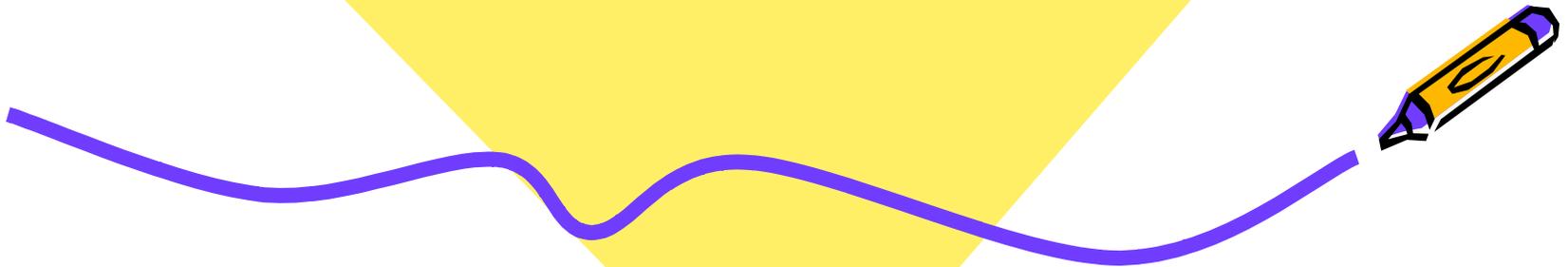Indicator #38: Do you actively collaborate with other professionals in your school (other health/mental health providers, educators, administrators)?
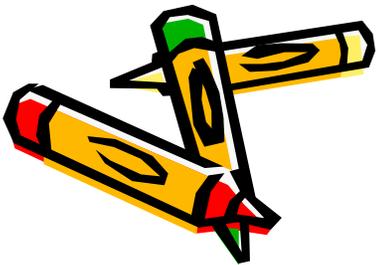
Background

- Effective practice in school mental health requires the ability to work across disciplines and with school-hired health, mental health, and educational staff.

- Collaborations with other professionals can improve the health and well-being of students and families being served by improving the breadth and depth of available services and increasing capacity to serve students' mental health needs.
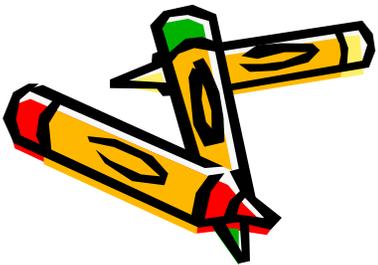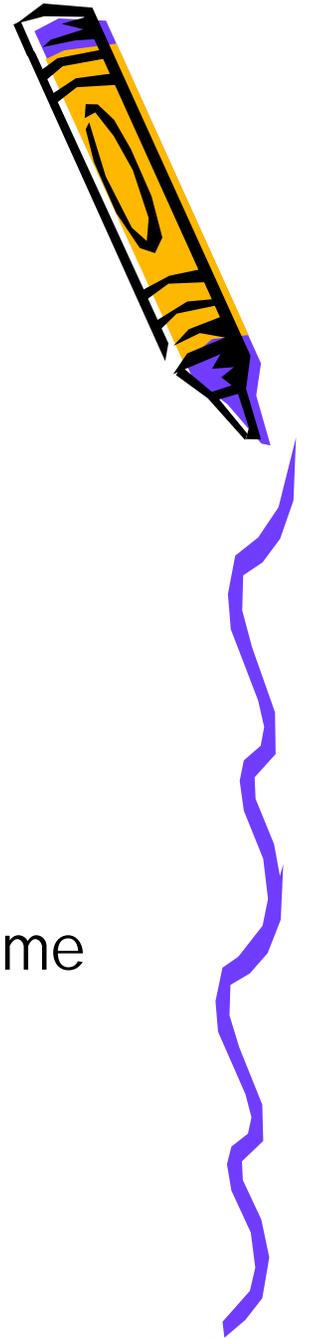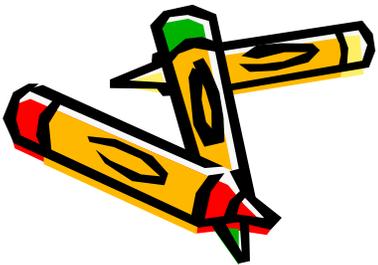
Background

- Integrating mental health and health care into the educational environment can help improve children's well-being and capacity to learn, as well as overall school climate.

