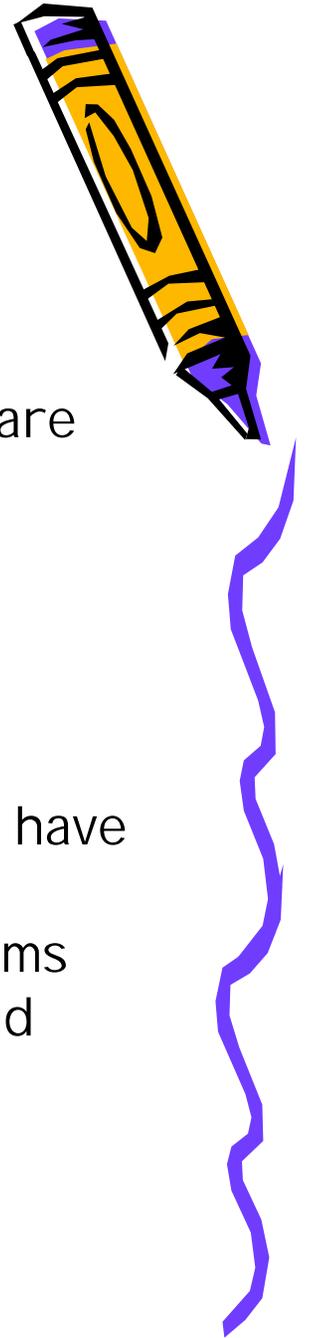


Indicator #28: Are referral procedures for the ESMH program being well utilized by educators, other school mental health staff, school administrators, parents, and students?



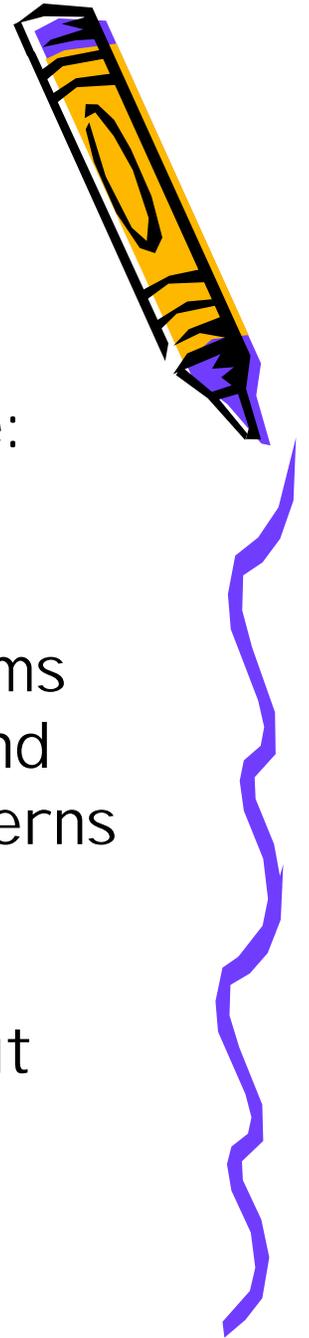
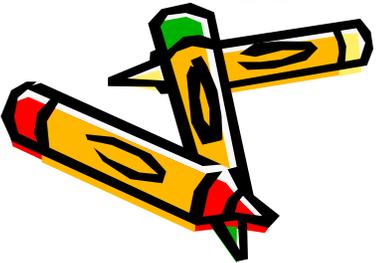
Background

- ESMH programs should have referral procedures that are easy to access and help to reduce barriers to care.
- Teachers, other mental health and health staff, school administrators, parents and students should be able to easily refer to ESMH programs and have a clear understanding of available services.
- The referral process should involve minimal paperwork, have an easy to follow process (e.g., take referral sheets, complete, return to mailbox), and should have mechanisms for feedback as to the outcome of the referral (e.g, Did the student agree to come for services? Were they referred elsewhere?).



Background

- Key information to obtain in a referral include: name of student, date, reason for referral, urgency of referral, source of referral.
- Tracking referrals received can assist programs in understanding who is and is not referring and which students through with treatment. Patterns of referral and nonreferral can be used to strategize about how to best outreach, form collaborations, and educate stakeholders about services.



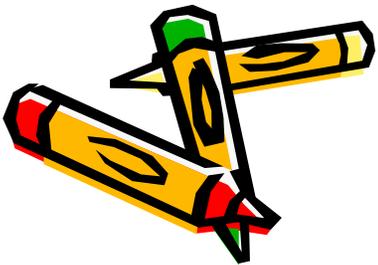
Background

- With staff turnover and entry of new students into the school, it is critical to have regular information sessions and available materials/fliers about how to refer for services.
- ESMH programs can improve the appropriateness of the referral process and can improve early recognition of problems by educating educational staff about normal and abnormal development and early indicators of mental health problems.
- ESMH clinicians can influence the appropriateness of referrals received by helping to form and/or participate on school mental health teams that coordinate the entire referral process for the school.



