Resources for Teachers to Support Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic

If you are reading this, it is because you are a teacher, a school counselor, a school administrator, or a helping professional who works within the school system. Please know that the important work that you routinely perform throughout to educate, guide, and protect children is more important than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic. As you are no doubt aware, children and their families are under a great deal of stress because of disruptions of their daily routines, social relationships, material resources, and financial stability. Every person and every family handles stress differently, but there are some fairly common warning signs that are particularly concerning.

What to Look For in Student Behavior

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- Seriously trying to harm oneself, or making plans to do so
- Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart or fast breathing
- Involvement in many fights or desire to badly hurt others
- Severe out-of-control behavior that can hurt oneself or others
- Not eating, throwing up, or using laxatives to make oneself lose weight
- Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities
- Extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still that puts the student in physical danger or causes problems in the classroom
- Repeated use of drugs or alcohol
- Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Drastic changes in the student’s behavior or personality

Please encourage the youth’s caregiver to seek mental health treatment for youth that are reported to have any of these behaviors. Please let the parent know that while most of the mental health treatment services that are being provided during the pandemic are occurring remotely (via telephone or videoconferencing) to comply with public health recommendations, case-by-case decisions are being made about when it may be necessary to have face-to-face contact.

Please note that if the family needs immediate assistance for a life-threatening emergency that they should immediately call 9-1-1. If the family has a need for assistance with a mental health crisis, they are encouraged to call the 24-hour Yolo County Crisis and Access Line at (888) 965-6647.

The caregiver can also request mental health treatment for their child from the 24-hour Yolo County Crisis and Access Line at (888) 965-6647. At the time of the call, the caregiver will be asked to provide some information regarding the child’s current and past mental health concerns. This information will be forwarded to a team within the Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency that assist families to access mental health services that are appropriate for their needs. Please inform caregivers that they will be contacted regarding their request for services within one business day of their call to the Access Line.

Although the County is the designated provider of specialty mental health services for Medi-Cal eligible individuals, there may be a way to assist families who do not have Medi-Cal through a sliding scale fee or with navigation assistance to find services through the family’s insurance provider.

If you have any questions regarding mental health services for youth or families in Yolo County, please contact the Clinical Manager for the Child, Youth, and Family Branch of Yolo County HHSA, Tony Kildare, at (530) 661-2929.

Again, THANK YOU for the very important work that you are continuing to do in the face of these unprecedented circumstances. Together we can ensure that all children in this community receive the support that they need to succeed in all areas of their lives.