

WSCC Component: Counseling, Psychological & Social Services

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Counseling, Psychological & Social Services

Grades 6-8

Student Agenda

Mr. Wu kept looking for better ways to communicate with students and parents. He decided to disseminate the student agenda via e-mail and post it on the class Web page to provide more opportunities to engage parents in their children's school activities. This planner helps students and parents organize activities and tasks. Mr. Wu incorporated graphics, quizzes, and puzzles to make it more enticing to read. He added reminders about health practices, such as getting plenty of exercise, staying hydrated, and eating a healthy diet.

The student agenda also promotes school events, such as the talent show and a track meet. It lists the contact information of event organizers so parents and students can sign up to volunteer and participate. Mr. Wu includes school rules on the student agenda, and he reminds everyone about services available in the Nurse's Office, the Counselor's Office, and the Health Center.

You can:

- Promote student and family engagement by producing an online or paper-based weekly or monthly student agenda. It can have a wellness theme and promote good nutrition and physical activity. Also, it can inform parents about school events, services, and policies.
- Check out the School Health Team's discussion about recommendations to improve Health Education at Jefferson School.

Learn More

- [Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health](#) [PDF – 1.74 MB]

Health Center

Exam Table

The Jefferson School-Based Health Center (SBHC) provides a wide range of care. When the center opened, the impact the center seemed to have not only on students' health, but also on academic achievement, surprised some of the faculty at Jefferson School. Teachers have seen how improved health and improved learning seem to go hand-in-hand. What the school staff has seen anecdotally is in

line with research recommendations that school-based health centers be used “as a strategy to improve health and education outcomes, particularly among low-income children.” The Jefferson School office administrator has been able to track how student absenteeism has markedly decreased in the time the health center has been open.

The Kolbe Public Health Department has been doing a study that looks at how and when community members access health care services. They have found that the SBHC is reducing inequities in health care access for children in their community. They also found that children from lower income households have markedly increased their usage of health care services, specifically their use of preventive services such as immunizations, flu shots, and well visits via the SBHC.

You can:

- Tell school staff, local leaders, and parents how school-based health centers benefit communities. To create or expand SBHC partnerships in your school, you can share evidence with your stakeholders, such as how:
 - Less money is spent on ER visits and hospitalizations for children with asthma if they have access to a SBHC.
 - Inner-city students were 21 times more likely to make mental health visits to SBHCs than to community health centers.
 - Students served by SBHCs had fewer discipline problems, course failures, and school absences.
- Check out the School Health Team's discussion about recommendations to improve Health and Academics at Jefferson School.

Learn More

- [Social Determinants of Health](#)
- [Asthma](#)
- [Mental Health](#)

Services Directory

The Jefferson School-Based Health Center (SBHC) is proud to provide comprehensive care to its patients with an array of services that address many components of health. It offers patients:

- **Primary Care Services** such as well-child visits, preventive screenings (including vision), immunizations, and chronic disease management. When applicable, the center also provides sexual abstinence counseling, pregnancy testing, and sexually transmitted infection (STI) diagnosis and treatment. Like half of SBHCs, the Jefferson SBHC also offers a full range of reproductive health services, including birth control, to its patients.
- **Dental Care** that includes screenings, cleanings, fluoride supplements/treatments, and sealants.
- **Behavioral Health Counseling** to address issues such as depression, anxiety, and attention disorders.
- **Health Education** on topics like healthy eating, active living, smoking cessation, and weight management.

The SBHC staff includes a licensed social worker (LSW) who is in charge of behavioral health. He collaborates with the school counselor and the health center's certified health education specialist (CHES) to offer support groups for students. These groups leverage positive peer influence to help students who are facing a variety of physical, social, and emotional health issues. The CHES, trained in behavior change theory, also works individually with students interested in making changes, such as decreasing substance use or improving nutrition.

You can:

- Support efforts in your school district to identify community health care providers who may be interested in various levels of partnership with your schools.
- Be sure to consider the spectrum of health and well-being services that your students may need.

Community Referrals

The Jefferson School-Based Health Center (SBHC) is proud to offer primary care, behavioral health care, and preventive education and support services. Nonetheless, the providers at the Jefferson SBHC make a point to know which providers and agencies in the community provide specialized care. Jefferson SBHC staff is able to quickly provide appropriate referrals to specialists any time a patient needs care beyond what the center can offer.

