



## **Considerations for tele-screening/assessment during COVID-19**

SAP liaisons conducting tele-screenings or assessments should be primarily guided by agency protocols. In developing these protocols, it may be beneficial for the agency and individual liaisons to consider what aspects of screening and/or assessment can be implemented similarly to how these services are delivered on-site and in-person. Wherever aspects of existing protocols may need to change, consider maximizing the similarities between approaches taken within a tele-screening/assessment environment and an on-site/in-person environment.

### **The Virtual Environment**

- What logistic considerations must be in place prior to tele-screening or assessing, for both the liaison and for the student/family?
  - Some examples include internet access/bandwidth, audio and video capability, etc.
- Is the platform being used HIPAA/FERPA compliant?
- What is the liaison and student/family's familiarity with the platform being used?
- What measures are in place to maintain continuity of the screening or assessment process if there are technology issues (e.g., video freezes)?
- What aspects of the physical environment should be considered to minimize distractions, and maximize attention and engagement during the screening or assessment?
  - Some examples may include moving items out of line of sight, wearing headphones, finding a quiet space
- What aspects of the physical environment help to increase privacy and promote confidentiality during the screening or assessment?
  - Some considerations may include availability of private space at the liaison's location and in the student's home, time of day, etc.
- What aspects of the physical environment help to ensure student safety during the screening or assessment?
  - Some considerations may include people and/or objects in the space, proximity of the parent/guardian/family members, video vs. auditory format, etc.

### **Communication with Others to Support the Student**

#### *Parents/Guardians*

- What communication is needed with the student's parent/guardian about the screening and/or assessment?
- Will the parent/guardian need to participate in or be available during the screening/assessment?
- What will be the timeframe and method of follow-up contact with the parent/guardian after the screening/assessment?

#### *School SAP Team*

- What is process for communicating with the school SAP team prior to and following a screening and/or assessment in accordance with previous practices and procedures?



- Who is the current building level contact for SAP?
- What is the appropriate method of contact?
- Are school SAP teams or SAP team members available to do follow-up after a screening and/or assessment?

### *Community Partners*

- What is the current availability of referral and follow-up resources and supports in the community (e.g., crisis, agencies, hospitals) that may be needed following a screening and/or assessment?
  - Some considerations include whether these services are fully operational, whether procedures and protocols have changed, key contacts have changed, etc.

### **Legal and Ethical Considerations**

- How will written parent/guardian consent for screening and/or assessment, as well as for telehealth services be obtained?
  - Agencies may consider whether there is an option to obtain this electronically.
- Are there additional aspects of the screening and/or assessment process that should be documented, and if so, how?
- How will the agency and individual SAP liaisons promote equity and cultural competence in tele-screening/assessment practices?
  - What are the cultural considerations for “entering” the student/family environment?
  - How will potential barriers to screening/assessment for some students and families be addressed?
  - What new or additional challenges does the current situation with COVID-19 bring to the student and/or family?
- What developmental factors should be considered in the screening/assessment process?
  - Some considerations include the age of the student, whether the student has a disability, etc.
- What are the established crisis protocols for students identified as at risk of harm to self or others, and do these protocols need to be altered in any way?
  - What is the physical location of the student during the screening/assessment?
  - Does the screening/assessment need to be visual (i.e., does the liaison need to see the student?)?
  - With regard to adult supervision during the screening/assessment, what is acceptable?
    - Consider whether there are alternatives if a parent/guardian is unavailable, as well as how this should be determined and then documented.
  - If results indicate that a student is at imminent risk of suicide and may need to be hospitalized, how will the SAP liaison/agency respond if parents do not want to follow-up based on increased risk of COVID-19?
- What are the follow-up options and timelines for screenings/assessments that do not involve crisis response?
  - Some considerations include the difference between a screening vs. an assessment that may determine a level of care. If screening only, consider whether the appropriate follow-up avenues are available within the school and community so that screening results and recommendations do not go unaddressed.



### **Considerations for SAP liaisons/agencies for outreach to schools during COVID-19**

- Try to find out whether your school SAP teams are operating currently and if so, in what ways procedures may have changed.
  - For instance, determine whether teams are still taking new referrals, holding meetings, etc. This can help SAP liaisons determine whether to expect new referrals for screenings and/or assessments, and it may help the SAP liaison agency determine whether other types of liaison services may be helpful to the school during this time.
- Communicate the current status of your SAP liaison agency and individual liaisons with your school teams, so they know whether referrals are on hold or whether students are being screened and/or assessed during this time and if so, how protocols may have changed (e.g., tele-screening).
- Consider inquiring with school SAP teams to determine what procedures will be in place to follow-up with screened students once school resumes, and discuss what interventions and/or supports may or may not be available while students are out of school.
- Determine whether there may be a need to make adjustments to existing Letters of Agreement with schools.

*Note: This document is not meant to provide guidance, nor are the questions and considerations within required. Rather, it is meant to serve as a helpful resource with suggested areas for discussion for SAP liaison agencies that may be adjusting current protocols during COVID-19.*