

Telehealth Contingency Plan for Any Virtual Health Services

The purpose of this contingency plan is to outline actions necessary in the event that the student is experiencing safety concerns during telehealth services

Action Steps are indicated in Blue.

Safety Concerns:

Safety concerns may arise for students participating in telehealth services. It is important to attempt to proactively identify and discuss any safety concerns when working with students.

When beginning each session, the provider will confirm with the student their location and who is with them at that time. This is crucial to ensure that if an unsafe event arises, the provider knows exactly where the student is at and where to respond if needed.

When able to, providers should discuss the following with their students within the first couple telehealth services:

- Confidentiality of their setting (many students are attending sessions at home, and may have others around them during sessions).
- Need for a code between student and provider to indicate a safety concern, or a need to disengage in regards to someone's presence. (For example, if a student and provider are engaging in discussion regarding home dynamics, and the student notices someone listening outside their door, or doesn't feel comfortable continuing that conversation, the student could hold 2 fingers up to indicate to the provider that the conversation has now become unsafe).
- Creating a [safety plan](#) with student's receiving services in the event that they have dealt with, or express any suicidal or homicidal ideation, or have expressed feeling unsafe at home.
- Identify emergency contact information for student.

Suicidal Ideation:

If a student expresses suicidal ideation during services the provider will:

- Assess the student's risk and access to means using clinical judgment and [Columbia Student Risk Rating Scales](#) if this falls within your scope of practice. If this does not fall within the provider's scope of practice or if the provider feels an immediate and imminent risk, the provider will attempt to stay online and connected with the student, while notifying emergency contacts and/or services.
- Imminent Risk: If the student appears to be in imminent danger and at high risk of dying by suicide, (has many risk factors, a plan, and access to means) the provider will attempt to stay connected with the student on one device, while using another device to contact family members and emergency services. If connection with the student is lost during this time, the provider will attempt to reconnect with the student while contacting local emergency services.
- Non-Imminent Risk: Provider will work with the student to update their Safety Plan and ensure they are communicating with parents or school staff needed to help keep the student safe as part of their plan. Involve the student in these conversations if possible and increase frequency of services as appropriate.

Risk of Harm to or by others:

If a student becomes unsafe due to risk of harming others or having others harm them during sessions providers will:

- Contact emergency services immediately if the student is in imminent danger.
- Contact the local police department to request a well-child check if imminent danger is not present but cause for concern is.
- Communicate and debrief the incident with the supervisor.

Mandated Reporter Responsibilities:

Being an employee of a school district within the state of Michigan, you are still a mandated reporter and are responsible for reporting any issues that may arise during telehealth sessions related to mental health, unsafe behaviors within the home, or activities and conversations that may endanger the student. Any existing district policies and procedures for a mental health crisis or response are still applicable.

All school staff and providers will follow MDHHS mandated reporting [guidelines](#) and report accordingly.