



School Social Work and COVID-19

The Board of Directors of the American Council for School Social Work seeks to convey our support and empathy as our members seek to cope with these challenges. It will be critical for us in the coming weeks to ensure that we are maintaining our own health, safety and well-being and the health and safety of those around us through good health practices and self-care. We hope that ACSSW can continue to support our members in these ways.

ACSSW exists to leverage the power of collective action and mutual support for school social workers across the country. We will continue this work as we collectively respond to COVID-19 and the long-term impact of this crisis. Be well, stay safe, and please reach out if there are ways we can support you.

Acknowledgement

The last few weeks have been a period of rapid change, anxiety, and loss. While these effects are felt differently in different communities, the overwhelming impact of COVID-19 and the necessary social response has touched us all. As an organization that seeks to support and represent school social workers across the country, we recognize that most if not all of you have experienced a rapid disruption in your work. For some, this has meant a shift to tele-health or emergency measures as you continue to provide resources to vulnerable students and families. Others are grappling with tremendous personal impacts, whether that means illness, the loss of childcare, loss of income, or other challenges. Others are coping with the challenge of not being able to do the work we love and know is vital at this time.

Call to Action

This crisis has made visible deep inequities in our communities and revealed the many inadequacies of our social safety net. These inequities have always been at the forefront of our work; the realities that we face as school social workers often reflect gaps in resources that exist outside of schools. However, this crisis has served to illuminate the many resources that students and families simply cannot access when schools are closed. While this reality is sobering, it has critical implications for our work moving forward. While we don't know when and how it will occur, the return to school will call all of us to:

- Adopt trauma-informed models of education and support for students and staff.
- Ensure that schools will be (as they have always been) pillars of community support.
- Express an understanding that everyone will have experienced the collective anxiety and loss that we are grappling with now.
- Provide leadership in establishing and implementing trauma-informed approaches in the months ahead.

Next Steps

To this end, we hope that our **National School Social Work Institute**--now postponed to February 2021-- will be a time for us to gather as a community to share and develop our skills in this area. We originally built the institute around the theme **“Building Trauma-Informed Schools and Communities”**, and we anticipate that this focus will be even more central to our work in the coming year.

Beyond the work we do in and with our own schools, this crisis also brings renewed urgency to our broader work ensuring that children and families have what they need to lead happy, healthy, and fulfilling lives. We encourage all school social workers to consider the role we can play in advocating for systems that ensure this is a reality for our most vulnerable. We will work to keep our members apprised of any opportunities for advocacy during this period.

Resources

ACSSW wants to ensure that you have access to as many resources as possible during this time. We previously posted a [list of resources](#) on our [website](#).

Below are some additional resources that may be useful.

- [Talking with Children About Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- [Questions and Answers on Providing Services to Children with Disabilities During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Outbreak](#)
- [A Trauma-informed Approach to Teaching Through Coronavirus](#)
- [CASEL SEL Resources During COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19 \("Coronavirus"\) Information and Resources for Schools and School Personnel](#)
- [OCR's Telehealth Remote Communications During COVID-19](#)
- [Self-care During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)
- [NASP Resource Center](#)
- [NCTSN's Simple Activities for Children and Adolescents](#)
- [UCLA's Activities for Kids](#)
- [Dave the Dog Is Worried About Coronavirus](#) A cute, downloadable book for younger kids.