

MEET the counselor

Jennifer Girard (Ms. G)

2021-2022

About Me:



This is my first year at Lafayette School District. Originally from Southern California, I moved to the Bay Area in 2003, and never looked back. I have two kiddos and a cat; a 7 year old son and a 5 year old daughter, and one cat, Pluto. For fun, I enjoy reading, hiking and playing board/card games. I look forward to getting to know your family better this year!

Philosophy:

Every individual child has the right to learn in an environment that encourages growth and expansion. All students can acquire the skills to be successful across their lifespan.

Education:

I received my BA in Communications from USC and then my MA in Counseling from St. Mary's.
GO GAELS!

MEET the counselor

Ms. Jennifer Girard (Ms. G)

Parts of My Job:

- Individual Short-Term Counseling
- Teaching Classroom SEL Lessons
- Small Groups Counseling
- Parent Conference Support
- Academic Support
- SEL Parent/Teacher Resource
- Behavior Intervention
- Crisis Response
- School-Wide Initiatives
- SST Participation



jgirard@lafsd.org



Google Voice:
(707) 341-6109



Springhill:

Mondays & Thursdays

Happy Valley:

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, &
Fridays

Communication:

If you'd like to set up an appointment with me to discuss your child's needs or would like to refer your child for brief short-term counseling services, please send me an email! THANKS!

SCHOOL COUNSELING

Frequently Asked Questions :

Q: What does an Elementary School Counselor do?

A: Elementary years is when students develop and acquire attitudes toward school, self, peers, social groups and family. We work to provide education, prevention and intervention services, which are integrated into all aspects of children's lives. We aim to enhance their social and emotional growth through both direct and indirect student services. We do this through tiered program planning and implementation of classroom lessons, small groups, individual counseling and more!

Q: Can you provide my student with counseling?

A: Sure! I am happy to work with your student on a short-term basis. Individual counseling with me is brief and solution focused in nature. I typically meet with a student for about 4-8 sessions before making other referrals. School counseling services are not a substitute for therapy. If your student needs therapy or other intensive services, I am happy to collaborate with you to make the appropriate referrals for those supports.

Q: Can my student be a part of a small group?

A: Possibly! Small groups are formed based on need, grade level scheduling, universal screening data, teacher recommendation, and individual student screening. If your student would be a good fit for a group I will be running, I will send home consents and more information.

Q: What's the difference between the counselor & the principal?

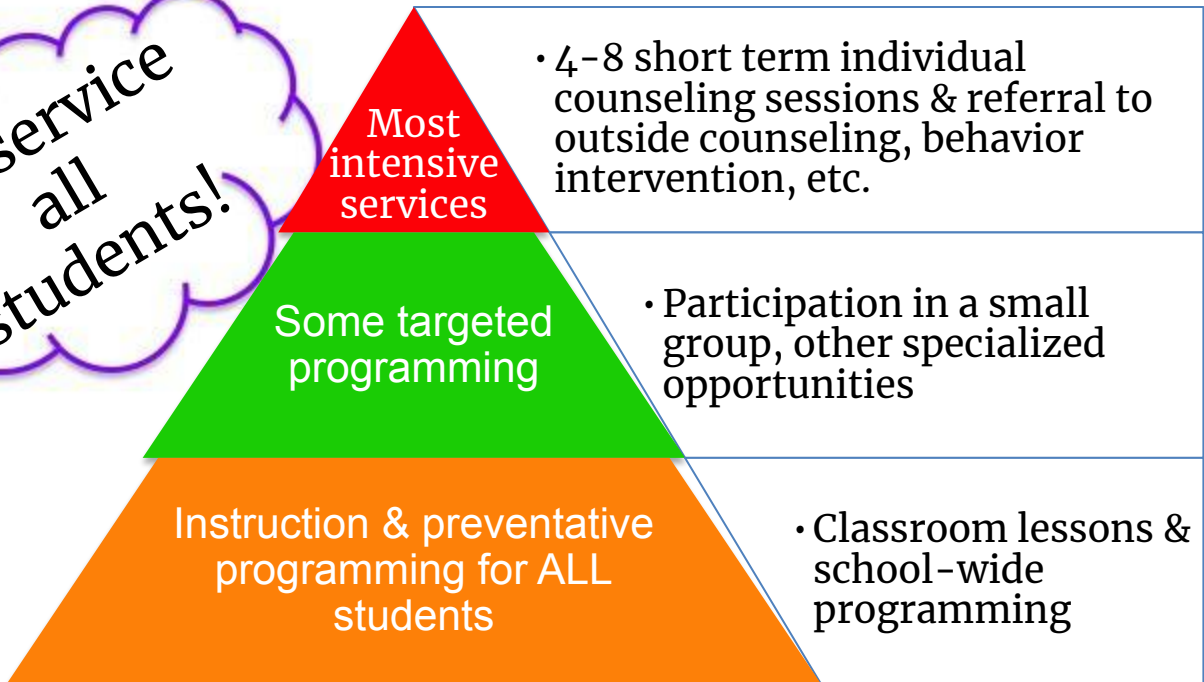
A: The role of a principal is to provide strategic direction in the school system. The school counselor role is restorative, supportive and student-centered. It is not appropriate for school counselors to perform disciplinary actions or assign discipline consequences. School counselors are often hired under a teaching contract and so personnel concerns should be dealt with by an administrator.