The SBHC providers seek to promote overall health for each of their patients. To do this, they do not simply focus on the single issue, such as a cold, that may have brought the student to the center. Rather,

they use the visit as an opportunity to assess how conditions in which the students live, learn, and play may affect their health risks and outcomes. The students fill out a brief survey while waiting to see the provider. The staff can then identify “red flags” such as unstable home environments or risky behaviors that affect a student’s health and well-being. The providers have a protocol for discussing potential issues with the students and providing appropriate referrals to community organizations and providers, such as social service agencies and substance abuse treatment centers.

You can:

- Create or review your school’s plan for identifying and assessing at-risk students.
- Formalize the team of individuals who lead these efforts and the processes they use to assess and refer students. Everyone on your staff can benefit from regular reminders about “red flags” with students and who to alert when they suspect a student may be "at risk."
- Look for ways to develop or strengthen partnerships with social services, behavioral health agencies, and health care safety net providers in your community.

Learn More

- [Care Coordination](#)

Medical Records

Dr. Kostas is a firm believer in the model of school-based health care. She and the rest of the staff at the Jefferson School-Based Health Center (SBHC) believe that providing integrated health care services on the school premises makes a significant difference in the health outcomes of the students. Like most SBHCs, a primary care provider and a behavioral health provider staff the center at Jefferson School. Unlike most centers, the Jefferson SBHC is in the 20% of SBHCs that also have an oral health provider on-site.

All the health care providers at the Jefferson SBHC make sure to emphasize to patients that provider/patient confidentiality and HIPAA protections apply at the health center just as they would at any medical clinic. The health center medical records belong to the health care providers. Like any medical records, they remain in secure areas and are only accessible by the appropriate personnel. Dr. Kostas takes a few minutes to deliver an annual presentation at Jefferson School faculty meetings to remind the teachers that clinic staff cannot answer any questions about an individual student’s health, even questions with the best of intentions.

You can:

- Help raise awareness at your school about how SBHCs complement traditional school nurse offices.
- Emphasize the two main differences between SBHCs and school nurse offices: (1) the types of providers typically found at SBHCs include medical doctors, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, licensed social workers, certified health education specialists, dentists, dental hygienists; and (2) patient record confidentiality.

Counselor's Office

Phone

After counseling a sixth-grader with emotional problems, Ms. Kowalski determined the student should seek counseling outside of school. She spoke with the parents and provided information for a social services agency that was well-suited to meet the student's needs.

Ms. Kowalski checks in with the student periodically and contacts the parents as additional school concerns arise and works with them to ensure the student can be successful in school. She meets with parents in person, or she e-mails or phones them if they are not able to come to her office.

You can:

- Support the efforts of school counselors by making sure they have adequate resources and equipment to serve the needs of students and implement comprehensive school counseling programs. School counselors may need some flexibility in their schedules.
- Check out the School Health Team's discussion about recommendations to improve Counseling, Psychological and Social Services at Jefferson School.

Learn More

- [Family Engagement](#)

Bulletin Board

Ms. Kowalski knows students deal with a lot of stress that can sometimes be overwhelming. She wanted to reinforce the positivity in the world, so she created a bulletin board to accentuate the good things at the school and in the community. Also, she used the bulletin board to emphasize growth mindsets that students need to develop coping skills and resiliency.

She encouraged students to add their own uplifting thoughts and drawings to the bulletin board, and she posted growth mindset messages and pictures. Some students created messages and drawings through classroom guidance lessons.

In a short while, the bulletin board gained a lot of attention because students liked the positive messages. Every month, Ms. Kowalski selects a theme for the bulletin board and highlights particularly relevant messages.

You can:

- Affirm the positive at your school and community by setting up a Wall of Positivity bulletin board and incorporating growth mindsets.
- Establish a supportive learning environment and help students understand the skills they need to develop coping skills and resiliency.

Learn More

- [Protective Factors](#)
- [School Climate](#)

Art Easel

Art easels, paints, crayons, chalk, and markers may seem like they belong in the art room, but they can fill an important function in the Counselor's Office. Students can create art works to convey their feelings and emotions. Painting and drawing can be effective communication methods, especially for students who have difficulty with verbal communication because of physical, cognitive, or mental challenges.

Ms. Kowalski learned about art as a school counseling tool at a professional development conference and began using it at Jefferson School. She engages students in art activities to help them express concerns that they may have difficulty communicating verbally.

You can:

- Introduce art as a form of self-expression in individual or small group sessions, or in classroom guidance lessons.

- Provide opportunities for counselors to pursue school counseling-specific professional development training so they have updated and well-rounded skills for implementing comprehensive school counseling programs that benefit all students.

