

Counseling, Psychological & Social Services is one of the ten components represented in the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model. School counselors, social service professionals and psychologists are essential to student emotional, behavioral and mental health as well as their academic success. Students who are taught social and emotional skills, such as managing emotions, practicing empathy, conflict resolution, and cooperation are more positive and less anxious than student not participating in these programs. Research shows schools with one professional school counselor for every 250 students or less have at least a 91% graduation rate, 94% attendance rate and 2% discipline issues rate.



Counseling, Psychological & Social Services support the mental, behavioral, and social-emotional health of students and promote success in the learning process. Services include psychological, psychoeducational, and psychosocial assessments; direct and indirect interventions to address psychological, academic, and social barriers to learning, such as individual or group counseling and consultation; and referrals to school and community support services as needed. Additionally, systems-level assessment, prevention, intervention, and program design by school-employed mental health professionals contribute to the mental and behavioral health of students as well as to the health of the school environment. These can be done through resource identification and needs assessments, school-community-family collaboration, and ongoing participation in school safety and crisis response efforts.

~ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

*A whole child approach, which ensures each student is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged, sets the standard for comprehensive, sustainable school improvement and provides for long-term student success.*

# COUNSELING, PSYCHOLOGICAL & SOCIAL SERVICES

Ways the **WHOLE SCHOOL, WHOLE COMMUNITY, WHOLE CHILD** components can support counseling, psychological & social services in your school

## 1 HEALTH EDUCATION

- Include counselors in the review and selection of health education materials and curriculum
- Work with the counselor to offer classroom lessons or programs in character education, conflict resolution, stress management, and anger management
- Coordinate with counselor to provide school-wide health promotion and prevention

## 2 PHYSICAL EDUCATION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Offer a variety of activities to meet the needs of all students
- Provide opportunities for students to practice communication skills to support psychological and social health
- Participate in professional development related to inclusion of all students in physical education/physical activity

## 3 NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT & SERVICES

- Develop and implement a system for identifying and referring students with health problems affected by nutrition including anemia, diabetes, eating disorders, food allergies, and overweight/obesity
- Implement policies or protocol to eliminate embarrassment or ridicule if a student is unable to pay for or does not have funds for school meals, classroom celebrations, etc.

## 4 HEALTH SERVICES

- Communicate with the counseling team about family problems that interfere with students' receiving needed medical care
- Include counselors in planning of emergency and crisis response protocols

## 5 COUNSELING, PSYCHOLOGICAL & SOCIAL SERVICES

- Establish a system to identify, track, and refer students with emotional, behavioral and mental health needs
- Provide treatment to student and parents using one-on-one counseling/sessions and small group counseling/sessions
- Coordinate with staff to implement emotional, behavioral, and mental health programs and education

## 6 SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL CLIMATE

- Establish a system to identify students who have been involved in any type of violence or self-harm behavior (as a bystander, victim, or perpetrator) and refer them to appropriate school-based or community-based services
- Establish a program to assist students with school transitions (orientation programs, matching new students with another student or buddy)
- Provide referrals for services when warranted
- Engage youth in positive social norming
- Conduct survey to measure climate

## 7 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Include counselors in planning of emergency and crisis response protocols
- Develop and implement a policy that promotes student health and safety
- Evaluate behavioral and violence data to make appropriate improvements to the school's physical environment

## 8 EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

- Participate in professional development to learn about the health and academic benefits of emotional, behavioral and mental health
- Offer a stress management program/wellness challenge for staff
- Organize a health screening for school employees that include mental health screening

## 9 FAMILY ENGAGEMENT





- Educate parents about tools and techniques for goal setting, decision-making, and communication skills
- Host a parent meeting or Lunch and Learn about the benefits of positive emotions on health
- Partner with parents to develop management plans for students with emotional, behavioral and mental health needs

## 10 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Establish links with community organizations that offer health and safety services (i.e., counseling, anger management)
- Identify social service and mental health providers in the community that can serve as consultants to the school.

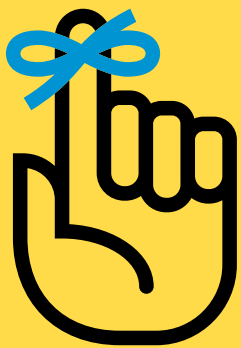
# COUNSELING, PSYCHOLOGICAL & SOCIAL SERVICES

## Maintaining Administrator Support for Counseling, Psychological & Social Services in the School

-  Ensure funding for or access to a full-time professional school counselor, social worker and psychologist based on the recommended ratios (one counselor for every 250 students; one social worker for every 400 students; one psychologist for every 1,000 students)
-  Ensure school-employed mental health and social service professionals receive professional development
-  Include school-employed and community-based mental health and social service professionals in planning of emergency and crisis response protocols
-  Utilize data to measure the need for, and impact of, behavioral health issues

