

# MAKING CONNECTIONS

## SUPPORTING FAMILIES VIRTUALLY



### CONNECTION

You have the opportunity and ability to interact with all families and provide resources in a way that might be new or unfamiliar during this extraordinary time.

Reaching out to engage with families and demonstrating respect to caregivers will increase trust and strengthen school and family partnerships during this pandemic.

#### TALKING POINTS:

Set up a time that is convenient for the parent or caregiver

During the meetings:

- Introduce yourself briefly before you ask their name(s)
- Tell them that you are checking in with everyone (universal not targeted)
- Thank them for taking your call
- Ask if this is a convenient time to talk
- Mention how much you miss interacting with the students
- Say something positive about their child
- Spend time listening to their story:
  - Start by asking questions about what is going well
  - Ask if they have any worries or concerns
- Find something to validate – for example, “It sounds like you are doing the best you can in this difficult time.”
- Find something to share about your own challenges – for example, “I really miss seeing people and going places, too.”
- Normalize what they are experiencing and that this is hard for everyone

# CONCRETE RESOURCES

You are the connection between families, school, and community resources.

You have the ability to build a partnership that will assist the student and family to help meet their needs.



## TALKING POINTS:

**Basic Needs:** Many families may be struggling with:

- Food: school & community resources
- Housing: access, tenant rights, mortgage forgiveness
- Financial: accessing unemployment, stimulus funds, help negotiating reduced ability to pay bills
- Physical Health: where and how to access healthcare, COVID-19 facts/myths, healthcare coverage if unemployed
- Internet and cell phones: accessing free/reduced service
- Social connectivity: community, spirituality, virtually
- Childcare

**Family Care:** Families may be spending more time together than ever and providing stress reduction, relaxation, and recreation activities may be helpful.

**Mental Health Resources:** Provide local, state, and national mental health and behavioral resources.

**Academic Supports:** Provide resources ranging from time management and organization to technology and tutoring.

### Making Connections Resource Materials

The Making Connections Resource List is a general resource guide based on Wisconsin and national resources as a starting point for families.



# SAFETY

Your partnership can provide families with the resources needed to maintain safety.

We know that during a crisis, violence increases in families, and counselors are worried about children and families. Remember, you are already trained to help.

## TALKING POINTS:

Refresh yourself:

- Know who you will consult with if you are informed of a situation, and you are not sure how to handle it. We can seek out support through consultation and supervision
- Have quick access to a list of the school, county, state, and national resources
- Helpful resources are being shared daily (see [Making Connections Resource Materials](#))
- Rely on your ethical standards to problem solve and feel confident in your course of action (see [ASCA Ethical Standards](#))
- Review mandatory reporter requirements (see [DPI Mandated Reporting](#))
- Remember: You Do Not Have To Do This Alone. Consult with WSCA, your local CPS, and other colleagues. Not only is teaming a good idea, it is a proven strategy for reducing stress and increasing the benefits of services offered to families



# FOLLOW UP & FOLLOW THROUGH

During this pandemic, leadership is not about having all the answers or fixing difficult circumstances.

Leadership is demonstrated with a willingness to make connections and offer emotional support, share time and resources, meet people where they are at in their journey, and walk alongside those on difficult paths.



## TALKING POINTS:

- Restate that we are all doing the best we can. Now more than ever, it is amazingly helpful that we have each other for support
- If you are able to follow through, ask them if you can reach out again, and if yes, ask when and how to contact them
- Provide your contact information and let them know when you are or are not typically available
- Ask them if they would like any of the ideas you discussed shared in a follow up email, text, or mail
- Thank them and make sure to end the conversation with something positive such as: "I'm really looking forward to getting back to normal. I am so grateful we have the chance to connect like this until then."

## Created by

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*and*

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