



High School Counselors' Re-Entry: Strategies for Returning to Campus

Presented by: Dr. Sandra Logan-McKibben, NCC, NCSC, DCC, ACS

April 15, 2021

Q: Could you please share more about the screener that was used, and how you navigated parent permission / opt out options?

A: There were two screeners used in Broward Schools this year. The SEL screener/assessment was through a program called ReThink Ed. It measured their level of awareness in the CASEL competencies at the developmentally appropriate age. This started in 3rd grade and went through 12th. The opt-out was managed at the district level by our SEL team. There was also a mental health screener used called Terrace Metrics, but only at four schools. This screener looked at things like anxiety, depression, connection to school/family, etc. Parents could opt their students out by simply notifying an identified school staff member. The follow up for this screener was prescribed by the company who created it, in that anyone who was a Level 1, needed follow up within 24 hours; Level 2 within 1 week, etc.. The follow up was provided by a mental health professional.

Many people are still "uncomfortable" with the use of screeners as they still equate them to assessments being conducted by a school psychologist. When in presentations, I am constantly reminding participants that a screener is really no different than a needs assessment and should be treated as such, especially since a screener would be applied to all students in a school or grade level, just like the needs assessment.

Q: How did your team recover from the shooting and how are you dealing with the pandemic?

A: Advocating for use of time is big, for our county public schools we still have guidance counselors who were hired to help with recovery from the shooting. Then we have another more recent trauma, COVID-19. There are supervisors that believe we should be doing counseling and not the master schedule. Administrators in my district take the lead on the master schedule to allow us counselors more time to do what is needed for students.

Q: What suggestions do you have for us to also personally recover from the trauma that we personally faced as well?

A: Having a trauma occur was their way to advocate for their time. Broward schools has a lot of mental health counselors and family therapists. My campus has 3, but most campuses have one they all share. Every school has one social worker as well. A big time advocate was when the mental health professionals proved the model was working which received tremendous support from admin and I feel this is something that should be implemented country-wide. Self-care is another very important factor that all counselors and school staff should make time for. Mindfulness and healthy eating, also exercise are good ways to practice self-care. First take care of yourself, so you can then take care of others.

Q: When you talk about the consistent communication with administrators do you have a format of questions/info to seek or share from admin?

A: In terms of consistent communication, think of it as regularly updating the necessary stakeholders: students, parents/caregivers, staff, etc. Making sure administration is updated on what you are doing on a daily basis is essential. Since we aren't always out and about around the school campus like normal, make sure admin and teachers know what you are doing to work with parents/families and students! Think of how you can build a sense of community and connection, right now there is a huge lack of it. In what ways are you contributing to the community and connection?

Q: What kind of precautions, due to social distancing, do you have in place and how do you work around it?

A: Sitting outside in the courtyard or a less crowded cafeteria is one way. Staying outdoors and always wearing masks is another. Our school implemented a 1 way hallway practice and placed arrows everywhere to ensure there is no two-way traffic, which is another way to stay safe. Lastly, making sure you're revisiting and reinforcing the expectation of safe practices to all students and staff is key.

Q: Do you share your counseling data? If so with who and what are some data you suggest we highlight at the end of the year?

You can't get to the regular data we usually have, but it will be different. Being able to log 1000 phone calls in whatever period of time matters. Show participation data ex: 25 parents who participate because it is online and more convenient for parents to actually make it to the meetings. Not outcome data, other data and documentation that matters that you can track/share. At the end of the year share how you are tracking data and compare to the past. I've now cultivated 4 new partnerships in response to the needs assessment I took to highlight the needs of our families. California school counselors, you ARE the heart of the school and I believe each of you will do what's in the best interest of your students!!! Ask yourself, "What is best for students?"

Q: Should we complete a needs assessment?

A: Yes, the needs assessment is vital as students return for the first time in over a year! Communication is a great must-do...making sure everyone knows what you are doing, how you can support, etc.! I also plan to keep my virtual office up and available and to still utilize video conferences for parent meetings, as I think it helps make things easier for families too!

Q: How can I get the resources and links, also will you share your needs assessment with us?

A: This presentation, questions/answers (FAQ doc) and welcome slides will be made available for FREE on www.rcec.us after creating a FREE account under the School Counselor On-The-Go Webinar Series section.

Resources:

[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/covid-19-resource-center/webinar-series/school-reentry-considerations-supporting-student-social-emotional-learning-\(sel\)-and-mental-behavioral-health-\(mbh\)-amidst-covid-19](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/covid-19-resource-center/webinar-series/school-reentry-considerations-supporting-student-social-emotional-learning-(sel)-and-mental-behavioral-health-(mbh)-amidst-covid-19)

Here is the bit.ly link that has links to all of the resources, needs assessments, etc.

<https://bit.ly/3e39fvm>