

Some notes for those in the school psychology field starting in a new school placement

For interns, practicum students, and field placement students in the field of school psychology

This list is not exhaustive and was developed from a Facebook post from Henry C. Thompson II on the Facebook Group, Said No School Psychologist Ever. *Compiled by Alisa Wing, NCSP.*

- ✓ Introduce yourself to as many of the existing staff members as you can and are able to.
- ✓ Become friends with:
 - o School administrative assistant(s)
 - o Custodian(s)
 - o Lunchroom staff
 - o Interventionist(s)
 - o Library staff
 - o IT specialists
 - o P.E. teachers
 - o Bus drivers & SPED Van bus drivers and ride-along techs
- ✓ Get on a first-name basis with educational technicians and build working relationships with these people; these staff are invaluable and know the students better than anyone else in the building.
- ✓ Get to know your building admin.
- ✓ Become close with your building's school counselors, social workers, and BCBA's. Get to know and support your mental health profession colleagues!
- ✓ Locate ALL of the adult bathrooms in the building.
- ✓ Build, maintain and remain in contact with a crew of colleagues with whom you can share frustrations, problem-solve, and celebrate.
- ✓ Celebrate your successes. Find at least one thing that brings spark and joy to each day.
- ✓ Do NOT eat lunch in the teacher's lounge, or hang out there for too long.
- ✓ DO take your duty free lunch, and don't talk shop while you're doing it.
- ✓ Do not engage in interpersonal drama that does not concern you.
- ✓ Find the person who knows ALL OF THE THINGS but be guarded until you build that trust.
- ✓ Choose your caffeine of choice and have it readily available. Also, chocolate is imperative.
- ✓ Get out of your office/cloffice/classroom to walk around the school. Go out during transition times in the hallway, on the playground at recess, get in the cafeteria during lunches, etc. Make sure you're seen at your school(s) by the students, staff and admin.
- ✓ Get to know your students' parents if you are working on long-term cases.
- ✓ Have regular office hours where people can consistently find you. Also, be cool with locking your door and turning off the lights to get reports done if you need to.
- ✓ Take responsibility for your own professional and personal development. Sign up for webinars, attend lectures, attend workshops, absorb as much information as you can.

- ✓ Schedule report writing time during your day. Better yet, plan to write testing observations after every testing session, type up and copy/paste your classroom observations into your report, score protocols after sessions, etc., to keep it fresh and moving.
- ✓ Respect the Sacred Hour – the hour before students enter the building is sacred time to write reports, respond to correspondence, plan and schedule testing and consultation sessions, and complete tasks needed for successful organization and execution.
- ✓ Become versed in students' pop culture and be ready to connect (look it up if you have to!).
- ✓ Get your School Psych'ed playlist going (angry and happy). Alisa Wing's recommendations:
 - o *System of a Down – BYOB*
 - o *Korn – Did My Time*
 - o *Nine Inch Nails – Head Like a Hole*
 - o *Limp Bizkit - Break Stuff*
 - o *House of Pain - Jump Around*
 - o *Lizzo - Juice*
 - o *Sister Sin – Fight Song*
 - o *Poison – Nothin' But a Good Time*
 - o *Timmy Trumpet & Savage – Freaks*
 - o *Prodigy – Smack My B*tch Up*
- ✓ Collect and keep all of your praise, accomplishments, and accolades in a space that you can review later when you need a pick-me-up.
- ✓ Never underestimate the power of a mini chocolate bar and a personal sticky note of thanks attached to rating scales for getting the job done!
- ✓ Know where to print and copy reports and documents. Find and designate your favorite copier!
- ✓ Keep a prize box filled with pencils, stickers, fidgets, gum, etc. Find out what's "in" and stock up on those items!
- ✓ A stash of healthy snacks go a long way in morning testing sessions when the student shares they missed breakfast.
- ✓ Offer support to others, no matter how small. This helps build relationships with others and creates and fosters a positive school community!
- ✓ Take care of yourself. Have a decent work/life balance. Do what brings you joy -make time for your favorite things and hobbies, spend time with your favorite people. And please sleep.
- ✓ Trust the process.