

## Selecting a Mental Health Agency

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### PURPOSE

This document will help schools research potential mental health providers and consider feasibility of partnership with each, ideally after conducting a needs assessment for the school community.

Target Audience: Student Support Staff

Optional: School Administrator or Leadership Team

### DIRECTIONS:

Use the following criteria as a list of considerations for selecting a mental health agency that will be a strong fit for your school. Where possible, select agencies that serve both children and their families.

### POTENTIAL AGENCY PARTNER:

#### Agency Logistics/Location

- Is the agency located within the neighborhood, so that families have easy access?
- Does the agency have multiple locations?
- What forms of transportation are needed to get to the agency? If traveling by car, is there parking?
- Are there other monetary considerations? (e.g., paying for parking, tolls)
- How accessible is the agency? (e.g., ramps, elevators/escalators)
- What are the office hours? (e.g., evenings, holidays, walk-in hours)

Notes:

### Services Offered

- How are services rendered? (e.g., online, in person, at school, in the home)
- What types of services will be provided? (e.g., individual, family, group, workshops)
- Are medical staff available? (e.g., nurse, psychiatrist)
- Are educational services, evaluations, or tutoring available?
- What concrete services are provided? (e.g., services to support housing, food insecurity, medical assistance, clothing, financial services, substance use, family court, employment, disability)
- Specialty areas? (e.g., trauma, bereavement, anxiety, depression, stress management, social skills)
- Do they offer crisis support? If so, how?

Notes:

### Cultural Supports

- Are services offered in different languages?
- What is the cultural make-up of the staff?

Notes:

### Referral Capacity and Process

- Is there a wait list? What is the wait time for responses?
- How are referrals submitted?
- Who is the contact for referrals?
- How are families engaged for services, especially those who may be difficult to get a hold of?
- How are missed appointments handled?

Notes:

### **Billing Structure and Insurance**

- How are services paid for? What types of insurances are accepted?
- Is there a self-pay option? Sliding scale? How are uninsured families supported?

Notes:

### **Experience with or Capacity to Collaborate with a School**

- Is the agency willing to keep ongoing communication and collaboration with the school? How and with whom?
- Does the agency have the capacity to come to the school as needed for trainings, meetings, crises, etc.?

Notes:

## **Additional Notes:**