

Effective School Solutions at Columbia High School

What is Effective School Solutions (ESS)



Effective School Solutions (ESS) is a comprehensive therapeutic program that provides emotional and behavioral supports to students and families who are in need. The program consists of weekly individual therapy, group therapy and family support.

The South Orange/Maplewood School District has partnered with Effective School Solutions since the 2012-2013 school year.

Effective School Solutions @ CHS

Therapy:

- 1. Daily Group therapy:** Group is incorporated into your student's day as a scheduled class. Group is credit bearing (5 credits per year).
- 2. Weekly Individual sessions:** Sessions are scheduled during non-academic periods to minimize impact on academics (i.e: during PE, Lunch, Study Hall). Your student will be assigned to a specific Clinician in the ESS program.
- 3. Bi-monthly Family sessions:** Families participate in an initial clinical interview and are expected to attend family therapy twice a month. Sessions may be held in person (preferred), virtually or via phone. Each staff member works one late night a week to accommodate caregivers' schedules.
- 4. Pop-Up sessions:** If a student needs support during the school day, they can report to an ESS office to obtain assistance from an ESS staff member.

Effective School Solutions @ CHS

Additional Support:

- 1. Study Skills:** This is a scheduled class occurring daily for Classified students which focuses on development of executive functioning skills and assignment completion. Study Skills is credit bearing (5 credits per year).
- 2. Parent Support Group:** A monthly meeting for parents/caregivers with students in the ESS program at CHS. Each month, a new topic is presented and open discussion is welcomed.
- 3. Home Visits:** If a student is experiencing school avoidance/refusal, and a parent is home, ESS can be asked to perform a home visit in which ESS staff reports to the student's home to provide therapeutic intervention with encouragement of school attendance.
- 4. Communication:** Your ESS clinician will be in contact with you on a regular basis providing updates and interventions regarding your child's emotional health, grades, attendance and discipline. ESS staff work both collectively and collaboratively with all academic and administrative staff who are involved with your child. Communication with outpatient providers occurs at least once a month.

Collaboration with CHS

- ESS staff requests that teachers assigned to an ESS student complete weekly Teacher Feedback Forms. This assists the student in identifying strengths, areas of improvement, and possible challenges.
- ESS regularly communicates with teaching staff regarding students' assignments, classroom presentation, and overall academic functioning.
- School administration is aware of students working with ESS and can request ESS support when our students are in need.
- ESS staff attend 504 and IEP meetings.
- ESS collaborates regularly with school counselors, SACs, and CST members.

Effective School Solutions Extended School Year



This program provides structure and support that helps students maintain stability throughout the summer and encourages a smooth transition into the upcoming school year. Group topics will include psycho-educational programming geared towards developing social, emotional, educational and life skills and building confidence for the year ahead.

Effective School Solutions Referral Process

Referrals for ESS may be provided to the ESS Coordinator (Julie Bennett) or the District Gatekeeper by school personnel such as:

- ✓ School Counselors
- ✓ Student Assistance Counselors
- ✓ Administrators
- ✓ Nurses
- ✓ CST Members (Case Managers/Social Workers)
- ✓ ISTEP Staff

School Avoidance

- Refers to child-motivated refusal to attend school or difficulties remaining in classes for an entire day
- Collection of different kinds of attendance problems along a spectrum
- Overall prevalence may be as high as 28% to 35%
- Encompasses children and adolescents ages 5-17, with average onset at 10 to 13 years old
- Symptoms peak during transitional years

Spectrum of School Avoidance

- ↓ School avoidance with stress and pleas for nonattendance
- ↓ Repeated misbehaviors in the morning to avoid school
- ↓ Repeated tardiness in the morning followed by attendance
- ↓ Periodic absences or skipping of classes
- ↓ Repeated absences or skipping of classes mixed with attendance
- ↓ Complete absence from school during a certain period of time
- ↓ Complete absence from school for an extended period of time

