

Tips for Building Your Network of Resources

Our mission is too great to do alone; therefore it is important to remember that our strength is in numbers. With a focus on building *deliberate partnerships* with others who are willing to do this work with us, we can help meet the needs of all students and their families. With our efforts, no one gets left behind, and no one gets turned away.

Integrated and coordinated services begin with identifying resources in your school's community. The initial step in *linking* services to your student and their families is to establish and build relationships with those community resources.

1. It's about who you know...

- What agencies or resources are you already strongly connected to (i.e. former employer, old classmate working in your area, neighbor, etc).
- Who is your resource specialist on your campus? Chances are they already have a great bank of resources they are strongly connected to. No need to reinvent the wheel here.
- What can they do for you? What can you do for them? Details are very important when building your resource bank. Knowing who qualifies for services, what services they offer, what info is needed to link, are all important pieces of information that you will need to effectively link. Remember, it is crucial to establish a mutual relationship; successful relationships are never one-sided. Offer your services, talk about your program and what you offer on school campuses. Offer to be their contact person for any students they come across that they want to link to your services.

2. Building Relationships

- What's in it for me? For them? Sell them on how great this mutual relationship will be for them (linking families and children to needed services; more referrals = contract numbers for them; benefits of knowing someone on their local school campus for access to services, etc).
- Pay a visit/tour the facility... Sometimes we only have time to place a call, if you can, make an extra effort to go see where you are sending your families. Meeting someone in person will help establish a firm referral & linkage relationship. Send a thank you card or a follow up email to establish the relationship even more. Visiting a facility also allows you to give details to the families about where you are linking them too. A family likes to feel that you are sending them to a safe place.
- Outline/detail a process for referring/linking families. An important part of building these partnerships is outlining a process to facilitate referral and linkages. It is important to know what services they offer and how one qualifies for services, but it is crucial to establish formal process with your connection. Who will be your contact person? If you need to follow up on a referral, who is the best person to connect with? All of these are very important questions when building relationships.

3. What resources/help are in your immediate/local area?

- Drive around your community before or after school; ask parent where they go for help/resources; what cool places do the kids like to hang out at after school? What services do the apartment buildings offer (i.e Project Access??)
- FRC; Low-Cost Clinics; Non-Profit Agencies; WIC Office; Community Centers; Library, etc.
- how can you stay updated on their programs and services: Email blast? Outreach Staff? Weekly flyers they can drop off at school? Do they offer presentation on their services (for a staff meeting or PTA meeting, or a parent night?) Will they come to a resource fair and hand out materials?

4. What County Resources can guide your search for partners?

- Orange County Community Resources
 - o <http://occr.ocgov.com>
- Orange County 211
 - o <http://www.211.org>
- Families and Communities Together (FaCT)
 - o <http://factoc.org>
- OC Community Services
 - o <http://occommunityservices.org>
- OC Health Care Agency, Behavioral Health
 - o <http://ochealthinfo.com/bhs/about/pi/resources>

5. Other ways you can find connections:

- Network Opportunities - Attend luncheons or collaboratives in your area.
 - o Help Me Grow (helpmegrowoc.org)
- Introduce yourself to potential partners at workshops or trainings
- Not your strength? That's O.K...
- Identify the person whose strength this is
- How can you support or contribute to the referral/linkage process outline above, so that the burden doesn't fall on one person (take care of your connections)

*May you be proud of the work you do,
The person you are, and the difference you make.*

Online Resources to Help Meet the MH Needs of Students:

- Catalogue.eachmindmatters.org
- Walkinourshoes.org
- Suicideispreventable.org
- Changingdirection.org
- Ochealthinfo.com
 - o OC Links
 - o You can look for various Prop 63 programs that provide services at all three levels of care
- Youtube
 - o Go Zen for mindfulness in the classroom
 - o Elmo Belly Breathing
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