SCHOOL COUNSELORS...

Provide services to students in three domains:

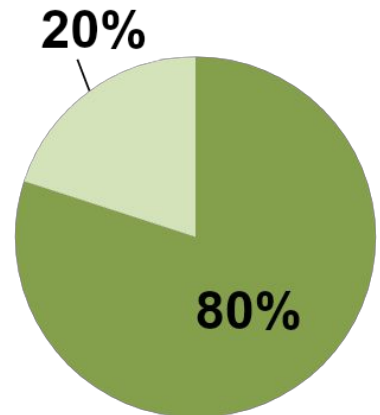


We service all students!



Are encouraged to spend

- 80% of time in direct and indirect student services
- 20% of time on program management and school support



OUTPATIENT COUNSELING

cheat sheet

Counseling sessions provided by the school counselor are brief and solution-focused in nature. School counseling services are not a substitute for therapy. If you are interested in seeking community-based outpatient therapy, a higher level of support, for your child, here are some helpful tips.

THE GOOGLE SEARCH:

- In your search try looking for “outpatient counseling”, “counseling services”, “therapy”, “mental health counseling” near you. The words *counseling* & *therapy* are interchangeable.

YOUR INSURANCE:

- Some outpatient counselors/therapists bill your insurance. When you call, make sure to ask them to check your insurance to see if they are a match for you and how much your copay will be. If you cannot afford the fees or have no insurance, ask them if they have a sliding scale or offer any pro bono work.

INTAKE SESSION:

- Most agencies will first schedule you for an intake. This is where they will meet with you to discuss concerns and collect a detailed history of the child/family. This may or may not be the actual therapist you get.

ALL ABOUT THE MATCH:

- Success in therapy is heavily reliant on finding a good match. If your child doesn't like and trust the therapist after giving them a good try, I suggest asking for a new therapist and/or finding a new agency.

TYPES OF THERAPY

cheat sheet

“TALK” THERAPY:

- Most therapists use some form of talk therapy. While each therapist may have a different theoretical orientation, most good talk therapists use validation, reflection of feeling & meaning, and other techniques to help the client explore their thoughts & feelings and use their inner desire to succeed to help generate and clarify solutions to problems.

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT):

- CBT is a very well-known and well-researched method of helping clients learn evidenced based strategies for changing their thinking. The concept with CBT is that thoughts cause feelings/emotions, and by correcting negative thought patterns, one can feel better. This practice has been heavily researched and proven to reduce anxiety, depression and many other presenting concerns. It can be done with kids & adults.