- Coordinating health and mental health care can result in an enhanced referral base, interdisciplinary collaboration, increased screening capacity, reduced stigma, and decreased need for more intensive care.
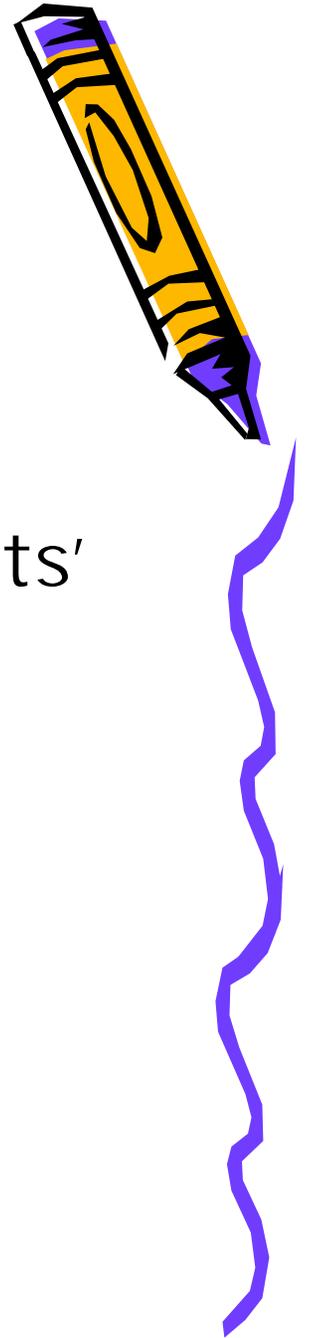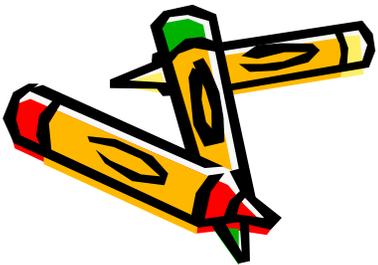
Background

- Tensions related to forming true collaborative partnerships are often related to the following:
    - Turf issues
    - Concern about job stability
    - Misunderstanding about each other's roles
    - Portraying clinical superiority
    - Unwillingness or disinterest in taking the time to learn the other's system and culture

Background

- Adelman & Taylor (1996) suggest that there are three areas to focus on when linking with teachers to improve students' outcomes

    1) prevention and health promotion in the classroom,

    2) teaming to address children who need additional mental health supports,

    3) collaborative problem-solving to create comprehensive, coordinated programming.

Background

There are formal and informal mechanisms for partnering with teachers.

