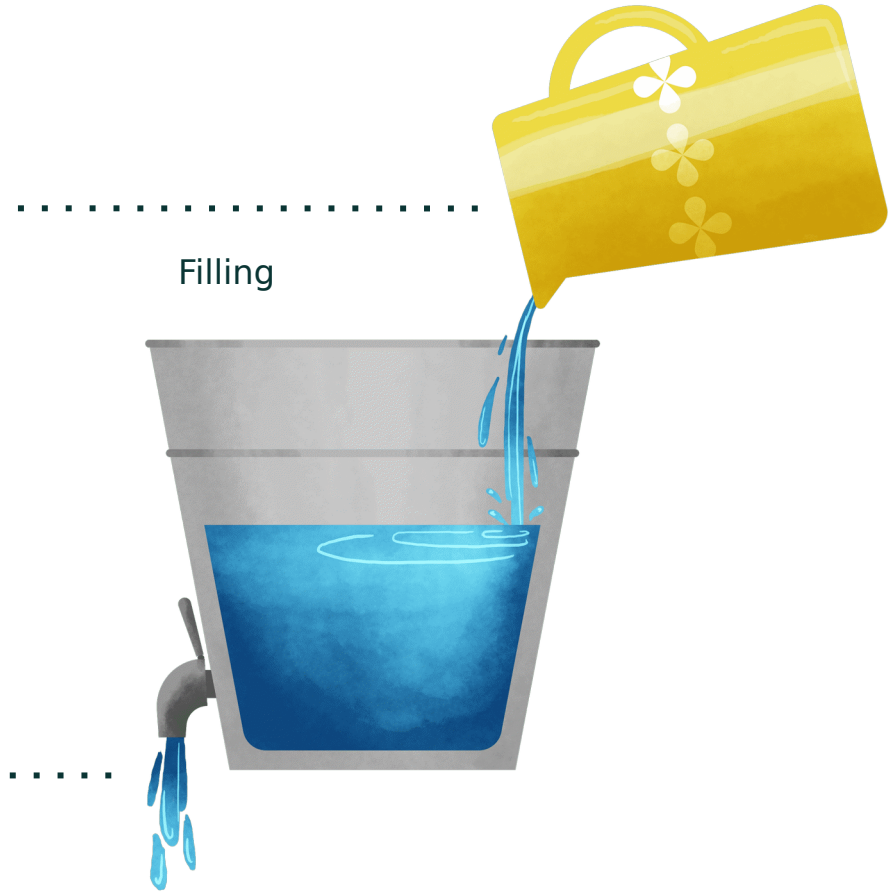
**What is filling my bucket:** Going on hikes and walks with my dogs, running, spending time with family

**What is draining me:** Screen time, missing seeing students and staff in person!





What Is  
Filling Your  
Bucket  
Today And  
What's  
Draining It?



Students, draw anywhere on this slide!

# Access to Community Resources

- We have many community resources in HCPSS
- Contact us anytime if you need help or have questions!



# Family Connectedness

- Connect without distractions
- Talk positively about the day
- Spend quality time
  - Play a game
  - Do a puzzle
  - Eat dinner together
  - Ride bikes, or go for a walk



# Responses: What are some ways your family has connected during the last few months?

Family walks and hikes

Family bike rides

Playing board games and video games

Backyard soccer games

Baking

We have designated Fridays for "Family movie and pizza night"

Enjoy our pets

Yoga together

Puzzles

Drawing and coloring together

Reading books together/taking turns reading stories each night

# What are some ways your family has connected during the last few months?-Cont.

Attend virtual parent PTA meetings and events

Have a virtual "concert" for grandparents (singing and dancing)

Rotate which parking lot we go to play at (ride bikes, walk, scooters, basketball)

Eat lunch and/or dinner together

Facetime with out of city or state family

Watching movies and Disney+

Eating treats

Arts and crafts

Take the dogs for a walk

Time outside (skateboarding, swinging, etc.)

Scavenger hunts

# Community and School Connectedness

- Find ways for your child to connect with their school and local communities (i.e. neighborhood)
- Attend virtual or physically distanced gatherings
- Provides your child and give them other adults and friends to relate to when they are feeling isolated and lonely.



