Virtual High School Counseling: Tier 1 How-to

Webinar Presenter: Dr. Adam Lips, Dr. Greg Nuckols, Dr. Tracy Steele
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Learning outcomes:

After viewing this webinar you should be able to:
1. Discuss best practices when working with high school students and families in a virtual setting.
2. Identify and locate various technology tools and resources to aid you in your virtual high school counseling.
3. Describe at least one lesson you can use when counseling your high school students virtually.
Virtual Counseling

Benefits

▪ Accessibility
▪ Safer, less emotionally exposed
▪ When online some people self-disclose more frequently than in person
▪ Opportunities to control disclosure (text, mic, video)
▪ Familiarity in online mediums
▪ Preference to write/type
▪ Teens can prefer online counseling over face-to-face

Challenges

▪ Privacy
▪ Technical issues
▪ Not all issues may be suitable for online environment
▪ Counselor boundaries
▪ Non-verbal cues and observational data can be missed
▪ Responding to a crisis
▪ Network of local referrals
▪ Informed consent (if appropriate)

Going Virtual

Online is not less than in-person – just different

▪ The opportunity to know and know about your students still exists
▪ Families and counselors benefit from articulating shared aims; we all want the same things

With potentially fewer points of contact, meaningful and productive interactions are valuable goals

▪ Enter meetings with a goal in mind; leave with action items
▪ Find an approach that works for you and your students and that instills trust
▪ Creativity with different tools can help students and families feel well supported
Best Practices in a Virtual Setting

Setting Expectations

WITH YOUR TEAM
• Many benefits to advising this way – work to view this as an opportunity
• Utilize the different personalities and strengths of your staff and school
• Keep lines of communication open and articulate goals

WITH YOUR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES
• When are you available? What methods are you using to meet with and/or contact your students?
• How do you “track down” students and communicate with parents?
• What types of meetings and events are taking place?
Boundaries

- In working to address social-emotional and academic needs of individual students, notify students, parents, and colleagues of counselor days and hours of availability.

- Make limitations regarding immediate access during business hours known to students, families, and teachers.

- Avoid use of personal devices for professional communication in most cases.

Provide list of resources to students and families to access 24/7
Setting

- For live video conversations, monitor appropriate physical location for both counselor and student.
- Select and switch modes of communication as appropriate; for example, an especially intense or sensitive conversation may be best handled via phone or video conferencing rather than by text/email.
- Use headphones whenever possible.
- Talk to students about safeguarding their own privacy.

Plans & Protocols

- Plan ahead for crisis situations and develop a written protocol in collaboration with school administrators.
- Whenever a student may be in danger of serious and foreseeable harm, contacting parents/guardians as soon as possible is even more important in an online context.
- If the danger to a student is acute and parents/guardians are not immediately available, contacting local first responders for a wellness check may be necessary.
Tech Tools and Resources

Tools of the Trade

Zoom
Meetings and office hours with students, families, and our team

Google Drive
Sheets/Docs: college lists, essay drafts, email drafts
Forms: surveys, check-ins, parent questionnaires

Calendly
Scheduling platform for individual meetings; team functionality for admission visits

Canvas
Learning management software - page with scheduling info, handbook, and resources

Stanford OHS Webinar Series: onlinehighschool.stanford.edu/how
Working with Students and Families

- One-on-one meetings: primary method; simplify by using a scheduling tool
- Small group meetings and peer support
- Regular class meetings: weekly in the spring
- Family grade level meetings
- Office hours
- College admission representative visits
- Parent association meetings
- Class- or issue-specific presentations as needed
  - Standardized testing
  - College decisions
  - Transition to college

Online Tools & Resources

Shared documents and calendars
- Reflection and goal setting: Goal Worksheet
- Academic example: Assignment Tracker
  - [https://www.challengesuccess.org/](https://www.challengesuccess.org/)
- Connecting students with supportive online communities
- Teen Line: [https://teenlineonline.org/](https://teenlineonline.org/)
- Trevor Project: [https://www.thetrevorproject.org/](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/)
Time Management: Student Scheduling Tool and To-Do List
Examples of Online Tools

- Time Management
- Mindfulness breathing
- College (Naviance)

Resources

ASCA Virtual High School Toolkit
[https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors/professional-development/learn-more/virtual-high-school-counseling]

ASCA Legal and Ethical Webinars
[https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors/professional-development/learn-more/virtual-school-counseling-toolkit]

Stanford OHS How to Series
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Activity: Application Case Studies

Conducted following a discussion of holistic application practices

Example: tinyurl.com/z7z6m33

Students read applications prior to meeting

Divide students to discuss applications in breakout rooms

Take notes; save for use in the large group discussion

Recommend decisions and discuss
Activity: Mindful Movement

• Provides a helpful break from long periods of sitting at a computer working on assignments or attending online classes.

• Key aspects of mindfulness:
  – Openness to whatever is happening now
  – An attitude of kindness and friendliness
  – Returning to awareness of the present moment

• Practicing mindful movement is primarily an awareness exercise; we pay close attention to how different parts of the body feel as we move.

Activity: Mindful Movement

• Stay seated, or stand up! We will try two short mindfulness exercises in movement.

• It’s OK to leave your earbuds in or headset on; we will be standing in place and moving only in a limited manner.

• Stand upright and relaxed, with feet about hip-width apart and parallel. Eyes may be open or closed.

• Be gentle with yourself throughout the exercises, and respect any physical limitations you might have.
Mindful Movement: Raising Arms

- As you breathe in, raise your arms out parallel to the floor. Hold for a few breaths, noticing how your arms and shoulders feel. Where are muscles under tension, and where are they relaxed?
- As you breathe in, raise your arms overhead, palms facing each other. Hold for a few breaths.
- As you breathe out, slowly lower your arms parallel to the floor. Hold for a few breaths.
- As you breathe out, slowly lower your arms to a resting posture.

Mindful Movement: Shoulder Rolls

- Move your shoulders forward, up, back, down in sequence.
- Combine these movements into a smooth motion, coordinated with the breath: forward and up as you breathe in, and back and down as you breathe out.
- After a few breaths, change so that the shoulders are moving in the opposite direction.
- Notice how your body feels now, and how this might be different from a few minutes ago. In an online group setting, students could share their experience with mindful movement exercises.
Mindfulness Activities

Many other mindfulness exercises can be conducted effectively in an online setting, including the following:

- Breath counting
- Breathing with mindfulness
- Body scan meditation
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Awareness of emotions
- Non-identification with thoughts
- Cultivating kindness
- Mindful self-compassion

Lesson: Growth Mindset

1. Explore the concept of growth mindset with students, distinguishing it from fixed mindset and reviewing some of the research evidence supporting the benefits of growth mindset.
2. Ask students to share their reactions to this information.
3. Give students a quiz to locate their current position on a continuum of fixed mindset to growth mindset.
4. Ask students to work collaboratively with their own self-talk, toward developing a growth mindset perspective on academic challenges.
Lesson: Growth Mindset

• Many counseling lessons could be delivered online, either individually or in a group setting.
• Students can be asked to share by writing on a slide, speaking on microphone (optionally with video), or in text chat.
• Breakout rooms could be used during interactive exercises to give all students greater opportunity to share and offer feedback.