



Who are School Social Workers?

MAY 2016

SCHOOL
PRIORITY AREAS
SUPPORTED BY
SCHOOL SOCIAL
WORKERS

- Direct services to students with IEPs
- Direct services to general education students
- Attendance support
- RTI team member
- Homeless liaison support
- Therapeutic services (Individual and Group Therapy)
- Family support via case management

What are school social workers trained to do?

- ◇ Support students, families, and schools, while removing barriers to academic success
- ◇ Work with both special education and general education students and their families
- ◇ **Elementary school social workers** have been trained in Child Centered Play Therapy (CCPT), an evidence-informed, early intervention therapeutic approach to help young children self-regulate emotions, develop improved executive functioning skills and increase emotional literacy using play and Grief and Trauma Intervention for Children (GTI), a group intervention
- ◇ **Middle and high school**

social workers have been trained in Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) and/or Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress (SPARCS). CBITS is a recognized evidence-based treatment designed to reduce trauma symptoms and was created specifically for im-

plementation in the school setting. SPARCS is a present-oriented, strength-based intervention that focuses on enhancing resilience through the development of important self-regulatory, problem solving, and communication skills.

- ◇ At the secondary level, DCPS also offers training in Motivational Enhancement Therapy/Cannabis Youth Treatment (MET/CYT). Using motivational enhancement therapy and cognitive behavior therapy principles, this 5-8 week treatment is designed as a marijuana abuse/dependence treatment for adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18.



How do school social workers support the day-to-day operations?

- ◇ Providing targeted evidence-based interventions to promote mental health and school success
- ◇ Consulting with classroom staff and caregivers to support positive behaviors
- ◇ Creating safe, positive school climates
- ◇ Strengthening family-school partnerships
- ◇ Supporting school-wide universal interventions to foster mental health and social emotional well-being
- ◇ Improving school-wide assessment and accountability
- ◇ Providing crisis intervention services





The Role of the School Social Worker: Preventive Work

Social Workers are involved in preventive work with students, staff, and families that promote positive school climate and social/emotional well-being. In this role, school social workers:

- ◇ Provide consultation to school staff and parents to facilitate student educational, social, and emotional growth
- ◇ Conduct individual and group counseling as well as psycho-education
- ◇ Obtain information concerning the effects of environment, including family, cultural, and economic disadvantages that may be adversely affecting student progress (Social History Analysis)
- ◇ Conduct home visits that encourage home/school communication
- ◇ Work collaboratively with the Response to Intervention (RTI) Team to develop plans of assistance for students at risk of academic and/or behavioral difficulty
- ◇ Serve as the home-school-community liaison
- ◇ Make appropriate referrals for community resources

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the role of school social workers in DCPS, please contact your school's office in order to speak with your school social worker.

You may also contact the DCPS School Mental Health Team at schoolmentalhealth@dc.gov or (202) 442-5472.

The Role of the School Social Worker: Special Education

Social Workers are involved in special education. In this role, they:

- ◇ Serve as a member of the multi-disciplinary team (MDT)
- ◇ Conduct social work evaluations and other related assessments for initial and re-evaluations
- ◇ Provide related services as prescribed by the IEP, including social, life, and transitional skills that can be transferred from school to community
- ◇ Complete student progress reports
- ◇ Participate in MDT, IEP, manifestation determination, and other related meetings
- ◇ Work collaboratively within the classroom setting to implement student IEPs
- ◇ Collect data for the purpose of monitoring social/emotional progress and evaluating effectiveness of services
- ◇ Provide technical assistance on strategies that improve outcomes for special education students
- ◇ Coordinate the design and implementation of behavior intervention plans and functional behavior assessments
- ◇ Attend court hearings as a DCPS representative

The Role of the School Social Worker: Program Development

Social Workers are involved in program development to meet the unique needs of the school. In this role, they:

- ◇ Conduct needs assessments and plan for support services both within and outside the school
- ◇ Facilitate special support groups (i.e., students with incarcerated parents, grief and loss, divorce, teen parents, conflict resolution, etc.) as needed
- ◇ Manage family resource centers, where parents/guardians can access needed information and participate in opportunities to learn how to support their student(s)
- ◇ Work with administrators to implement effective policies and programs to address school safety, school attendance, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, child abuse, and neglect, as needed