

Supporting students in stressful times

April 9, 2020

Chat box dialogue

Link to slides:

https://learningforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Webinar_4-9-20_FINAL-.pdf

To receive a participation certificate:

Email office@learningforward.org

Contact information for the panelists:

Amy Nicholson, Turnaround for Children anicholson@tfcusa.org

Jessy Newman, AIR jnewman@air.org

David Adams, Urban Assembly dadams@urbanassembly.org

Resources and links from the panelists:

- Turnaround for Children's resources for supporting students and families during COVID
<https://www.turnaroundusa.org/coronavirus/>
- AIR resources for home connections during COVID
<https://www.air.org/resource/building-positive-conditions-learning-home-strategies-and-resources-families-and-caregivers>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network Tip Sheet
https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/outbreak_factsheet_1.pdf

Learning Forward resources:

- [COVID-19 online resource page](#)
- [COVID-19 online community](#)
- [COVID-19 webinars](#)

Resources suggested by participants:

- Resilience slide reminds me assets work by the Search Institute. Search Institute has assessments for multiple age levels and in Spanish and English on what he is talking about
- "I have to work from home?" <https://spark.adobe.com/page/OfwDyBI4BII6d/>

Discussion question: If you were a student, what would you want from your teacher right now?

- Connection (mentioned frequently)
- Phone calls or video (mentioned by several people)
- Face to face time
- To know my teacher cares/ To know someone is there for me
- Compassion and understanding
- Reassurance/ to know it will be ok / we will get through this together

- Reassurance about graduation
- Support
- Communication
- Encouragement
- Clear directions
- To see and hear classmates
- Continuation of relationship
- To be seen and recognized
- Humor/ levity
- What is happening in my teacher's home
- Calm and collected response
- To know I am doing ok
- Academic and emotional support
- Hope
- A hug
- Comfort

Challenges participants are experiencing:

- I feel bad that I haven't talked to phone or video, but it's because parents are not answering!
- Parents don't all feel the same way - I'm at a private school they want the "curriculum" they paid for.
- School Psychologist- tough to connect right now with parents/students. We are trying to figure out how evaluations/IEPs will look, especially if schools in S.C do not return till the Fall :(
- Instructional aide at JH level here - I don't have access to students' personal info, so can't call. Google Classroom and email are primary forms of communication...
- I teach in juvenile detention. They can't use internet and we are not allowed in the building... so no contact. I'm going to write them a letter, it's all I have :(
- I also worked in a jail and they already are isolated so this would be devastating.
- Many parents are also trying to work full time at home.
- David, what are your suggestions for helping teachers who are connecting with students virtually who appear to not have those family/care giver positive relationships? What are some strategies to best build on the teacher/student relationships virtually?
- Parents may not have music skills, the foreign language skills, the advanced math skills, or even the English skills.
- Kids who have parents in the medical field are worried about parents bringing home the virus...
- I think when you talk about student overwhelm, it can include the volume of work, as well as the level of it.
- So, thinking of this year's 8th grade students, who enter a regional HS next year - three different elementary districts feeding into one high school - 'maintaining' is going to be a nightmare for those teachers!

Strategies and comments about communicating with students and families and colleagues:

- Special Ed Assistant, we are contacting students and parents at least twice a week on the phone. Elementary School.
- My role typically does not involve parent/student interactions. My communication is mainly with teachers. Which is still happening daily.
- As a para, I tend to keep in touch with teachers about events and curriculum, as well as assist with observing who is using the programs assigned to them
- As a staff developer, I don't communicate directly with students and their families, but I'm looking for ways teachers and school staff can.
- I'm an Instructional assistant and have been keeping in touch with students via Dojo.
- I have left messages, we *67 so it shows up as unknown caller, so maybe that is why ?
- As counselors we have the opportunity to have one to one conversations with students
- One on ones can be with student AND parents.
- As a counselor I have been in a zoom breakout with a student and a teacher
- Other strategies- voice or video recording sent to students
- We were told that if there is only one student another teacher or parent has to be present. no 1:1
- We book a 15 minute one-to-one meeting per week with teachers and student/parents as a check-in and this is not just class material but also an emotional check-in and to make sure students are still finding ways to connect with their friends. A lot of families are using kids messenger for outside of school connections with friends.
- Whatever strategies you use, keep in mind that many parents are struggling to work and "homeschool" their student, so don't be surprised if some practices that end up being more work for parents are not successful
- Our school made a Miss You video sent out to all the families! They loved it!
- My coteacher has a lot of family responsibilities. In order to make sure she is regularly connecting with our kids, she tapes a response to the do now and emails it to me. I include it with the other resources on Google Classroom and list watching her video as part of the agenda. This allows them to remain connected to her. It works so well, I'm including her responses in my non-ICT classes.
- Great example of caring for your colleague, Katharine. Teachers need to care of each other too in this new learning environment.
- For younger classes a lot of teacher's are using Seesaw where they can record messages, assign work, post links and student's can also add journal entries, photos and video

