Quick Tips For Schools Providing Mental Health Support Online During COVID-19

- *Remember you have already established these relationships with your students*
- You are not starting over
- Keep it simple/basic
  - You do not need to mimic exactly how online schools currently provide services (as they have different systems set up already)
- Start with a phone call and work your way up to be ready for [Zoom](#) or Google Hangouts ([video instructions](#), [document instructions](#)) or whatever platform your district has decided to use.
- Have a designated work space
- Encourage families/students to have a routine/schedule/workspace
- Mandated Reporting
  - This doesn't change in the online environment, follow the same mandated reporting guidelines as you always have.
  - If the student is not in immediate danger, but you have a concern, there's always the option of a welfare check. Call the local police department.
  - If you are unsure if something is a mandated report, report it. It is CPS's responsibility to determine if an investigation is warranted.
- Set Boundaries with your students
  - Your role as their school social worker/counselor doesn't change/you are not providing family therapy
  - Have office hours and post them
  - Use out of office features for after work hours
    - Email
    - Text (you can download an auto reply app to share you are out of the office, include the 741741 option in your auto response)
  - Get guidance from your district on whether they will support you texting students and families
  - Provide the MN Crisis Text Line: text MN to 741741 will be connected to Crisis Text Line
  - Specific day/time meetings work very well in the online environment with connecting with students and their families
- Create a schedule for yourself
  - Guidance from your district
  - May not be traditional hours during this time
  - Put it away at the end of the your work day
- Set up a schedule with your students but be flexible
  - Invite students via google calendar (older students)
  - Calling students to set up a weekly check in
    - Younger students this may look like connecting with parents first

- Practice good self-care strategies and share those with your families and students
- We use google forms for our consent for services
  - Use electronic signature
  - Make it clear we work during our office hours/and to contact outside services or 911 if emergency after school hours
  - View the example of confidentiality agreement in resources below
- Encouraging families and students to look at life a week at a time-being present in each day
  - Information is changing daily
  - Limit social media coverage/tv coverage

Possible Ideas

During this time the daily work we have been doing with students is most likely going to change. This will look more like checking in and helping students process what is going on, the stress of being home w/ multiple family members, missing friends, possible financial stress and managing mental health from home while distance learning.

- Provide Zoom sessions (other video platform) for larger groups of students
  - Seniors who are grieving losing the end of the senior year
  - Anxiety Regulation
  - Grief Groups
  - Self Care/Mindfulness
  - Mood Management
  - Helping kids manage a routine and schedule
  - Suggestions for families
    - Helping families come up with a routine, entertainment, conflict skills (before you may have been helping your students get along with each other-now it will be supporting them getting along with their siblings)
- Create support sessions via google documents and have your student(s) complete them
  - google documents are a great working document
  - you could send the session out at the beginning of the week and check in w/ them towards the end of the week once they have it completed
  - use privacy settings so the document can only be viewed by you and that student
- Provide Zoom (video) sessions for staff support
  - Host a virtual party (we've had a couple of virtual happy hours)
  - Mindfulness sessions (breathing strategies, yoga, meditation, self care tips)
- Provide Zoom sessions (video) for students 1 on 1 (or even in small groups)
  - Utilize e-libraries to check out workbooks with students (our school uses SORA). You can also use an online cloud reader from Amazon.
  - Sharing screen to show access to websites like headspace, mindful.org, changetochill, stopbreathethink, Downdogapp

Resources

- [BlueSky Handbook](#) (check out Netiquette section)
- [Google Slide Presentation with 4 Ways to Reduce Stress and Anxiety](#)
- [Support in Dealing With the Impact of the Coronavirus](#)
- [Tips to Help Manage Anxiety and Reduce Stress during the Coronavirus Outbreak](#)
- [Links to Resources](#)
- [Education Companies Offering Free Subscriptions due to School Closings (Updated) : Amazing Educational Resources](#)
- [30 days of mindfulness to calm anxious thoughts, strengthen emotional resilience, and cultivate connection](#)
- [30 Virtual Field Trips](#)
- [Example of Confidentiality Agreement from Upper Mississippi Academy](#)
- [MSSWA: Responding to COVID-19](#)