



From the Desk of the School Psychologist

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Accessing Mental Health Supports During COVID-19

Resources at School and in the Community

by **Mrs. Jennifer Campbell** on January 11, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all families and individuals differently, however, the fact that it has changed everyone's daily life is undeniable. Change can be hard for all, but especially for children as they struggle to keep up with and understand the changes happening in the world around them. Throughout this time of reduced social opportunities, frequent life changes, and nation-wide worries, children may exhibit emotional difficulties. As a result of this, we wanted to provide all EMSA families with some information regarding support we are providing at school and ways to access community support.

School Supports

As a new process this school year, EMSA began conducting school-wide, social-emotional screeners using the Student Risk Screening Scale - Internalizing Externalizing edition (SRSS-IE). For more information regarding this screener, please see: <https://www.ci3t.org/screening>. The rationale for conducting this screener is similar to why we do MAP testing for academics; it is a check-in to see if there are potential concerns both on a school-wide basis and on an individual-student basis. Three times each school year, teachers complete a brief survey regarding potential social, emotional, or behavioral concerns they may have for students in their classrooms. Team conversations are then held to review the survey results and discuss what can be done class-wide, with small

groups in the classroom, and/or with support outside of the classroom in order to best meet students' needs.

At EMSA we are exceptionally fortunate to have so much support for social-emotional needs already built into our school culture. Our first line of defense for social-emotional needs is, of course, our amazing CREW structure. Through classroom and school-wide CREW activities, students have the opportunity to participate in skill-building social-emotional activities and share their thoughts and feelings with a social support system within their classroom. As a result of our school-wide screeners, we have also developed a structure for small-group CREWs in some grade-levels in order to support the needs of some students. These small groups can work on more focused skill areas to target the needs of these students.

If a student is experiencing social, emotional, or behavioral needs and they are not demonstrating progress with the supports provided within the classroom, then the team can also discuss whether a small group with me, the School Psychologist, would be appropriate to meet the student's educational needs.

Community Supports

It is important to remember that school supports focus on meeting a student's needs within the school setting. When a student is experiencing social, emotional, or behavioral difficulties that are impacting them outside of school, the Elgin community has a wide variety of supports and services that are available to help assist.

Below is a link to a list of local community agencies that EMSA is aware of. This list may serve as a starting point for families interested in accessing support outside of school. It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive nor does inclusion of an agency on this list indicate that EMSA endorses this service in any way.

[ACCESS THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AGENCY GUIDE](#)