Menu of Suggested Activities

- Create a flier or handout that describes services offered by your program and explains how to refer students.
- Review the last year of referrals (or last six months, or last 50 referrals, etc.) Analyze who has and has not referred and set up a meeting to discuss reasons for nonreferral and how to improve collaboration and services.



Menu of Suggested Activities

- Create a referral feedback form that will inform the referral source about the action taken on the referral. Provide a summary of services delivered and number of referrals at the end of the school year.
- Create a presentation for a teacher meeting or parent event that highlights the services available and how to refer.
- Have a focus group to discuss awareness of the referral process and how to improve it.
- Create a mental health referral process for your school in collaboration with school hired mental health and health staff.



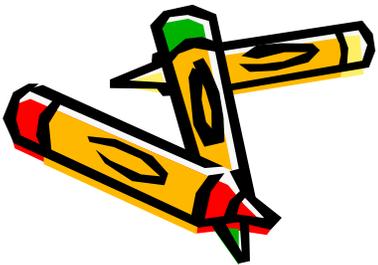
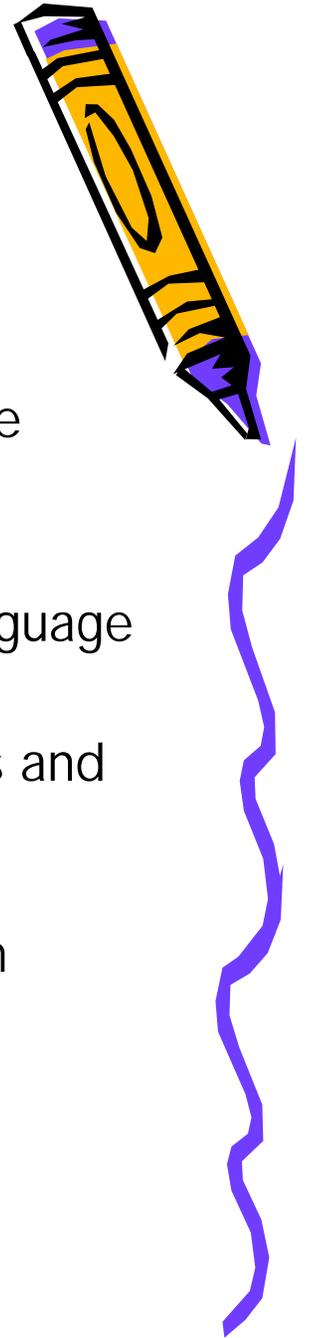
Helpful Hints

- Make sure that your referral process offers the potential for a confidential referral. Make sure that referrals are kept in a place where they are not easily visible to others.
- Set up a referral box for referrals to be left outside of your office and in the main office of the school.
- Take the time to get to know and interact with other professionals in the building. Listen and problem-solve with other mental health staff to improve the referral process and reduce tension and turf issues.



Helpful Hints

- Ask parents/guardians and students how to improve the referral process and make it more accessible.
- Make sure handouts and referral materials are easy to read, free of jargon, culturally sensitive, and in the language spoken by the student and parent/guardian.
- Allow students to be referred for prevention programs and groups, not just intervention activities. This can help expand the understanding that ESMH programs are dedicated to offering a full continuum of services from prevention to intervention.



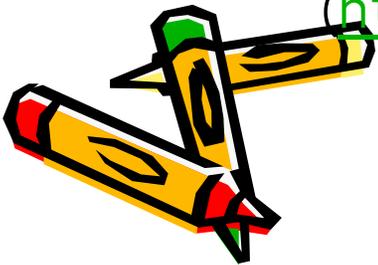
Helpful Hints

- Keep a referral log book that includes who made the referral and the outcome. This can help in trying to collect referral data at a later point in time.
- Be gracious to referral sources and emphasize the importance of their role in improving the mental health of the children in the school.
- Have a comments/feedback box in the school that encourages feedback on the program content and procedures, including the referral process.



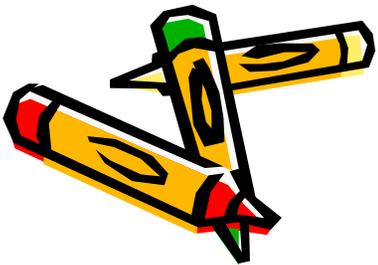
Web Resources

- Center for Health and Health Care in Schools
(<http://www.healthinschools.org>)
- National Mental Health Association, Standards for Consumer-Centric Managed Mental Health and Substance Abuse Programs (Chapter 2)
(www.nmha.org/pdfdocs/standcons.pdf)
- Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. School-Based Client Consultation, Referral and Management of Care (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>)
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Surgeon General's Report on Children's Mental Health
(<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/cmh/default.htm>)



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