

Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

A Resource Tool for Providing a Continuum of Services and Supports during COVID-19



As we seek to provide services to our students in new ways, this resource tool is designed to provide suggested guidance for how Comprehensive School Counseling Programs may address students' social-emotional learning, academic development, and career and college readiness by providing a continuum of services and supports matched to individual student need. Each school/district has their own unique way of supporting students. This tool is provided merely as guidance for those who are seeking additional tools and support.

The outbreak of coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) may be especially challenging and stressful for middle school students. Fear and anxiety about missed classes and assignments, heightened news media, the health of friends and loved ones, and other concerns may feel overwhelming and cause strong emotions for students and their families/guardians.

The activities in the table below complement the work of districts and schools while recognizing the expertise and systems already in place. This is not an exhaustive list, but serves as a starting point to approach the work through a continuum of supports and services. It is important to match the level of support to the level of need of the student, while knowing that students do not have to progress through each level of support to get a more intensive support. For instance, a middle school student may need targeted support in academic development, but may only need universal support in the area of career and college. As you consider next steps and implement your program during this time, your expertise is essential in continuing to maintain care, connection and continuity of learning for all our students.

Middle School: Grades 6-8

Manage Program:

- Establish regular and predictable communication routines with students and families/guardians.
- Continue to facilitate/attend school meetings (i.e., SIT, SST, IEP, 504s) in format provided by your district to ensure all students get the necessary supports.
- Use data-driven decision-making and screening practices to identify students in need, provide support, monitor outcomes, and modify supports as needed.
- Provide communication and progress checks with students, teachers, and families/guardians to match increased supports.

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SUPPORT LEVEL	DELIVER SERVICES (Services directly to students or indirectly for students)	PERSON RESPONSIBLE (record here)
<p>Universal (For All Students)</p>	<p>Social-Emotional Learning/Mental Health and Social Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite students to suggest ideas on how to connect or implement new/different rituals to mirror school traditions (i.e., 8th grade graduation, dance). • Provide a supervised/staffed topic-specific forum for students to connect, manage stress and anxiety, share positives, and discuss challenges they are facing. • Provide regular updates to students and families/guardians on bright spots, good news, celebrations, and where basic needs can be met or are located in the community (i.e., food, housing support, financial support, mental health supports, etc). • Conduct check-ins with students and routinely ask students about how they are doing and what they are feeling. • Connect with teachers and other educators to identify students needing additional support (targeted and intensive support). • Direct students to appropriate and safe online resources and teach them how to evaluate resources for safety and relevance. • Coordinate with other staff members (i.e., leadership teacher, class advisors) to help students plan activities and remain connected. • Direct students and families/guardians to resources (food, mental health, housing, or community specific resources, such as LGBTQIA+ resource centers and culturally specific organizations) on websites, handouts, or by phone. • Coordinate with community-based organizations who are engaged with the students and families and/or who provide culturally and linguistically responsive services in their community. <p>Academic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources and supports for whole school activities, lessons, or skill building. • Provide information for online organization skills and time management. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with high school counseling staff to prepare 8th graders for transition to 9th grade (i.e. forecasting support, information sessions, etc.). <p>Career & College Readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When possible, encourage participation in virtual college exploration resources, college and career virtual tours, and websites for resources and updated information. • Coordinate with other staff members (i.e., leadership teacher, class advisors) to help plan virtual activities related to career and college exploration. 	
<p>Targeted (For Some Students)</p>	<p>Social-Emotional Learning/Mental Health and Social Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor which students respond to emails and which ones have not responded at all. Continue to follow-up with those who have not responded. • Provide small group support for grief and loss issues, stress reduction, and coping skills. • Collaborate with other mental health professionals to provide groups. • Provide consent forms for parents to sign-up students for group counseling sessions. • Send home small group worksheet packets that correspond with small group lessons. • Provide individual support, a plan, short-term counseling and resources for depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicidal ideation. • Provide regular check-in calls/connections with students as appropriate. • Develop a plan with student when possible for involving family/guardian support. • Collaborate with/refer to other mental health professionals and community partners (i.e., mental health providers, school-based health center staff). • Coordinate with homeless liaison to place copies of resources in places that are accessible by families navigating houselessness. • Encourage adult mentor programs to serve as a virtual weekly connection with students. • Coordinate with community-based organizations who are engaged with the students and families and/or who provide culturally and linguistically responsive services in their community. 	

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	<p>Academic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with teachers for information about student progress and needed supports. • Check-in with students about academic progress and challenges. • Provide supports and consider possible interventions for students needing assistance with academics. <p>Career & College Readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide small group activities to explore career-related learning areas connected to student interests and strengths. • Assist students in exploring how the subjects they are learning are connected to various professions. 	
<p>Intensive (For Few Students)</p>	<p>Social-Emotional Learning/Mental Health and Social Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify students needing intensive and individualized supports, notify administrator, and refer student for further assessment, counseling, treatment, or support and resources in your district or community. • Contact parents/guardians for informed consent and to schedule virtual individual or small group counseling. • Refer students at risk for suicide immediately to local resources for assessment and safety planning. • Follow district policy on crisis response and referral to mental health and suicide prevention, including calls to 9-1-1 for student safety. • Collaborate and communicate regularly with student and family/guardian, staff and community-agency providers to provide wrap-around supports for accessing services and resources. <p>Academic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor students on 504 Plans to make sure appropriate accommodations are provided. Update plans as needed. • Identify which students need intensive individualized support, and develop individualized academic intervention plan and frequently monitor progress. • Work with individual students to support transition to high school. 	

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Career & College Readiness

- Support students to assess their strengths, interests, and explore postsecondary options.

Things to Consider

- Reminder of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs - Assess students' basic needs, safety (physical and emotional), security, etc., before academic and career/college preparation needs.
- Apply a trauma informed and culturally responsive lens as you provide support services, especially with a focus on nurturing connection and well-being.
- Affirm and empathize with the emotional impact for the students during this crisis. Emotions such as sadness, anxiety, fear and frustration are understandable and normal.
- [Engage families](#) and [community-based organizations](#) as partners.
- Encourage students to communicate with trusted adults and/or mental health professionals. If negative emotions and behavior persists, interferes with normal functioning, or increases in severity to distressed levels, then direct students immediately to additional supports, resources, and referrals. Refer to ODE's guidance on [Mental Health and Social Support](#).
- Accommodations/modifications should be considered for [students with IEPs](#), 504 plans, and for English Learners to access distance learning and supports.
- Proactively identify students who may need more support before a referral (i.e., teacher hasn't been able to get in contact with student, student is receiving zeros, etc.).
- Utilize virtual face-to-face platforms as much as possible for regular check-ins with students to continue to build and maintain safe and supportive relationships, and to support students' emotional and mental health.
- Recognize the importance of providing sexuality education/child abuse prevention education, and to include information to those who may be experiencing abuse or violence at home, cyberbullying, unhealthy relationships, and/or challenges with development changes.