A school-based referral system for connecting students to health services

Nicole Liddon, PhD
Catherine N. Rasberry, PhD, MCHES
Amanda Brown, MPH
Sandra Leonard, DNP, RN, FNP
Valerie Sims, MA, CHES

1Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
2CAI

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Who's Here?
Stand up if you're...

Meet the Team

Valerie Sims, CDC/DASH
Program Consultant

Amanda Brown, CAI
Project Director

Sandra Leonard, CDC/DASH
Program Consultant

Nicole Liddon, CDC/DASH
Senior Health Scientist

Catherine Rasberry, CDC/DASH
Senior Health Scientist
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Background
- CDC’s Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) recommends funded school districts develop a system to refer students to community providers
  - Largely focused on sexual health services (SHS)
  - Geared toward high schools

Guiding Principle
- A referral system must have a common process and components to ensure usability

Objectives
- Provide a general overview of a DASH tool for implementing a referral system in schools
- Highlight the components of a referral system and how the components may relate to services for a variety health needs

To what types of services are students in your schools being referred?
Component 1: Policy

- Key policy areas that impact the implementation of SHS referral systems and students’ access to SHS:
  - Confidentiality
  - Minor’s Consent
  - FERPA
  - HIPAA
Component 2: Referral Staff

- School champions who advocate and facilitate student access to SHS...
  - are identified and selected as designated referral staff
  - receive training and regular updates
  - promote all staff awareness

Component 3: Written Procedures

- Considerations for outlining the processes or procedures that school staff will use to refer students to SHS, including clearly defining the who, when, what, and how of making a referral

Component 4: Referral Guide

- A paper-based (posters, palm cards, tear-off sheets) or electronic (database, website, mobile app) resource that lists sexual health resource provider organizations
- Partners-involves informal and formal relationship building with school and/or community-based SHS providers
Component 5: Communications & Marketing

- A strategy to:
  - Successfully connect students to sexual health services with the specific aim of increasing awareness about the availability of both school- and community-based adolescent-friendly SHS
  - Make all school staff aware of the referral system

Component 6: Monitoring and Evaluation

- How do we know we are making the change we want to see?

  - Establishing a monitoring and evaluation system to measure the intended objectives to refer and link sexually active adolescents to adolescent-friendly SHS providers

Component 7: Management & Oversight

- In order to develop, implement, and sustain a successful referral system, task key staff, partners, and/or school groups with maintaining the referral system at the state, district, and school level
**Activity: A Closer Look**

**A Closer Look: Referral Guide**

**Purpose**
- A tool/resource staff can use to select appropriate service providers for making referrals
- A stand-alone resource to increase students’ awareness of available services and facilitate self-referrals

**Development tasks**
- Decide what information to include
- Gather list of potential providers
- Identify services provided
- Finalize provider list
- Design, produce, and publish the guide
- Conduct training and professional development
- Update/maintain

**A Closer Look: Referral Guide**

- Broward County Public Schools: Youth Health Guide

Activity: Referral Guide

- Form groups of 4-5 people
- Select a health topic of focus for your group (e.g., sexual health, asthma, nutrition, mental health)
- Discuss some of the important details for a referral guide in your community
  - What information would you need to include (e.g., transportation, cost, confidentiality, specialized patient groups, languages)??
  - How would you identify potential providers in your community?
  - What criteria would you use for inclusion in the guide?
  - What format would be best for your guide?

A Closer Look: Written Procedures

Who?
- Designated staff

How?
1. Build rapport with the student
2. Ensure confidentiality and consent
3. Identify student needs
4. Select the appropriate service(s) and provider(s)
5. Make the referral
6. Follow-up after the referral

Activity: Written Procedures

With your group, discuss what the “who” and the “how” aspects of written referral procedures might look like for your topic area
Summary

Referral systems
• Allow school staff to meet student needs by connecting students to community providers for care and services
• Can be topic-specific, or ideally, broadly designed to work for a comprehensive set of health and social needs

Core components
- Policy
- Referral Staff
- Procedures
- Referral Guide
- Communicating and Marketing
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Management and Oversight

For More Information

Contact us
Nicole Liddon nliddon@cdc.gov

Download the “Developing a Referral System for Sexual Health Services” toolkit
www.connectionsforstudentsuccess.org/download

Check out CDC/DASH’s new web space
www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth

Follow CDC/DASH on Twitter! @DrZazaCDC