# Responses: How have you connected with school and community?

Secret Santa Neighbor Gift Exchange

Picking up lunches from the school so they can still see and visit the school

Virtual lunch bunches

Donating books to neighbors

Sidewalk chalk messages to neighbors and to add smiles to anyone walking by

PTA and reaching out to other parents through Family File

Planning service projects

Food trucks, fall fest, and movie nights in the park for the community

Helping others (e.g. donating to a shelter)

Fire pit nights with friends/family

Staying after meets to talk with teachers



# Life Skills

- Life Skills - Have them do chores! They may not love you at first but it helps them learn how to contribute to the family and gives them a sense of accomplishment and independence when they see that their contribution makes a difference to the family. Make a big deal out of how helpful it is to you when they pitch in!
- Teach them other life skills like basic cooking, fixing things around the house, or using tools to build something.



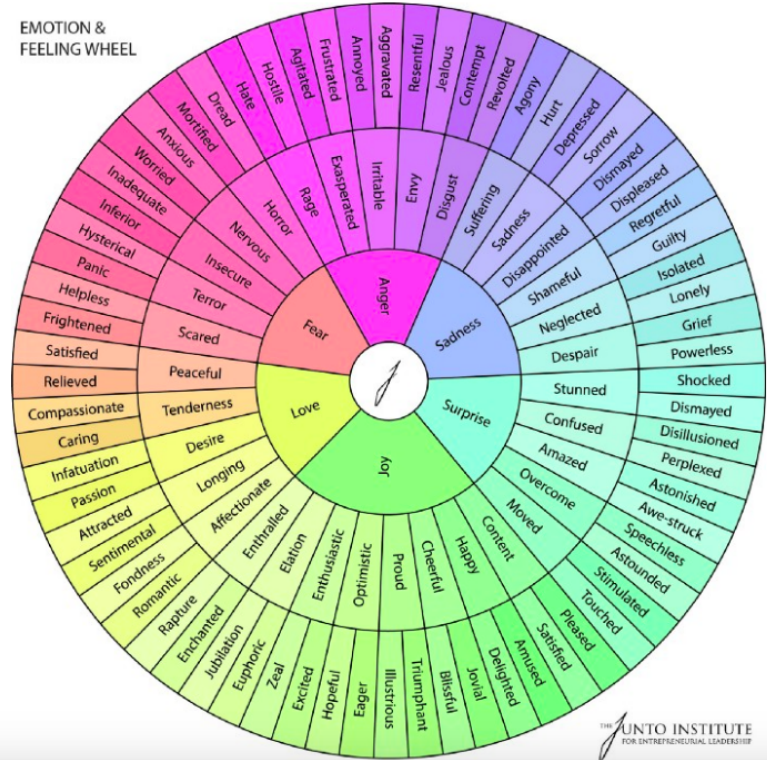
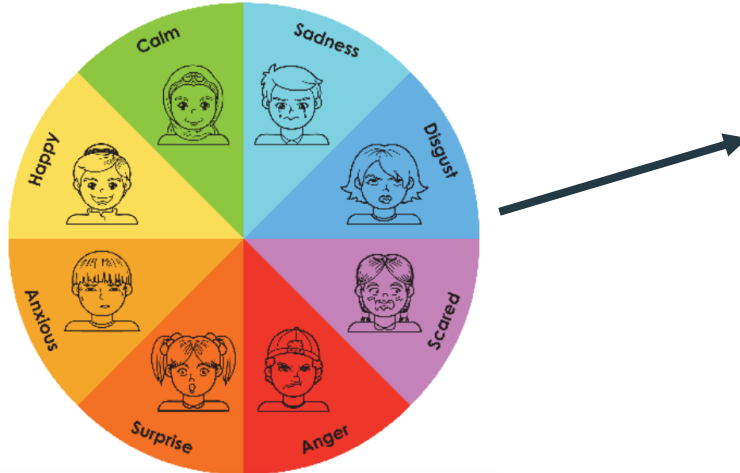
# Managing Virtual School Expectations

- Role as of “coach” or “supervisor” not teacher
  - Help with logging in, checking “virtual backpack”
- Importance of making mistakes to the learning process
  - Teacher needs to see struggle to provide feedback
  - “Productive struggle”



# Social Emotional Vocabulary

- Helps children share their feelings by modeling and teaching them an [I-Message](#)
- Move past words like happy, sad, and angry
- Use complex feelings words like frustrated, lonely and excited.



# Self Compassion

- Self Compassion - This is the idea that people need to learn to be warm and understanding toward ourselves when we suffer, fail, or feel inadequate, rather than ignore our pain or beat ourselves up with self-criticism. Modeling this ourselves is the best form of teaching self compassion!



Work on being in  
love with the  
person in the  
mirror who has  
been through so  
much but is still  
standing.