- Formal opportunities include student support teams or student problem-solving teams.
- Informal opportunities include:
  - Have lunch with teachers
  - Attend staff meetings
  - Participate in school-wide events
  - Be open, friendly, positive, and welcoming in the hallways and when greeting staff
  - Share resources through newsletter or email updates
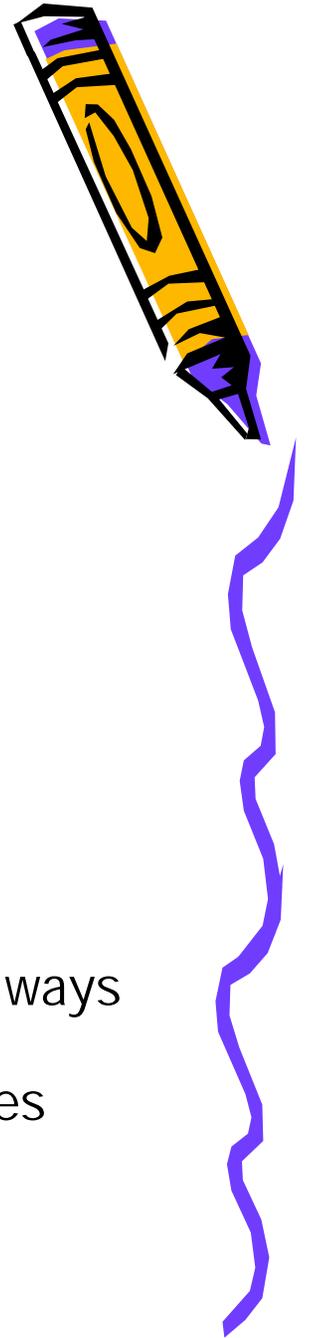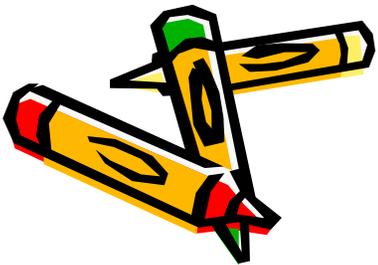
Menu of Suggested Activities

- Set up monthly or quarterly meetings to discuss service provision and the coordination of care with other mental health and health staff.

- Work together to create a mental health and health flier or newsletter for the school.

- Work together to present a classroom or school-wide prevention activity.

- Work together to identify or create screenings that will allow for cross-referrals between mental health and health staff.
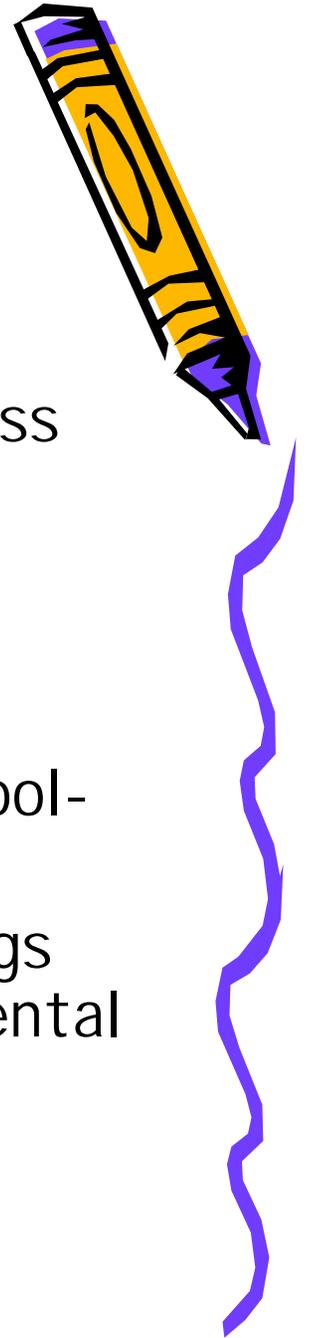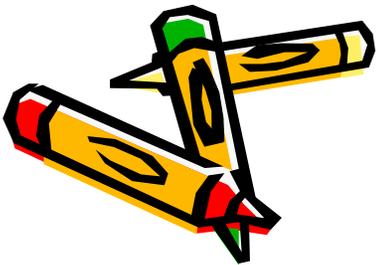
Menu of Suggested Activities

- Create a team of health, mental health, and educational staff to provide oversight to the ESMH programming to ensure that it is meeting the needs of students, teachers, and families.

- Collaborate to create a school climate initiative that is designed to improve mental health and health of students and staff.

- Recognize the efforts of school staff to support the ESMH program and communicate your appreciation both to the staff member and to the leadership.
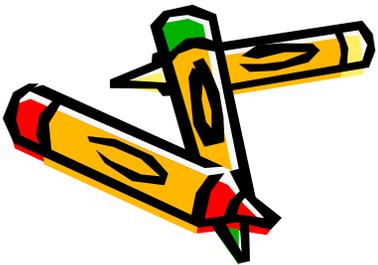
Menu of Suggested Activities

- Create a booth or develop a health and mental health presentation for faculty meetings, family nights, and other times that staff are together.