Learn More

- [American School Counselor Association](#)
- [School Health Index \(Module 6\): School Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services](#)

Storage Shelf

Puppets, board games, and other toys are items that can help students feel more at ease in the Counselor's Office. Sometimes Ms. Kowalski plays board games with students as a way to encourage them to open up and talk through their problems. She also uses board games in small groups that address social and emotional issues, student skills, or career exploration. Toys and games can help build a communication connection between counselors and students who may be shy or reluctant to reveal their feelings.

Older students grab stress balls, while younger students use toys and costumes for role playing or moving around the Counselor's Office. The physical activity—even if it is simply keeping hands busy—can help minimize anxiety.

You can:

- Reduce students' stress by making your Counselor's Office a welcoming environment.
- Ask community organizations to donate toys and board games that stimulate interaction or serve as conversation starters.
- Make sure the school counseling department has funding to purchase developmentally appropriate games and toys.

Learn More

- [School Connectedness](#)

Bookshelf

Ms. Kowalski maintains a well-stocked lending library of books, movies, and audio media on topics related to academic, career, and social and emotional development. These resources provide guidance

on advancing academically, establishing personal goals, and developing plans. The resources also address the behavioral, mental, and emotional health of students.

The bookshelf has plenty of "how to" guides on setting goals, nurturing special talents, and establishing healthy lifestyles. Topics also include anger management, personal safety, violence prevention, and substance abuse. The books and audio media offer guidance to Ms. Kowalski and all educational staff members.

Students, parents, and staff borrow these resources to help them address problems or barriers to learning and general well-being. The books and audio media can suggest ways to promote student achievement and solve behavioral issues in the classroom.

You can:

- Build a resource center to reinforce student well-being and learning. Many materials are available from publishers that specialize in school counseling. Some community organizations may have resources to donate that can help stock the lending library.
- Check out the School Health Team's discussion about recommendations to improve **Health and Academics** at Jefferson School.

Computer

In several classroom guidance lessons, students revealed incidents of cyberbullying. Ms. Kowalski developed a student survey to find out the pervasiveness of cyberbullying and then decided to create an intervention based on the results.

She organized a "Caught in the Web" Internet safety event that featured a panel of experts: a mental health provider, a representative from the Kolbe police department, and an information technology professional.

The after-school event was open to the public and heavily promoted to attract students and their families. Serving as moderator, Ms. Kowalski guided the panel discussion to focus on how students can navigate safely and handle bullying on the Internet. Parents posed questions about setting up controls on their home computers. They asked about law enforcement support and emerging threats to computer security. The mental health provider offered guidance on building self-esteem and avoiding unfavorable social interaction on the Web.

Following the panel discussion, Ms. Kowalski gathered up extra leaflets and brochures from members of the panel and put together packets to send home with students for parents who did not attend the after-school event. She also developed a classroom guidance lesson on cyberbullying and delivered a presentation during a PTA meeting so more parents could find solutions for cyberbullying.

You can:

- Coordinate a "Caught in the Web" Internet safety event for your school and community by working with parent support organizations, the local mental health association, and police department. A panel of experts may include computer security professionals, social media communications specialists, mental health counselors, and law enforcement personnel.

Learn More

- [Prevent Cyberbullying](#)

Door Sign

Ms. Kowalski found out students sometimes felt uncomfortable when they entered the Counselor's Office because of fear that others would think they were in trouble or had serious issues. She requested a less noticeable location for her office. Now students have a certain level of privacy because they do not have to pass in front of teachers and other students when they come to meet with the counselor.

Ms. Kowalski provides a quiet, comfortable environment and ensures uninterrupted conversations by hanging a sign on the window of her door: "Counseling in Progress — Please Do Not Disturb."

You can:

- Select a location for the Counselor's Office that affords a level of privacy. The space should be large enough so parents or small groups of students can gather.
- Create a relaxing setting so participants feel at ease.
- Check out the School Health Team's discussion about recommendations to improve Counseling, Psychological and Social Services at Jefferson School.

Conference Room

Conference Room Conversation 5: Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services

Mrs. Ahmed: Good morning, everyone. The School Health Team completed the *School Health Index* (SHI) module on School Counseling, Psychological and Social Services. The team identified strengths and

weaknesses in Jefferson School's counseling, psychological, and social services based on the results of the module score card, and then they developed an action plan to recommend improvements. Nurse Okonjo and Ms. Kowalski, would you share with the group the team's findings and recommendations?

Nurse Okonjo: Thank you, Mrs. Ahmed. The *School Health Index* has been very useful. Two years ago, Ms. Kowalski and I noticed some of our students had difficulty adjusting to Jefferson School, in terms of transitioning to the next grade level and making friends. After completing the SHI module, our score card results brought our attention to this area for improvement, and we developed an action plan to address socialization issues.

