

SEPT | 2023

In the Office

Robert Brunelle | School Counselor



WHO IS MR. ROBERT BRUNELLE?

My name is Robert Brunelle (He/Him/His), and I am so pleased to be a new member of the Ojai Valley School family. If you have not heard, I am the new School Counselor. This role is brand new to OVS and I am excited, eager, and motivated to build this program and tailor it to our students.

I would like to first provide a little information about myself. In counseling I would say I was building rapport! I have spent all my life in New York state. First, I grew up in Central New York where I attended school, played baseball, ran track & field, sang & danced in the school musicals, and even participated in student government. Needless to say I was fascinated by being around people and education so I decided to further that passion by moving to Western New York where I received my B.A. in Inclusive Education and Psychology, followed by a M.S. in School Counseling with a leadership emphasis.

As a School Counselor my philosophy is to understand and educate the major stakeholders (students, faculty, parents) on the internal and external phenomena humans interact with on a daily basis. It is through being a scientist that we can truly understand our social and emotional world. Being able to associate a feeling, thought, or behavior with language and strategies that allow the individual to gain their agency back is the major premise of my work.

Beyond being a counselor I have a plethora of interests. When I am not in my office I can be seen in the kitchen cooking or baking (probably some chicken dish), at the CrossFit gym, reading a fantasy novel, enjoying my favorite show Big Brother, or laughing with family/friends as we play board games and get a little too competitive with each other. In the year ahead, I look forward to becoming a part of the OVS family.

Warmly, Robert Brunelle

OJAI
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Newsletter Highlights

Who is Mr. Robert
Brunelle?

What is the role of a
School Counselor?

Tips and Tricks to Start
the Semester

Recommended
Resources





School Counselors do not provide long-term counseling. Here at OVS the aim is to not be therapeutic but to have another educational resource and safe space to understand how our mind and relationships impact us.

It is important to note that School Counselors meet the students where they are at. They take their knowledge of development to scaffold and tailor information so the student can understand best. Additionally, confidentiality is critical as it builds rapport between school counselor and student and ensures that students will reach out for help should they need it.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A SCHOOL COUNSELOR?

A School Counselor is an advocate for all students and whose primary role is to address students' individual social and emotional needs. The School Counselor provides both tier 1 and tier 2 interventions for the school community.

Tier 1 interventions consist of educational lessons, classroom interventions, and student check-ins. Tier 1 is for everyone and involves the assessment of the social/emotional world. It is in this tier that common language and understanding of various phenomena occur. Common language and knowledge allows all stakeholders to have important conversation and facilitate accurate and timely interventions.

Tier 2 consists of individual or group short-term counseling. Tier 2 targets the plethora of challenges we see students encounter that impact their learning. Short-term counseling's main goal is to understand what is not working, to educate the individual/group on what is occurring internally and externally with their mind and body, and teach strategies so the student can get their agency back.

School Counselors take pride in providing social-emotional curriculum to the school system. It is encouraged for all students to discuss what they are learning with the counselor at home and to ask how the information ties into a family's view or value.

Since counseling is collaborative in nature, School Counselors are also a resource for teachers or parents to consult with. They must remain confidential, unless safety is a concern, but sharing resources, common language, and strategies aids in building a community that is ready to address not only a student's academics but their feelings and relationships.



Top Tips to Start the School Year:

Be a Scientist, Not a Judge:

In Marc Brackett's book, *Permission to Feel*, he mentions being a scientist. A scientist knows that the world is not black and white or right and wrong. Instead of judging what is going on, be curious to why and how it is going on. We would never like to be judged, but we would like to be understood. Take this idea into the school year to succeed. Get curious with school, yourself, and your relationships but remember not to judge them.

Have Intentions, Not Expectations

Expectations tend to be empty wishes/goals. They put an idea out into the world and hope that it happens. This can put both pressure on the individual and confusion if it doesn't happen. I suggest setting intentions. An intention tends to be action forward making it measurable and more achievable. Let's intend to communicate, listen, and explore to have an interesting school year, instead of just expecting this year to be great. Take time and think, "What are my intentions"?



SOME RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

PODCAST

The Mindset Reset: Rob Dial dives into neurology, psychology, development, and more to help people understand the interaction of the mind and body. Ready to master your mindset?

WEBSITE

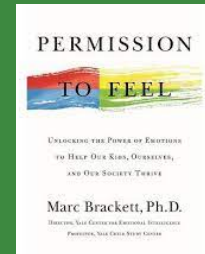
Positive Psychology Blog: Positive psychology looks at the positive events and influences in our lives. In this blog there are a plethora of topics to explore and understand through this way of thinking. Its often a great place to gain strategies and new perspectives around a variety of topics.



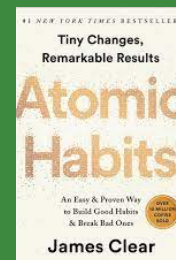
THE NEW HAPPY

GOOD READS

Permission to Feel | Marc Brackett



Atomic Habits | James Clear



Perfectionism | Lisa Van Gemert