*It is ok to make mistakes and forgive yourself!*

# Something to look forward to

- Plan short and long term things for you child(ren) to be excited about!
  - Movie Nights
  - Special dessert/treat nights
  - Reading a chapter book
  - Day trip
  - Virtual field trip



# Responses: What could you plan that your student could look forward to?

One on one time with parent

A "road" trip around Maryland to see different sites

Plan a way to connect with school friends

Baking cookies together

Drive through to see the Christmas lights

Walking around to look at Holiday lights in the neighborhood

Christmas traditions

Letting them pick out new cookie recipes and baking a new recipe each weekend from now through the holidays

Mommy daughter day - I take off , we still do school but do some fun things too

Day trip



# Foundation of cultural and/or religious beliefs

- Aspects of culture and/or religion can include



- Aspects of culture and/or religion can include...
  - Values/beliefs
  - Traditions
  - Holidays - [14 Ideas for Virtual Holidays](#)
  - Meaningful places
  - Understanding of family history
  - Symbols in your home
  - Daily rituals
  - Who you spend time with
- Begin talking about and developing their values and belief system. Possible questions to ask:
  - What do you value or believe is important?
  - How could these values and beliefs help you create meaning or make sense of a stressful time?





# Resiliency skills

Resilience is the ability to cope with and rise to the inevitable challenges, problems and setbacks you meet in the course of your life, and come back stronger from them.



Examples to build resiliency:

- Encourage child to try new sport/activity
- Resist the urge to “fix” a problem, instead ask questions to help child find solution
- Embrace mistakes to promote growth mindset
- Model coping skills like deep breathing
- Help child reframe thoughts to optimism
- Exercise! It strengthens brain and lowers stress
- [Why Some People are More Resilient](#)

# Predictable routines and expectations

- Have a consistent routine (schedule posted)
- Have a designated work area
- Use positive reinforcement and praise



# Healthy habits

- Physical health and hygiene like exercise, healthy eating, doctor visits
- Build good hygiene habits into your schedule
- Kids also learn to begin to take responsibility for their own healthy living choices.



# Warning Signs My Child Might Need More Support

- Increased mood swings
- Changes in eating and sleeping patterns
- Preoccupation with sadness or death in conversation, writing, or drawing
- Aggressive or hostile behavior, more than typical sibling/friend conflict
- Loss of interest in activities that had been enjoyable
- Increased difficulty thinking or concentrating beyond challenges of virtual learning alone
- Feeling sad, empty, or tearful nearly every day
- Frequent withdrawing from others
- Psychosomatic symptoms - stomach aches, headaches, etc, with no obvious physical reason

# What can I do if my child is struggling?

Source: Child Mind: A Parent's Guide to Helping a Child in Distress)

- Take the child's feelings and concerns seriously
- Intentional one on one conversations
  - Increases connectedness and feelings of worth
  - Enables problem solving discussions
  - Encourage I-messages
- Help child(ren) understand what they can control and cannot control
- Focus on stability in routine, expectations, and expressions of care
- If your child talks about wanting to hurt or even kill themselves, please seek crisis support immediately from either a local emergency room or Howard County's **Grassroots Crisis Center at 410-531-6677**, available 24 hours a day. Research has shown that asking a child if they have thoughts of suicide will NOT put that idea in their head or make them want to consider harming themselves.

# Resources for Additional Help

- **Your Local Pediatrician or Medical Doctor** (keep accurate contact info handy)
- **CARE Line:** 410-313-CARE
- **Grassroots 24 hour Crisis Line** 410-531-6677; 24 hours a day
- **Grassroots Crisis Center** <https://grassrootscrisis.org/> - serves Howard County
- **Child Mind Institute** <https://childmind.org/>
- **Children's Mental Health Matters**  
<https://www.childrensmentalhealthmatters.org/>
- **National Child Traumatic Stress Network** <https://www.nctsn.org/>
- **Network of Care:** Search community providers in your area

# EES Student Support Staff Contacts

## **School Counselor:**

Stephanie Dean : [stephanie\\_dean@hcpss.org](mailto:stephanie_dean@hcpss.org)

Angie Szalecki: [angie\\_szalecki@hcpss.org](mailto:angie_szalecki@hcpss.org)

Canvas Course : How students and parents can connect with counselors and find additional resources!

## **School Psychologist:**

Jessica Albrecht [jessica\\_albrecht@hcpss.org](mailto:jessica_albrecht@hcpss.org)



# Questions & Answers