- Provide staff development on topics of interest to staff related to student mental health issues.

- Develop a mechanism that enables teachers to refer students to the program easily and with minimal paperwork.
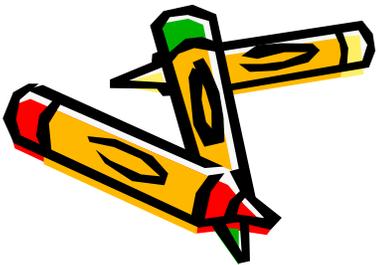
Helpful Hints

- Take the time to listen and learn about the services that are offered by your colleagues, particularly specific mandates for their work (populations served, required services). Brainstorm with them about how to coordinate care and avoid duplication of services.

- Develop a brochure for your program that clearly describes what ESMH is and emphasizes the importance of collaborations with other staff.
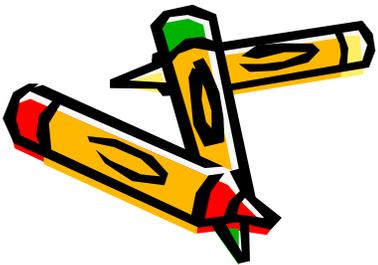
Helpful Hints

- Allow opportunities/mechanisms for consumers to make suggestions about needed services and how to improve the quality of service provision.

- Mental health and health staff need to set a tone within the school and are role models for promoting health and wellness. Turf issues and tensions should not be apparent to others in the school.
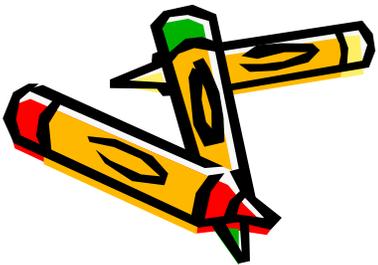
Helpful Hints

- Be available before and after school as those are the times that most teachers have to network.

- Participate in activities that increase your visibility at the school so that people get to know you and trust that you are a valued member of the community.

- Provide resources to teachers that address common issues in the classroom.
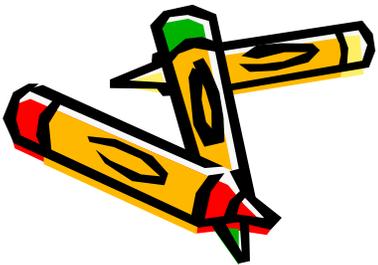
Helpful Hints

- Be responsive to teacher referrals. Develop routine methods for collecting and reviewing information.

- Do not over promise what can accomplished by the program. It is better to set reasonable goals and expand the program.

- Work with staff to help bridge the connection between schools and families. Offer to facilitate meetings between students, families, and educators to ensure that all voices are heard and respected.

Helpful Hints

- Be respectful of time constraints and responsibilities. Also, be aware of stressful times of year and be respectful of the students' educational demands.

- Be aware of speaking in the language of mental health providers. Do not use acronyms or other language that creates a barrier between you and the staff.

- Develop collaborative relationships with teachers that are focused on the vision on developing better outcomes for children. Help teachers refocus on that vision through providing opportunities to network and problem-solve.
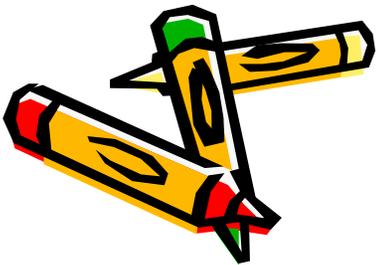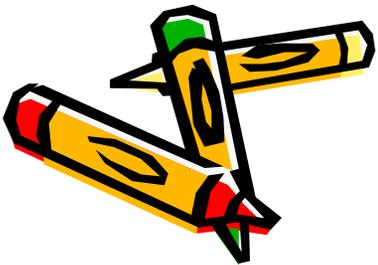
Helpful Hints

Don't lose sight of the following:

It takes a village to help our children.

There are more than enough needs and more than enough children to keep everyone busy.