Discussion about online platforms for connecting with students:

- This zoom format is so cool! My district won't let me use it and I wish we could! I love the poll and being able to show the slides too.
- Our county just banned Zoom...
- what? why ban Zoom?

- Some districts have banned Zoom because of the data breaches that were happening with malicious actors bombing random meetings with inappropriate material.
- Zoom was hijacked and pornography appeared during a meeting with teacher and students. Districts have banned Zoom. Google meets is uses.
- Zoom needs passwords to avoid Zoombombing
- Have to be very careful with Zoom. Use passwords
- Our district set all our accounts to require "waiting rooms" and passwords.
- We shifted zoom so you have a waiting room so outsiders can't get in and you have to sign in with our schools email to get in
- Google voice gives you a real number you can call/text with
- yes, we can use google hangouts now.
- You might try GoToMeeting
- We are using Google Hangouts Meets and Microsoft Teams.
- Teachers can possibly use google voice to get a number that can be used instead of the teachers personal phone number.
- You can also use *67 before your phone number if you are making calls. It will block your number.
- For those with younger students, ClassDojo is really easy and very organized to use. ClassDojo also translates for parents who can't read English

Strategies for supporting students and families:

- Love the vocabulary of intentions vs. goals [that Jessy shared]
- Totally going to use the "intentions" list [that Jessy showed] for some of my families!
- Great ideas for setting intentions with young children!
- With young kids you could use images - instead of words - to help remind them of their daily intention
- Resilience slide reminds me assets work by the Search Institute
- I like the idea of images for the young ones!
- We do a 15-minute guided breathing/meditation for teachers each day before they start remote learning
- I love the idea of the meditation for teachers! What platform do use?
- For meditation we use Zoom.
- Asking students to learn one or two subjects at a time, rather than to ask them to go through the whole school day, each day that they're at home.
- I agree with you Lindsay; less is more.
- I think remembering to keep the work at a level that a student at home can do independently is a great reminder.
- K-5, we were told to maintain their learning. Keep up what they have already been taught. Keep it light. Lots of SEL.
- Simplicity is the key!
- I think we need to try to keep out students at their current level they were on when all of this happened and not try to challenge them to learn new things. This will only cause more stress on the parents/guardians and students as well.

- Thank you. Yes, let's work on maintaining knowledge
- The counter point is that school work can be a touchstone as an anchor of normal. If I am working on schoolwork then I am not binge-watching news or ruminating about how awful being "stuck" at home is. Offering enough work to keep the day normal but not pressuring to produce.
- We are remediating Benchmarks which were not mastered.
- Our district also just went to an odd period-even period day schedule - students only have 4 classes each day (half the homework for next day)!
- Get ideas from summer school weeks for themes ie: Hawaii, Fashion Show, Dragons, etc. Those themes can permeate the lessons or the days.
- Like - theme idea
- We play a game, like Pictionary and Mad Gab (we have a different game each time we meet)...they love it!
- We are doing challenges - like meme challenges
- They students had to submit a personally designed meme based on a topic and then we screen them and post them on our morning announcements
- Love that meme idea!
- I love the meme challenge
- We are also doing online spirit week. I am trying to figure out how to share the virtual spirit week flyer... if you want it email me at roys@gulliverschools.org
- RE: spirit week - we did a virtual spirit week using social media: FB, Instagram, Twitter, etc. photos were sent to school or district accounts
- Our activity director Tweets & Instagrams the Spirit schedule for each week - and hashtags for students to use on their responses so everyone can see all the responses - I've seen so many students responding to staff on these!
- I have joined the Simon Sinek virtual book club on his book "Start with Why". He mentioned that the most stressful experience for human beings is uncertainty. So the focus you are sharing around routines, structures, predictability helps all of us to deal with our fears and anxieties around this pandemic.
- I would also suggest working journaling into the daily schedule. Students can journal individually in response to prompts about how they are doing and those are shared only with the teacher. The teacher cannot return the 1-to-1 communication but this could be a good way to tap into how students are doing.