

New Mexico School f/t Blind & Visually Impaired	NO. 514.1
	SUBJECT: Student Behavioral Support and Mental Health Services
Effective Date: March 7, 2007	Revised: 12/15/10; 9/8/11 Reviewed: 2/19/15
Distribution: All Staff	Kind: Board Policy

GOAL

The goal of mental health services is to provide education, support and intervention that promotes healthy social, emotional and behavioral development

DEFINITION

Mental Health services includes services provided that promote healthy social and emotional development and prevent problems by fostering protective factors and resiliency, intervene as early after the onset of a problem and is feasible, and provide specialized assistance for persons with severe, pervasive and/or chronic problems.

IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENT

1. Student Services

- a. Upon student placement at NMSBVI, the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team will determine if student has risk factors or has exhibited risk behaviors that indicate that the student should receive a counseling evaluation from the School Mental Health Counselor and/or an outside mental health professional. A referral to counseling may also occur through recommendations from the psychological evaluation, request of IEP team or as a result of a threshold trigger and staffing. NMSBVI must obtain parental consent prior to administering any counseling assessment.
- b. When an IEP committee requests a psychological evaluation for a student cognitively able to participate, NMSBVI shall provide the assessment as part of a re-evaluation. NMSBVI must obtain parental consent prior to administering the psychological evaluation.
- c. NMSBVI shall provide counseling support to include school-based individual and/or group counseling, or referral to appropriate services outside of the school at an appropriate mental health facility, as determined by the assessment, psychological evaluation, or decision by IEP team. Placement into counseling will be determined by a clinical need. If there is deemed to be a clinical need for counseling services, that student must receive appropriate counseling services from either NMSBVI School Counselor, a Psychologist or an appropriate outside mental health facility in order to remain a student at NMSBVI. NMSBVI shall also provide counseling to students on an as-needed basis.
- d. School Counselor or School Psychologist shall develop goals for treatment that are measurable to determine and report progress towards goals, and shall also identify criteria for discharge from counseling services. Progress towards goals and meeting

criteria for discharge shall be monitored by School Counselor, or School Psychologist, Mental Health Team and supervisor of School Counselor. Students shall be discharged from counseling upon meeting criteria for discharge; discharge must occur through an IEP.

- e. Upon student placement at NMSBVI, the IEP team will determine if student has exhibited risk behaviors that indicate that the student should receive a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). A referral for a FBA may also occur through recommendations from the psychological evaluation, NMSBVI staff or parent(s) through completion of a referral form, or as a result of a threshold trigger and staffing. NMSBVI must obtain parental consent prior to conducting a FBA. Behavior Support Specialist shall conduct an FBA over a 45 day period, at which point the IEP team shall reconvene to review the FBA and decide if a Strategic Action Plan (SAP) or a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is appropriate or if the behaviors warrant less formal intervention.
- f. NMSBVI shall provide formal support through Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) or Strategic Action Plans (SAP), as determined by the Functional Behavior Assessment results (FBA), Mental Health team and IEP team decision as appropriate. A BIP will be implemented for those behaviors that are dangerous to self or others or pose significant interference with learning. A BIP must become part of the IEP. The SAP will function as a lower level of intervention that may be implemented for less severe behaviors, or as a preliminary tool before considering the implementation of a BIP. NMSBVI shall also provide informal behavior support through positive behavior support strategies and effective classroom management strategies.
- g. Restrictive means such as time out, loss of privileges, or restriction of movement shall only occur if outlined in a BIP and approved by an IEP team. When restrictive means are included in a BIP, the plan must also include positive behavior supports and a clear plan to teach replacement behaviors. When the student begins to show use of the replacement behaviors in at least 50% of the reported behaviors, the BIP will include a plan to begin to decrease the use of the restrictive means. In situations in which restrictive means are implemented with a student that is not on a behavior plan, an incident report must be completed and the incident report will be reviewed by the Superintendent or Student Support Services Director.
- h. NMSBVI will follow the New Mexico Administrative Code 7.VI.C when considering restrictive responses to behaviors. Specifically, "IEP teams may consider the use of time-out **as a positive intervention** and design time-out strategies to assist students in correcting the attitude and/or behaviors that interfere with their ability to remain in the classroom. **The use of time-out will not be used as a punishment for negative student behavior or as a means of removing the student indefinitely from the classroom setting, as it does not meet the intent of the IDEA.** The use of time-out must have positive implications, including enabling the student to return to the classroom setting.
- i. **The Definition of Time-Out**
The New Mexico PED defines the term *time-out* as a continuum of behavior management techniques that are designed to address inappropriate or negative student behavior resulting from over-stimulating or challenging classroom situations. This continuum begins with minimally intrusive or restrictive strategies that can be implemented within the classroom setting. The continuum

then progresses to more restrictive strategies that may involve the physical separation of a student from his or her classmates, for a brief amount of time, in order to enable the student to regroup and return to the classroom setting.

