***SUPPORTING CONSIDERATIONS:   
MENTAL HEALTH/SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING***

*Updated 9/21/2020*

**COMMUNICATIONS**

❏ Is your school staying in close contact with public health authorities and other community partners to receive ongoing updates, share information and address concerns?

❏ What types of information does your school include in its “umbrella communications” to staff, students and families?

❏ Are your school’s communications using developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate language for students and families?

❏ In light of ongoing anxiety, isolation and grief associated with the pandemic, how is your school communicating what “normal” now means at school to staff, contract personnel, families and students, both those attending onsite and those virtually from home?

❏ How is your school continuing to update staff, contractors, students and families with current information on the pandemic, reassuring their health and wellness is the priority? [RM1]

❏ How is your school continuing to stress the importance of personal protective equipment (PPE), hand-washing, sanitizing and social distancing to staff, contractors, students and families?

❏ How is your school communicating with students in vulnerable health populations and their families to reassure necessary measures are being taken at school to keep students safe?

❏ How is your school communicating with Pre-School and Kindergarten families to reassure necessary measures are being taken at school to keep students safe?[RM2]

❏ How and at what intervals is your school continuing to check in with students at higher risk for mental health challenges, both those attending onsite and those virtually from home?

❏ What outreach has your school made to the families of students who were expected but did not return to school?

**SCHOOL STAFF**

**Staff Supports**

❏ What types of activities, “quiet spaces” and supports does your school provide to staff and contract personnel for de-stressing, self-care and staff peer support?

❏ How is your school providing support to Preschool and Kindergarten staff who may have higher levels of stress due to the challenges of managing young children’s safe behaviors during a pandemic?

**Professional Development**

❏ What types of professional development does your school provide, in collaboration with public health and mental health authorities, for all staff and contract personnel about:

❏ Recognizing their own personal stressors, secondary trauma, compassion fatigue and when emotionally overwhelmed?

❏ Effective strategies and activities to ensure ongoing self-care?

❏ Sustaining positive, supportive learning environments for both students attending school onsite and those virtually from home?

❏ Talking with and supporting other staff and students experiencing anxiety, isolation, trauma, grief, a mental health concern or crisis, using *Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA)* and suicide prevention principles?

❏ How is your school connecting trauma-informed practices already familiar to staff with competencies addressing pandemic-related anxiety, isolation, trauma and grief?

❏ What types of professional development is your school providing for School Nurses about the pandemic, recognizing physical manifestations and the effects of anxiety, isolation, trauma and grief on mental health and social-emotional wellness?

❏ What types of professional development is your school providing for Afterschool Program staff about the pandemic and the effects of anxiety, isolation, trauma and grief on mental health and social-emotional wellness?

❏ What types of professional development is your school providing for Nutrition Services staff about the pandemic and ways to provide social-emotional support to students through meal service, both onsite and take-home?

**RESILIENCY, OPTIMISM AND HOPE**

❏ Research has shown hope is one of the best predictors of positive academic outcomes. Educators who are more hopeful have students that generally perform 12% better on academic assessments. Since hope can be both measured and taught, how is your school fostering hope among staff, students and families?

❏ Positive psychology provides a variety of strength-based approaches for teaching coping skills needed during a pandemic. How is your school fostering the development of skills related to resilience, optimism and hope?

**POSITIVE, SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE**

❏ How is your school fostering a positive, supportive learning environment that promotes all students’ physical, mental and social-emotional health and wellness?

❏ How is your school providing for all students’ safety during the pandemic through developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate health and wellness measures and supports?

❏ How is your school fostering trusting relationships with students and families during the pandemic?

❏ Does your school have a designated safe space or sensory room accessible to students within each classroom, with sanitized hands-on support items?

❏ How is your school ensuring a positive, supportive learning environment for LGBTQ students, reducing the potential for trauma, bullying and victimization at school? Are adequate restrooms, changing areas and safe spaces at school provided?

❏ How is your school minimizing stressors for staff, contract personnel and students during daily transition times between classes?

