

MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS LEARNING SERIES

Virtual Strand

A Primer on Virtual Small Groups, Presented by Dr. Sam Steen

Webinar Summary:

Group counseling interventions are effective, efficient and appropriate for offering students in need of additional social, emotional and behavioral support. There are a number of considerations, generally speaking, that are applicable within virtual environments, yet the evidence is still emerging. It is important for helpers to continue to learn basic group counseling considerations that can be made within virtual environments, reflect on a number of challenges and barriers to overcome, and identify areas for additional growth and development.

Resources:

Websites

- [Center on PBIS Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports](#)
- [Associates for Specialists in Group Work](#)

Articles

- Banbury, A., Nancarrow, S., Dart, J., Gray, L., & Parkinson, L. (2018). Telehealth interventions delivering home-based support group videoconferencing: systematic review. *Journal of medical Internet research*, 20(2), e25.
- [Education Week blog: Ask a Psychologist: Helping Students Thrive Now](#)
- Rose, J., & Steen, S. (2014). The achieving success everyday group counseling model: Fostering resiliency in middle school students. *Professional School Counseling*, 18(1), 2156759X0001800116.

Webinars

- [Ethical Considerations: School Counseling in a Virtual Setting \(Part 1\)](#) (ASCA)
- [School Counseling in an Online World](#) (ASCA)
- [Ethical Considerations: School Counseling in a Virtual Setting \(Part 2\)](#) (ASCA)

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References

- Steele, T. (2017). School Counseling in a Virtual School Setting.
- Kozlowski, K. A., & Holmes, C. M. (2014) Experiences in Online Process Groups: A Qualitative Study, *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 39:4, 276-300.

Discussion Guide

1. If you are counseling students using a virtual platform, what are some risk factors that you must be on the look out for? And, if there is student who presents suicide ideation, what is the first thing that you should try and do?
2. How does your school or school district recruit students to participate in groups? Are parents' permission required to participate or is there an opt out process?
3. What are some user-friendly assessments and screening tools that could be use within a virtual environment to screen students for participation?
4. If some students do not want to use their cameras, should it be mandatory? Why or Why not? How can you go about using the chat/text feature when counseling students?
5. What grade or age level of students should be able to participate in virtual small groups? What brings you to this conclusion?
6. What is an appropriate number of students that should be in each of your groups and how long should each session be?
7. To what extent is resiliency a concept that is developmentally appropriate for all students k-12 and from all racial and cultural backgrounds?
8. Traditional groups in school settings help students with social, emotional and behavioral issues. Which of these might be most easily addressed in a virtual environment?

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9. What are some aspects of this session that are applicable to your work within your particular setting and what areas are you still in need of further exploration?