Mrs. Chen: What were some of the items in your action plan to improve the situation?

Nurse Okonjo: One item we implemented was to set up a buddy system. We connected students to older classmates who could answer questions and help them find their way as they transitioned into a higher grade.

Mr. Rodriguez: Another item in the action plan was to install a Buddy Bench on the playground. Students can go to this seat and socialize with others. It helps them form new friendships. We followed the guidance in the Social and Emotional School Climate component of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model as we worked through implementing these improvements.

Nurse Okonjo: Ms. Kowalski and I are pleased with the changes we made last year in social services. We are sure that when we reassess next year, we will see improved scores on our SHI score card.

Mrs. Chen: Did this year's score card show other areas for improvement?

Nurse Okonjo: Yes, our health and safety promotion and referral systems received medium scores on the score card. Some students feel emotionally upset and out of control. The SHI score card helped us realize the need for more in-depth counseling services for these students. In our action plan, we set out to establish an efficient, effective process for connecting students with counseling services at the school and in the community.

Ms. O'Ryan: School counselors like Ms. Kowalski are able to help students through tough times. They can teach coping skills and provide tools, such as anger management techniques. And, they can help students deal with life's highs and lows through individual and small group counseling and through classroom guidance lessons delivered to all students. Many students struggle with issues not related to academics. In some cases, students are dealing with violence, family illness, serious diseases, or even

tragedies. These issues may be the underlying reasons for disruptive behavior or poor academic performance.

Nurse Okonjo: Plus, students can check in with me when they feel stressed or anxious, particularly if they have a health crisis.

Mr. Anderson: Do you or Ms. Kowalski make referrals to mental health professionals in the community?

Nurse Okonjo: First we try to match the student with the right professional within the School-Based Health Center. However, sometimes we determine a student should seek counseling outside of school. In that case, we contact the parents, and then we provide information about a social service agency that can help them find appropriate mental health care.

Mrs. Chen: How do you address fighting among students or other forms of violence at school?

Nurse Okonjo: The SHI helped us recognize the importance of being able to identify, track, and refer students who show signs of aggression or who bully other students. Bullying or harassment may lead to other violent acts, so Jefferson School is stepping up its anti-bullying campaign, but a lot of work remains. We also need to identify the victims of bullying. These students could be harming themselves or contemplating suicide, and need referral to the appropriate agency for help.

Principal Paul: Our next professional development day will offer a workshop on recognizing the signs of mental health concerns. The entire school staff needs to know the warning signs and symptoms of those who may need outside help and could be in danger of hurting themselves or others. We are enriching our workshop by using guidance found in the Health Services, Community Involvement, and Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services components of the WSCC model.

Our new processes will help us connect students to counseling and other assistance programs in the community. By staying focused on the well-being of our students, we continue to build and sustain a healthy school environment at Jefferson School.

If you want to learn more about the *School Health Index*, visit the [Healthy Schools website](#). For training, visit the [Professional Development & Training page](#).

Community Map

Behavioral Health Center

The Kolbe Behavioral Health Center is an important community resource. It provides services intended to prevent or intervene when mental health or substance abuse/addiction issues occur. It offers both

inpatient and outpatient services to children and adults as well as an array of counseling services and classes on topics like stress or anger management. The Jefferson School-Based Health Center often refers patients to the behavioral health center when students need a higher level of care than the center can provide.

Ms. Kowalski, the Jefferson School counselor, also frequently refers families to the support groups and classes offered at the behavioral health center. For instance, they offer a *Building Community, Building Hope* parenting class that she has encouraged several parents to attend.

The center also specifically provides services, such as case management, crisis intervention, and counseling tailored for children and youth who may be a part of either the foster care or juvenile justice systems. Jefferson School is intentional about working with students, children's services case workers, and parents/guardians to be involved in a coordinated support network for its most vulnerable or at-risk students.

Learn More

- [National Child Abuse Prevention Month 2018](#)
- [Care Coordination](#)

Community Resource Center

The town of Kolbe has a primary community resource center that provides an array of support services to individuals and families in need. The center includes a food bank, overnight shelter, and clothes closet. Beyond meeting the immediate physical needs of those in crises, the center offers long-term development opportunities such as job training, support groups, and referrals to inpatient and outpatient health services.

Many individuals and organizations in Kolbe support the resource center, including faith-based organizations that have played an important role in providing for the ongoing financial and volunteer needs of the center.

The Jefferson School counselor, Ms. Kowalski, has been a valuable conduit for students and their families in accessing the social and support services they may need. She stays up-to-date on the services offered by local nonprofits and government agencies in order to help connect families, as appropriate.