❏ How will your school minimize stressors for staff, contractors, students and families in the event of future school closures?

**ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING**

❏ Families may have gone through radical changes and traumatic events that schools aren’t aware of. How is your school staying attuned to broader social, political, economic and family stressors that may affect a student’s engagement in learning, whether attending onsite or virtually from home?

❏ How, and at what intervals, is your school assessing students’ engagement in learning, adjusting academics accordingly? When adjusted academic expectations are unrealistic, school may become a source of emotional distress for students and families.

❏ What types of academic supports and assistance is your school providing to students having difficulty concentrating or engaging in learning due to pandemic-related anxiety, trauma, grief or a mental health concern, both those attending onsite and those virtually from home?

❏ How is your school addressing any emotional distress experienced by students and families engaging in virtual learning at home, such as:

❏ Assistance with internet connectivity?

❏ Providing the technology, devices and supports needed?

❏ Training and technical assistance in technology competencies?

❏ Understanding the academic tasks assigned?

❏ Knowing when and how to best assist a student at home?

❏ Monitoring the student’s active engagement in learning?

❏ Recognizing when the student is struggling, bored or disengaged from learning and the appropriate steps to address this?

❏ Sharing formative information and insights about the student’s learning with their teachers?

❏ How is your school collaborating with community partners to provide additional supports for students and families struggling with food security/access impacting a child’s physical, mental or social-emotional health and engagement in learning?

**SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND WELLNESS**

**Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Supports**

❏ What types of developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate social-emotional learning opportunities and supports is your school providing for students, both those attending onsite and those virtually from home?

❏ How is your school integrating evidence-based social-emotional learning into all curricula content areas and how taught?

❏ How is your school addressing interruptions in students’ social-emotional development related to the pandemic and adjusted curricula and supports accordingly?

❏ How, and at what intervals, is your school assessing students’ social-emotional development, both those attending onsite and those virtually from home?

❏ What criteria is your school using to identify and triage students with the highest levels of social-emotional needs, accompanied by appropriate interventions and supports?

❏ Students with disabilities may have difficulty with the social-emotional aspects of school, whether attending onsite or virtually from home. How is your school addressing this?

**Student Behavior**

❏ Students may exhibit a wide range of behaviors to adjust and cope with pandemic-related stress, anxiety, isolation, trauma and grief. How has your school re-defined “normal” student behavior and adjusted tiers of interventions and supports accordingly to avoid “jumping tiers” by over-diagnosing pandemic-related behaviors?

❏ How is your school communicating clear expectations of student behavior, both for those attending onsite and those virtually from home, to students, families, staff and contract personnel?

❏ How is your school integrating social-emotional learning and supports into the student disciplinary process to address any underlying trauma, grief or mental health concern?

**MENTAL HEALTH**

**Mental Health Awareness and Self-Care**

❏ How is your school promoting students and families’ awareness about:

❏ The pandemic and associated physical, mental and social-emotional manifestations?

❏ The importance of mental health and social-emotional wellness?

❏ The effects of anxiety, isolation, trauma and grief on mental health and social-emotional wellness?

❏ Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) and Suicide Prevention?

❏ Secondary trauma and compassion fatigue?

❏ Mental health and social-emotional self-care, resources and supports?

**Mental Health Screening and Assessment**

❏ Universal mental health screenings can provide markers on what students are struggling with emotionally and psychologically. Repeated at regular intervals, this data can help your school be more responsive to students’ specific mental health and social-emotional needs. How, and at what intervals, is your school screening students to identify those in need of mental health services and supports?[RM6]

❏ Are the mental health screening tools evidence-based and developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate for the students being screened at your school?

❏ What arrangements has your school made for outside clinical assessments of students needing specialized mental health services and supports?

**Mental Health Referrals**

❏ What are your school’s referral protocols for staff and for students in need of mental health services and supports, both those attending onsite and those virtually from home?

❏ Are your school’s referral protocols developed in partnership with local mental health providers?