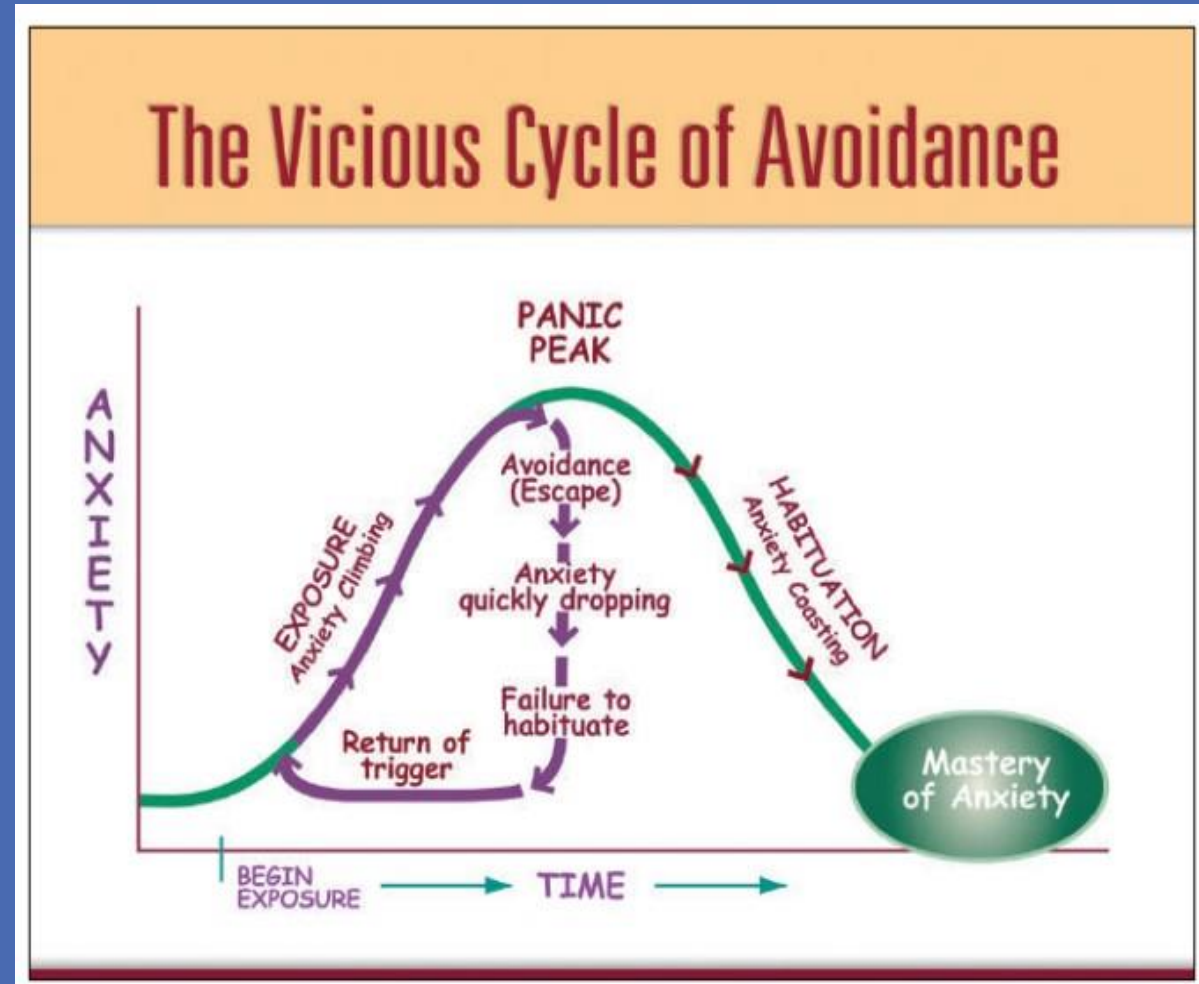
Why do some kids refuse school?