Web Resources

- American School Health Association, National Task Force on Confidential Student Health Information: Guidelines for Protecting Confidential Student Health Information (www.ashaweb.org)

- Bureau of Primary Health Care's Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities (http://www.bphc.hrsa.gov/center/students.htm)

- The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools (http://www.healthinschools.org/sbhcs/papers/pictureofhealth.asp)

- Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (http://cecp.air.org)

- Center for Mental Health in Schools, Resources on collaborative teams (http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/topicslist.hmll#IB)
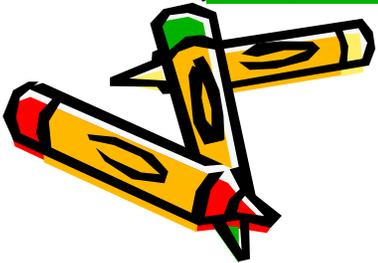
Web Resources

- Center for School Mental Health Analysis and Action, Critical issues document focusing on the integration of mental health and education (http://csmha.umaryland.edu/cim.html)
- Center for School-Based Mental Health Programs, Presentations on teacher involvement in mental health programming (www.units.muohio.edu/csbmhp/research.html)
- Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, Safe and Sound, Provides an overview of social and emotional learning and the impact on student outcomes and school climate (www.casel.org/projects_products/safeandsound.php)
- National Center for Drug Prevention and School Safety Program Coordinators, Resources for collaboration and integration of support services throughout the school day (http://www.k12coordinator.org/resources_detail.cfm?id=40)
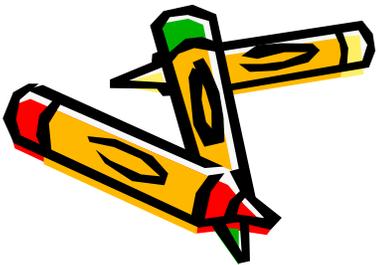
Web Resources