❏ What types of follow-up mechanisms, at what intervals after a referral is made, have been put in place by your school and local mental health providers?

**Mental Health Services and Supports**

❏ Heightened anxiety and depression are normal reactions to ongoing stress, isolation, trauma and grief. What types of school-based and community-based mental health services and supports are available to students, both those attending onsite and those virtually from home?

❏ How has your school aligned social-emotional learning during the school day with school-based mental health services and supports?

❏ What types of assistance and supports is your school providing for staff and students having difficulty re-adjusting to school, whether onsite or virtually from home?

❏ What types of assistance and supports are available to grieving staff, students and families through your school?

❏ If your school is utilizing tele-health platforms to meet staff and students’ mental health needs, how is the privacy, security and confidentiality of information exchanged being ensured?

❏ How is your school integrating mental health services and supports into Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) or other similar frameworks?

**Mental Health Crisis Response**

❏ What types of mental health crisis interventions and supports does your school provide students at risk of imminent harm to themselves or others?

❏ Does your school have a Mental Health Crisis Response Team in place?

❏ Is a licensed mental health practitioner who is familiar with your school part of this team?

❏ Are your school’s mental health crisis protocols developed in partnership with your area’s Youth Mobile Crisis Response Team (YMCRT)?

**RESOURCES**

***NOTE:* If you need immediate assistance, we encourage you to access the following resources that are available any time of the day or night:**

**Nebraska Family Helpline: 1-888-866-8660**

**Local Law Enforcement / Emergency Response Agency: 911** *(Emergency)*

**Boys Town National Hotline: 1-800-448-3000 or**

**Text Voice to 20121** *(Text 12 pm -12 am)*

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255**

**National Crisis Text Line: Text START to 741741**

*(Phone Carrier’s text charges may apply)*

**STATE HOTLINE for COVID-19 Information: (402) 552-6645**

**Nebraska Resources**

* Department of Health and Human Services
  + School-Mental Health Resource Guide:

<http://dhhs.ne.gov/Behavioral%20Health%20Documents/Resources%20for%20Schools.pdf>

Mental health resources and checklist for school administrators

* + Nebraska Family HelpLine:

<http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Nebraska-Family-Helpline.aspx>

Resources on Child Behavioral Issues and Child Mental Health Issues

* + Youth Mobile Crisis Response:

<http://dhhs.ne.gov/Behavioral%20Health%20Documents/MobileCrisisResponse.pdf>

This is a free resource for families and youth of any age who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis anywhere in Nebraska. YMCR therapists are available 24/7 and help is provided in the community, home, or through video consultation within one hour of your call.

* + Screening and Referral Guide: Promoting Mental Well-being For All Children and Youth:

<http://dhhs.ne.gov/MCAH/PH-PB-4.pdf>

Provides a list of commonly-used, valid and reliable tools for screening readily available and suitable for use in community and clinical settings.

* The Kim Foundation:

<https://www.thekimfoundation.org/local-national-resources/>

Information on Mental Illness, Finding Help, Community Outreach and Suicide Prevention

* Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

<https://www.nebraskachildren.org/covid-19-information-and-resources.html>

Includes information on accessing Basic Needs, Financial Assistance, Suspending Utility Connection, Food Security, Unemployment, Federal Sick Leave and Family Medical Leave, Health and Safety, Mental Health, Housing, Health Insurance, Child Care Providers and Tips for Parents

* University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Education and Human Sciences

<https://cehs.unl.edu/comingtogetherforwellness/>

Coming Together for Wellness is a resource page with service and support for easy access to FREE 30-minute family therapists, ideas and activities to support and strengthen families.

**COVID-19 Related Resources**

* Colorin’ Colorado!:

<https://www.colorincolorado.org/coronavirus>

Multilingual resources that can help schools and communities communicate more effectively with families of English language learners and immigrant students about COVID-19.

* Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Manage Anxiety and Stress

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

This article provides information on managing anxiety and stress during the pandemic

* Talking with Children about Coronavirus Disease 2019

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fschools-childcare%2Ftalking-with-children.htm>

This article provides tips on talking to children about the pandemic

* *Search Institute Building Developmental Relationships during the COVID-19 Crisis:*

<https://www.search-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus-checklist.pdf>

When young people experience developmental relationships with parents, educators, youth program staff, and other adults their outcomes are better, their risk behaviors are lower, and they are more likely to be on the path to thrive in life. Staff in schools and youth programs do not need to and should not stop seeking to build developmental relationships with young people while they are at home during the nation’s response to the COVID-19 crisis.

* National Center for School Mental Health:

<http://www.schoolmentalhealth.org/COVID-19-Resources/>

Includes various resources for School Staff and Administrators, Wellness and Mental Health and Technology to Support School Mental Health

* Mental Health Technology Transfer Center: Responding to COVID-19 / School Mental Health Resources:

<https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/global-mhttc/responding-covid-19>

This page highlights MHTTC products and resources that can be useful when coping with the effects of widespread public health crises. A compilation of resources from other reputable organizations is also available.

* National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/covid-19-resource-center>

Online COVID Resource Center, providing a variety of resources, such as checklists for school-based mental health, crisis team planning, and materials for parents on depression and anxiety.

* American Foundation for Suicide Prevention – Taking Care of Your Mental Health

<https://afsp.org/mental-health-and-covid-19>

It’s important to know that we are not helpless in light of current news events. We can always choose our response. Tips for individuals who might be struggling and some tips to take care of your mental health.

* What Should I Look For? Signs and Symptoms of Mental Health Problems in Children During COVID-19:

<https://27c2s3mdcxk2qzutg1z8oa91-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/WTI-tipsheet.pdf>

Signs and Symptoms of Mental Health Problems in Children During COVID-19

* Child Mind Institute: Back-to-School Resources for Families and Educators

<https://childmind.org/backtoschool/>

For families and educators alike, the transition into this school year comes with new challenges. Going “back to school” might mean attending in person with lots of distancing, soldiering through another round of remote learning, or some of both. No matter your situation, we’re here with practical tools and expert advice to help you make the best of going back to school during the coronavirus crisis.

**Training Opportunities**

* Panorama-*Social-Emotional Learning Toolkit for Educators, Schools and Parents related to COVID-19:*

<https://go.panoramaed.com/adult-sel-social-emotional-learning-toolkit>

During this time, it's critical for school leaders, educators, and parents to focus on our own social-emotional wellbeing as we look to support the social-emotional development of our students at home.

* Daily Learning:

<https://www.panoramaed.com/webinars>

* Free virtual learning to support social-emotional learning and mindfulness:

<https://go.panoramaed.com/video/adult-sel-wellness-w1>

* Mental Health America-Self-Help Tools:

<https://www.mhanational.org/self-help-tools>

Self-Care Resources for Educators, Schools and Parents with screening tools to help identify symptoms of a mental health disorder. MHA's screening tools provide an anonymous, free and private way to learn about your mental health and if you are showing warning signs of a mental illness.

* Online Course for Teachers:

<https://statprogram.org/training>

The STAT curriculum is designed to help educators understand Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) and provide ways to mitigate its effects through the use of self-care techniques and a variety of helpful resources.

* Online Training for School Nurses on Mental Health during a Pandemic:

<https://www.answers4families.org/school-health-updates>

* [Psychological First Aid](https://learn.nctsn.org/):

<https://learn.nctsn.org/enrol/index.php?id=38>

PFA online includes a 6-hour interactive course that puts the participant in the role of a provider in a post-disaster scene. This professionally-narrated course is for individuals new to disaster response who want to learn the core goals of PFA, as well as for seasoned practitioners who want a review. It features innovative activities, video demonstrations, and mentor tips from the nation’s trauma experts and survivors. PFA online also offers a Learning Community where participants can share about experiences using PFA in the field, receive guidance during times of disaster, and obtain additional resources and training.