- j. Behavior Support Specialist shall develop goals for BIP and SAP that are measurable to determine and report progress towards goals, and shall also identify criteria for discharge from BIP or SAP. Progress towards goals and meeting criteria for discharge shall be monitored by Behavior Support Specialist, Mental Health Team and supervisor of Behavior Support Specialist. Students shall be discharged from BIP or SAP upon meeting criteria for discharge, and discharge for a BIP must occur through an IEP.
- k. If there is a chronic problem with injurious/dangerous behavior(s), if the child is chronically disruptive to the classroom milieu, if a student is exhibiting psychiatric symptoms that warrant treatment, chronic insomnia or if the child is unable to perform in the academic setting due to their behavior(s), then medication would be discussed as an option to help support the student. However, per IDEA 2004, NMSBVI will never require students to obtain a prescription for a substance covered by the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. Secs. 801 et seq.) in order to attend school at NMSBVI.
- l. In accordance with NMSBVI Policy 507, Student Placement, “if a student’s behavior significantly escalates and does not decrease in a reasonable period of time, placement will be re-evaluated by the IEP team to determine whether the distance from the student’s supportive home environment is detrimental to their wellbeing.” If this is determined to be the case, the residential campus will no longer be considered ‘least restrictive’ for the student and an IEP team will be convened to determine placement.
- m. Threshold triggers
 - If a student has 4 incidents in 4 weeks that result in an incident report, a staffing will be convened as soon as possible. In that staffing, it will be evaluated if student should be referred for a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and/or counseling evaluation. If the student is on a Strategic Action Plan (SAP), strategies will be reviewed and revised as necessary, or it will be determined if student should be placed on a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). If the student is already on a BIP, interventions will be reviewed and if changes need to be made to interventions, an IEP will be called. If student is already receiving counseling services, it will be determined if supplemental services or a higher intensity service is necessary.
 - If a student is placed on a psychotropic medication targeted towards modifying a student’s behavior, then an FBA will be conducted to identify positive behavior supports and replacement behaviors to be placed into a BIP for that student.
 - Any incident report rated as severe shall result in at least one counseling session with the School Counselor to address the incident.
 - If a student has 2 incident reports rated as severe in one school year, it will trigger a staffing in which it will be determined if an FBA or counseling evaluation is warranted, or if current SAP, BIP or counseling services need to be modified.

- n. Tracking – Students on Behavior Intervention Plans will be tracked as indicated on their BIP. Data retrieved from tracking sheets will be entered into a data tracking system, and Behavior Support Specialist will use this data tracking to look for trends, and increases or decreases in target and replacement behaviors. Additionally, the Behavior Support Specialist will utilize appropriate standardized evaluation tools to assess for changes in behavior.
- o. Reporting progress – Students receiving counseling services or students who are on a Behavior Intervention Plan will have quarterly reporting on student progress towards goals provided to the students' parent(s) or caregiver(s).

2. Student Education

- a. NMSBVI shall provide training to secondary students in the recognition of specific student mental health issues (ex: harassment, substance abuse, suicide prevention, depression) as well as recognition and reporting of physical, emotional and sexual abuse and types of neglect.
- b. NMSBVI Mental Health Team shall support the formulation and implementation of the school Social and Emotional Wellbeing Policy. The policy shall include a plan addressing the behavioral health needs of all students in the educational process by focusing on students' social and emotional well-being. NMSBVI shall encourage a school-wide educational program that includes age appropriate instruction that strives to improve the knowledge, skills and behaviors of students so they can make health decisions and avoid negative behaviors. Examples of school-wide educational topics include: social skills building, problem-solving skills, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STD's), human sexuality, parenting and family issues, disease prevention, nutrition and dietary patterns that contribute to disease, tobacco, alcohol and other drug education, physical education, coping with life situations, CPR, first aid and safety training, and consumer health.

3. Staff

- a. NMSBVI shall provide annual training to student services staff in the recognition of specific student mental health issues (ex: substance abuse, harassment, depression, suicide prevention), as well as recognition and reporting of physical, emotional, sexual and residential abuse and types of neglect. NMSBVI shall provide within the first 10 days of employment training for recognizing and reporting suspected abuse, neglect, substance abuse, harassment, suicide prevention, and reporting incidents and injuries.
- b. Behavior Support Specialist shall provide group and individual staff training in use of positive behavior support strategies, implementing BIP and SAP interventions, and teaching replacement behaviors. Behavior Support Specialist shall also train staff in completion of tracking sheets and behavior evaluation forms. Behavior Support Specialist shall maintain records of staff training indicating staff acknowledgement that they have received training and understand their role in implementing behavior strategies.
- c. NMSBVI shall provide training in MANDT to new hires prior to the start of the school year. New hires that are hired after the start of the school year shall be trained at the next scheduled MANDT training. Staff shall receive annual boosters every year thereafter.

- d. NMSBVI shall maintain a Mental Health Team that meets regularly to quickly and professionally address student and staff concerns as they arise in regard to student behavior and mental health issues.
- e. NMSBVI shall maintain a crisis response team that may consist of any combination of the following: Health Services Supervisor, School Counselor, MANDT Instructor(s), Behavior Support Specialist, School Psychologist, Student Support Services Director, Residential Life Supervisor, School Nurses and Superintendent.