

# Bridging the Gaps



## Utilizing Therapeutic Interventions to Build Wellness and Resilience in Children with Behavioral Challenges

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### COMMUNITY PARTNER

Northern Children's Services supports the healthy development of children, while supporting their families to build stronger communities. The Wellness and Resiliency Program offers intensive and individualized services that integrate therapeutic interventions and academic support. It is provided after school during the academic year and all day during the summer. The majority of students referred for participation in the after-school and summer youth programs typically display behavioral challenges that manifest as multiple school suspensions, poor academic performance, impulsivity and difficulty responding appropriately to school structure and authority figures. The program offers individual therapy, family and group therapy skills, social skill development, and homework help and tutoring.



### TEAM'S EXPERIENCE

As Bridging the Gaps student interns, we assisted in recreational and therapeutic activities for children participating in the Wellness and Resiliency Program. We assisted in conflict de-escalation, resiliency-building strategies, implementation of coping skills and recreational day camp activities. We also provided academic support services in the form of assistance with reading and writing. As part of the summer programming, we created educational activities such as a Jeopardy game centered around Oral Health and Cardiovascular Health and teaching the children how to check their pulse.

### REFLECTION

"We initially chose NCS as our site because we are passionate about pediatric health care and mental/behavioral health services. We are grateful for this experience because we were able to better understand how social and environmental factors impact behavior and development in children. Working with the therapists and behavioral health technicians has broadened our knowledge regarding the effectiveness of practices such as mindfulness, emotional regulation, and distress tolerance. We look forward to applying what we have learned at NCS in order to provide better trauma-informed care to our patients."



### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Formed bonds with children through conflict de-escalation, resiliency-building strategies, and implementation of coping skills
- Provided academic support services in the form of assistance with reading and writing
- Created educational activities such as games centered around Oral Health and Cardiovascular Health
- Educated children on how to check pulses

### CHALLENGES

- Sociocultural views; engrained lessons regarding violence and respect
- Behavioral management difficulties
- Impulse control
- Undeveloped coping skills
- Nature of our temporary placement as interns