- To **avoid** general school-related distress causes by known or unknown factors
- To **escape** aversive social and/or evaluative situations at school
- To **pursue attention** from significant others, such as caregivers
- To **pursue tangible rewards** outside of school

The “why” will help shape the intervention

Anxiety Bell Curve

- ✓ If we don't give ourselves an opportunity to "ride the wave", we don't allow ourselves the chance to utilize strategies to regulate or habituate to the stressor, thereby denying ourselves the opportunity to successfully manage anxiety



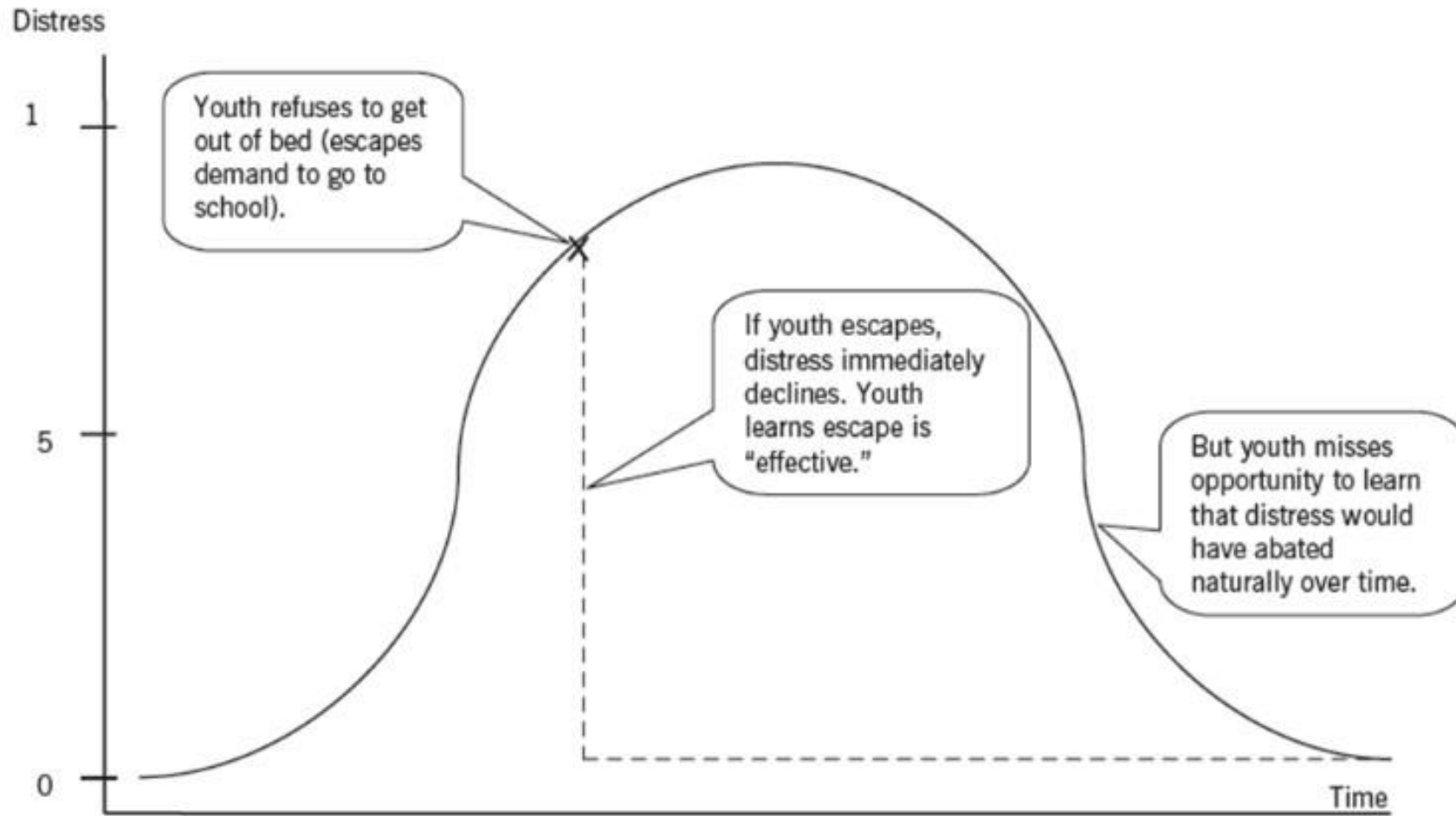


FIGURE 5.1. Effect of escape on learning in the case of a school-refusing youth. Escape is negatively reinforced by its immediate impact on distress reduction.

ESS Contacts

Elizabeth Kolodiy, LPC

Regional Director

ekolodiy@effectiveschoolsolutions.com

Julie Bennett, LSW

Coordinator

jbennett@somso.k12.nj.us

973.762.5600 x1225