

THE STUDENT INTERVIEW

Considerations

The Purpose

- Determine the student's
 - Strengths
 - Perceptions
 - Needs
 - Concerns
- Identify significant adults and youth in the student's life
- Screen for and identify problems

The Interviewer

- Good relationship with the student or able to establish a positive connection
- Comfortable with discomfort
- Strong listening and observation skills
- Able to recognize and follow-up on “red flags”
- Able to elicit feelings and coping methods (not just facts)
- Doesn't assume that the identified problem is THE problem

The Interview

Can be oral or written, structured or unstructured

Stages

- 1) Social
 - Connect
 - Define your role and purpose
- 2) Exploring
 - Identify strengths and needs
 - Gather information
- 3) Next Steps
 - Explain the action planning process and how the team will use the information
 - Explore the student's next steps

DETERMINING STRENGTHS AND NEEDS: The Student Interview

Assessment of Internal and External Strengths

The student's perceptions regarding her/his behavior, problems, crises, strengths, concerns, supports, and needs are critical to effective action planning. The student may save the SAT time by suggesting supportive activities & strategies and resources. Also, the student may offer information that only s/he has – information key to an action plan that meets her/his needs. In addition, by involving the student in the process, s/he is more likely to agree to participate in the strategies developed by the SATeam.

The questions listed below are strength-based, general in nature, and invite more than a “yes” or “no” answer. The interviewer does not need to ask them all and can reword them to fit the student's developmental needs. Depending upon the response, each question should be pursued and clarified so that accurate information can be gathered and presented to the SATeam. The interviewer should personalize the questions below, taking the student's age into consideration, asking them and recording the responses per the interviewer's day-to-day style of interacting with students. For each question, ask regarding family, school, community and peer settings and interactions.

Screening for Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Involvement

If during the course of the strength-based assessment the interviewer determines possible AOD issues, the interviewer should report her/his concerns to the SAT. An AOD assessment needs to be conducted before the team can move forward with an Action Plan.

STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Support

- *Who are the adults who mean the most to you?*
- *Who do you think really cares about you?*
- *Who are the other students who mean the most to you?*

Empowerment

- *What do important people in your life do that show you that you are appreciated, that you really count?*
- *Where do you feel most safe? Most unsafe?*
- *In what ways do you help others?*
- *In what ways do you have control over your life?*

Boundaries and Expectations

- *Which rules/boundaries in your life are most helpful to you?*
- *Which rules/boundaries would you like to change?*
- *How can you help change rules that don't work well?*
- *What do important people in your life expect from you?*

Constructive Time Use

- *Which activities give you the most satisfaction?*
- *What makes you laugh?*
- *How do you plan and organize your time?*
- *How do you spend your time outside of school?*
- *What talents, skills, accomplishments are you most proud of?*

Commitment to Learning

- *How do you feel about school?*
- *Are you motivated to achieve academically?*

Positive Values

- *Which values are most important to you?*

Student Assistance Program

Social Competencies

- *With whom do you interact easily, communicate consistently?*
- *When confronted with a problem that you can't resolve right away, what do you do?*
- *When you find yourself in a situation that makes you uncomfortable and you can't change that situation, what do you do?*
- *How do you feel trying new skills in front of people? What would help you take these kinds of positive risks?*

Positive Identity

- *What accomplishments are you most proud of?*
- *What do you think your life will be like in three years? Five? Ten? Later?*
- *What do you expect of yourself?*
- *Describe your most recent success.*
- *Describe your most recent failure. How do you feel about it? Have you learned anything from not having it go the way you would have liked? What will you do different next time?*

Concerns

- *Are you concerned about any of your behaviors?*
- *What do you think the problem is?*

Needs

- *What do you think you need?*

Strategies

- *What strategies have been tried by others?*
- *What have you tried?*
- *What has been successful? Why do you think it was successful?*
- *What has not worked well? Why do you think it wasn't successful?*
- *What else could you do?*
- *What support would be helpful to you?*
- *What else would you like?*

OBSERVATION OF PERSONAL RESILIENCY TRAITS

After completing the student and parent interviews, use the following list to assess personal strengths the SATeam can consider in developing the action plan.

Insight

Does the student sense when something is wrong, know something is wrong, and understand that something is wrong?

Independence / Autonomy

Can/does the student stay away from risky situations, disengage and separate from risky situations, take charge of situations s/he can influence?

Relationships

Can/does the student connect with others, recruit others for help? Does s/he have strong relationships with others?

Initiative

Does the student work well on her/his own, explore, generate her/his own ideas, and have fun? Is s/he resourceful?

Humor

Does the student have fun playing (or does s/he have to win?), is s/he a “laugher”, can s/he laugh during difficult situations, does s/he have a sense of humor?

Creativity

Is the student capable of shaping and composing her/his own “stuff”?

Morality

Can/does the student choose right from wrong, express values of right and wrong, serve others? Is s/he altruistic?

Other Strengths

Does the student indicate other behaviors, competencies, talents, capabilities that can be used to strengthen the action plan?