- National Assembly on School-based Health Care (http://www.nasbhc.org/nasbhc_resources.htm
- National Association of School Psychology, National Mental Health and Education Center, Excellent handout for parents, teachers, and principals (www.naspcenter.org)
- Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (www.pbis.org)
- Resource Oriented Teams: Key Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Education Supports (available through Center for Mental Health in Schools, http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu)
- Community Toolbox, University of Kansas (http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/coalitions/expand/index.jsp)
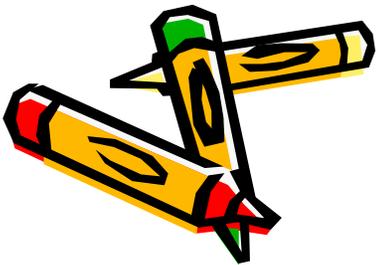
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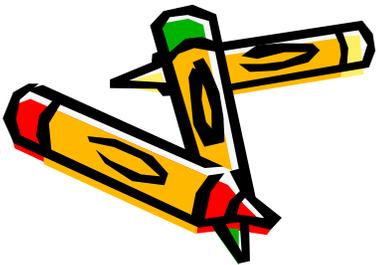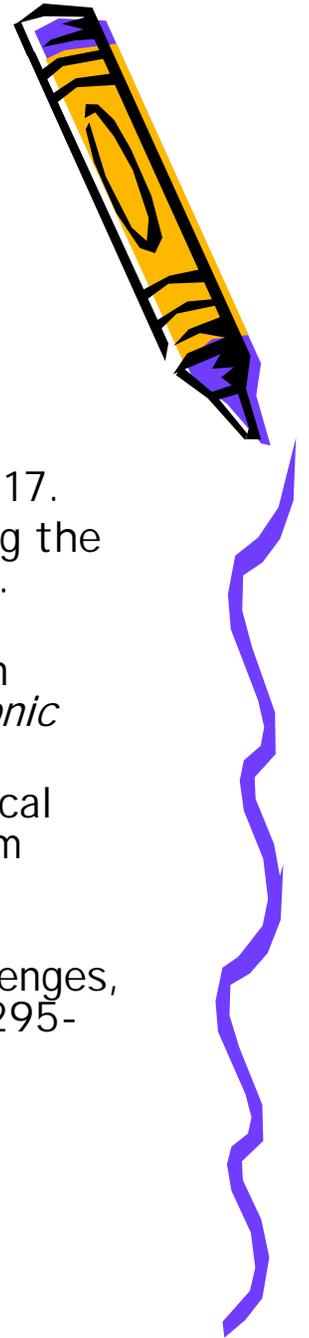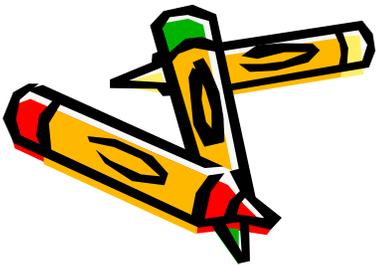
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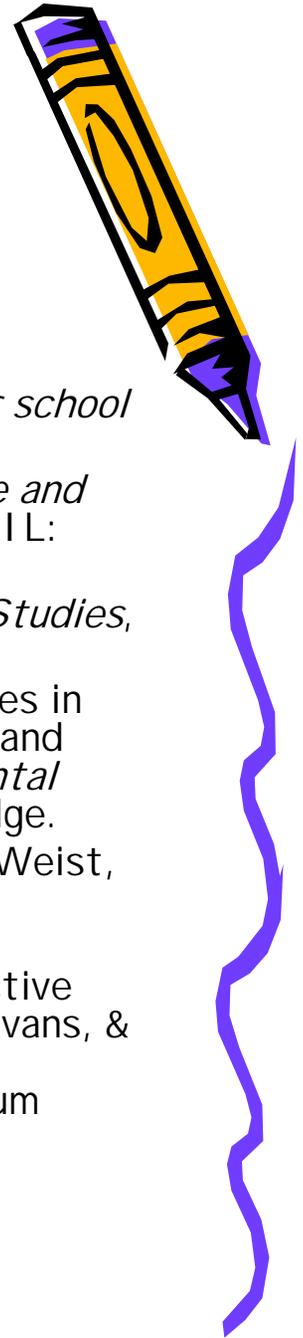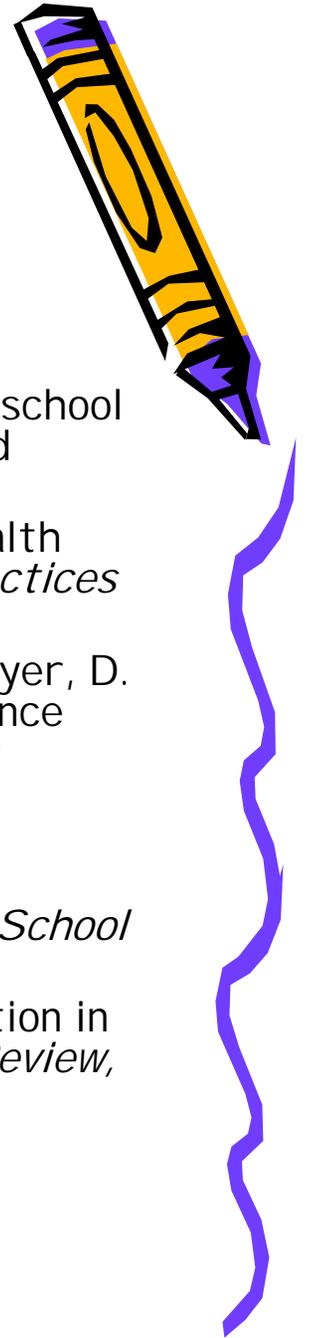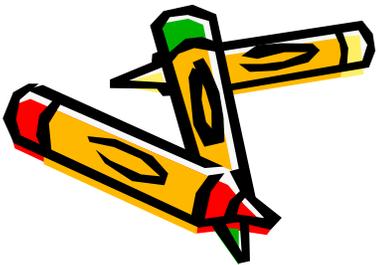
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