

MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS LEARNING SERIES

Virtual Strand

Suicide Intervention in a Virtual Setting, Presented by Benjamin Fernandez

Webinar Summary:

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for students between the ages of 10 and 19. Despite this, suicide is preventable when students in need are connected to appropriate supports. As many schools start the school year with distance learning school mental health professionals need to adapt suicide intervention practices from the brick and mortar to the virtual environment. This session will focus on the considerations for suicide intervention in a virtual distance learning environment.

Resources:

[SEL Resources](#), [Crisis Intervention Resources](#), [Suicide Prevention and Intervention Resources](#)

References:

- Brock, S. E. & Fernandez, B.S. (2019). School Suicide Postvention. Documented session presented at the National Association of School Psychologists 2019 Annual Convention, Atlanta, GA.
- Center of Disease Control and Prevention. (2017, July 20). 10 Leading Causes of Death and Injury. Retrieved from CDC.gov: <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/leadingcauses.html>
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- Fernandez, B. S., Brock, S. E., & Coffey, L. (2016, September). Suicide Risk Assessment. Bethesda, MD.

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- Kann, L., McManus, T., Harris, W. A., Shanklin, S L., Flint, M. A., Queen, B., ... Ethier, K. A. (2018, June). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2017. *MMWR Surveillance Summaries*, 67(8), 1-114. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.ss6708a1>
- Miller, D. N. (2011). *Child and adolescent suicidal behavior: School-based prevention, assessment, and intervention*. New York, NY: Guilford Press
- National Association of School Psychologists (2020). *Comprehensive suicide prevention in a time of distance learning* (Handout).
- National Association of School Psychologists (2020). *Returning to School Following COVID-19 Related Closures: The COVID-19 School Adjustment Risk Matrix (C-SARM)* [Handout]. Author.

Suicide Intervention Discussion Guide:

1. **Review your current suicide intervention procedures. Given the distance learning (virtual) environment:**
 - a. Who are the key members of your suicide intervention team?
 - b. How are you communicating student concerns to the suicide intervention team?
 - i. How are teachers referring students?
 - ii. How are caregivers referring?
 - iii. How are students referring or self-referring?
 - c. Who are your community partners that will work with your school district to support student needs?
 - d. What approved technologies will you use to connect with students and caregivers?
 - i. What is your backup form of communication?
 - ii. Is the technology secure?
 - e. What telehealth training have you received, or do you need to consider receiving?
 - f. What goals have you established for the school year?

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2. **Review you school/school district's suicide intervention program.**
 - a. In the context of virtual service delivery and doing no harm, are there ways to adapt your intervention procedures from the in person to the virtual environment?
 - b. As a team, problem solving the following situations:
 - i. When you are conducting a suicide screening and Technology and Communication Fails.
 - ii. When you are working with a student who was referred to you because of suicidal statements and the student hangs up on you.
 - iii. When you cannot reach the parent when you begin your suicide screening.
 - iv. When you cannot reach the student after you receive a referral regarding concerns from a teacher.
 - v. When you need to conduct a suicide screening and you encounter a language and/or cultural barrier.

3. **Knowledge**
 - a. What doing concerning behaviors and emotions look like in a virtual environment?
 - b. How will you communicate this information to teachers?