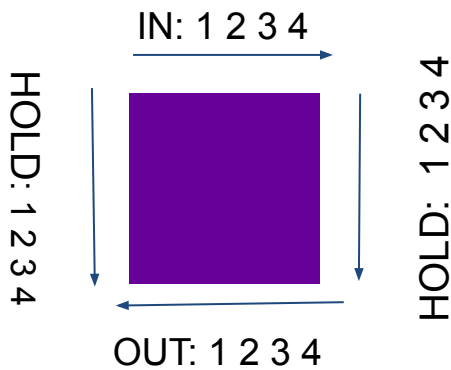
PLAY THERAPY:

- It can be tricky to find a play therapist in certain regions/areas, but play therapy can be a great choice for many kids. Kids who are very young or who struggle to verbalize their feelings/thoughts are a great match for play therapy. The therapist allows the client to play freely and by specific commenting techniques is able to guide the child through working through certain life events or feelings that are present.

Coping Skills SAMPLER

Your child will be learning coping skills at school this year. Here are some sample exercises you can practice with them at home to reinforce our learning!

SQUARE BREATH



Repeat as needed

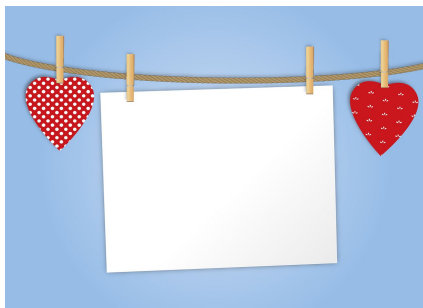
FIGURE 8 BREATH:

Use your finger to trace the 8. Breathe in as you trace the left side, breathe out as you trace the right side.



GRATITUDE CHECK:

Write 3 things you are grateful for.



THE WALL PUSH-UPS:

Set your timer.

Do push-ups against the wall until the time is up.

PARENT

Reading Ideas

In case you are a book lover like me and looking for any reading ideas, I've compiled a list of books on the topics of parenting, relationship with kids, child well-being, etc. I haven't read every single one but many come highly recommended from colleagues in the field. I'm currently working my way through the list. If you choose to read one or two, let me know what you think!

- Parenting With Love And Logic by Foster Cline
- Raising Your Spirited Child: A Guide for Parents Whose Child Is More Intense, Sensitive, Perceptive, Persistent, and Energetic Paperback by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka
- Transforming the Difficult Child: The Nurtured Heart Approach by Howard Glasser
- Explosive Child, The: A New Approach For Understanding And Parenting Easily Frustrated, Chronically Inflexible Children Paperback by Ross W. Greene
- No-Drama Discipline: The Whole-Brain Way to Calm the Chaos and Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind Paperback by Daniel J. Siegel
- The Whole-Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind Paperback by Daniel J. Siegel
- How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk Paperback by Adele Faber
- Raising Happiness: 10 Simple Steps for More Joyful Kids and Happier Parents by Christine Carter
- Girls Without Limits by Lisa Hinkelman
- The 5 Love Languages of Children: The Secret to Loving Children Effectively Paperback by Gary Chapman
- Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain Paperback by Dr. Daniel J. Siegel
- Raising Human Beings: Creating a Collaborative Partnership with Your Child Paperback by Ross W. Greene Ph.D
- Simplicity Parenting: Using the Extraordinary Power of Less to Raise Calmer, Happier, and More Secure Kids Paperback by Kim John Payne

Parent Tip:

Sign up to receive free weekly parenting engagement tips from Common Sense



common sense®

Just text the word **kids**
to this phone number
21555

Receive free text message tips
about how to practice healthy media
habits at home with your family!

We, the Digital Citizens!

The graphic features a green background with a pattern of small white icons. On the right side, there are five colorful, cartoonish characters in shades of pink, yellow, purple, blue, and orange. The text is white and yellow, providing clear instructions for signing up for text message tips.