## Ways to Engage Students

- Establish a peer mentor program for students to help others through school and/or life transitions (moving to a new school, starting middle or high school, etc.)
- Ask students about programs or services they would like to have available to support their emotional, behavioral, and mental health
- Invite students to assist in development of school-wide social and emotional health promotion campaigns



- ✓ Don't try to take on everything at once!
- ✓ The focus of the School Health Improvement Plan should be on the health needs/highest priorities identified through the assessment (School Health Index or Smart Source).
- ✓ Get input from other individuals in your school on how to best address counseling, psychological and social services.
- ✓ Meet regularly with your school health team and monitor School Health Improvement Plan implementation progress.
- ✓ A final consideration: If you shared the School Health Improvement Plan with someone unfamiliar with it, would they understand the purpose, SMART objective, and action steps necessary to achieve the objective? Would they understand what the school health team is trying to accomplish? If not, add more details!

## Writing a SMART School Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)

### Sample SMART Objective

- By May 15, 20XX, health teachers at Mountain View Elementary School will teach a five-week social skills program with all 5th grade classes to develop students' academic skills, social skills, and life-management skills.
- By May 15, 20XX, Skyline High School will provide a tobacco cessation counseling program for students using tobacco (identified by disciplinary action or volunteer).



## SMARTness

To ensure your SHIP is SMART, be sure it includes:

- A SMART objective based on the priority identified from a school health assessment tool
- Action steps that are clear, complete, and in chronological order
- Action steps on data collection, team and grant responsibilities, and sustainability efforts
- A realistic budget aligned with the SMART objective
- Shared responsibility among all team members

For more information on School Health Improvement Plans, refer to the Destination <http://tinyurl.com/orq4pyu>

# COUNSELING, PSYCHOLOGICAL & SOCIAL SERVICES



## Backpack Program: Ensure students have basic needs met

Each day, more than 31 million students receive low-cost or free lunch through the National School Lunch Program and 12.9 million receive low-cost or free breakfast through the School Breakfast Program. However, many students will struggle with access to food on the weekends. Backpack programs, often partnerships between schools and local non-profit organizations, provide much needed food and nutrition for the weekend to students in a confidential and discreet manner.

### Suggested action steps for your School Health Improvement Plan:

- Research non-profits or food banks that partner with schools in your area to provide backpack programs
- Make the call for volunteers among teachers, parents, and community members
- Determine your budget for food, backpacks, etc. If you are working with a non-profit or food bank, they may have an existing fundraising mechanism or food bank that can be utilized
- Estimate how many students could be served in your school (what is the need?, what is your capacity?)
- Identify and notify (confidentially and discreetly) parents of student who qualify (in some cases, there is no financial need or other qualifications to participate in a backpack program)
- Determine program logistics:
  - how will food and backpacks be obtained?
  - when will backpacks be filled?
  - where will backpacks be filled (at school or off site and delivered)?
  - where will food be stored, if needed?
  - who will fill backpacks?
  - how and when will backpacks be distributed to students?
- Set up record keeping system
- Set your kick off date
- Implement and evaluate your backpack program after a pre-determined timeline (4 weeks, 3 months, etc.)
- Share progress and outcomes of implementing the backpack program with the school community

## Student Orientation Program: Assist student during school or life transitions

To help incoming middle and high school students have a successful transition to a new school and grade level, many public schools host student orientation programs each summer. Some schools not only show new students around the school but also introduce them to a mentor or buddy. This serves several purposes: 1) new students have a familiar and friendly face during their first days of school to ease anxiety, 2) students are engaged in school program and activities to increase school connectedness, and 3) a safe and friendly school environment is promoted and demonstrated.

### Suggested action steps for your School Health Improvement Plan:

- Invite upper classmen students to assist in planning Freshmen Orientation Day and Mentor Initiatives
- Invite upper classmen to participant in Student Orientation Programs as mentors
- Set date for new student orientation event, and plan agenda and activities
- Provide training to mentors about the anxiety of coming to a new school, what their role will be as a mentor and what they can do and say to help new students
- Match new students with their mentor
- Invite incoming freshmen to new student orientation event where they will meet their mentor, tour the school, find their classrooms and locker, etc.
- Hold new student orientation event
- Send survey to new freshmen, mentors, and parents to evaluate Student Orientation Program and make improvements as needed
- Share progress and outcomes of implementing the Student Orientation Program with the school community

## Resources

- [American School Counselor Association](http://www.schoolcounselor.org)
- [Colorado Crisis Services](http://www.coloradocrisiservices.org)
- [Children's Hospital Colorado](http://www.childrenshospital.com/z35umyc)
- [Colorado School Safety Resource Center](http://www.colorado.gov/cssrc)
- [National Association of School Psychologists](http://www.nasponline.org/)
- [School Social Work Association of America](http://www.sswaa.org)
- [Youth Mental Health First Aid](http://www.youthmentalhealthfirstaid.org)
- [Colorado Education Initiative: Colorado Framework for School Behavioral Health](http://tinyurl.com/gtdckwg)