VAST
VIRTUALLY ASSISTED SCHOOL TEAM
Tele Mental Health Support

MONTANA SAFE SCHOOLS CENTER
TAMMY TOLLESON KNEE, SCHOOL SUPPORT LIAISON
EMAIL: TAMARA.TOLLESONKNEE@MSO.UMT.EDU PHONE: (406) 243-4974
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION | SUITE 109
32 CAMPUS DRIVE, MISSOULA, MT 59812

Virtually Assisted School Teams (VAST) are a collaboration between the Montana Safe Schools Center (MSSC) and Counseling Department. A team is comprised of graduate interns who are recruited, trained, and supervised through this partnership. The VAST graduate interns use video conferencing to provide social, emotional, and behavioral support. There are many reasons someone might request VAST support.

WHEN A STUDENT:
- needs help coping with difficult life circumstances
- struggles with focus, anxiety, or withdrawal
- lacks the ability to make and maintain friendships
- has suicidal ideation
- is grieving a significant loss such as the death of a family member
- struggles with emotional regulation
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Researchers have found that tele-mental health services are just as effective as comparable in-person mental health care across many populations and settings (Hilty et al., 2013, Langarizade et al., 2017). Tele-mental health has been utilized to successfully support children with ADHD (Meyers 2015), depression (Nelson, Bernard, & Cain, 2003), and anxiety (Carpenter et al., 2018). Potential benefits also are reflective of tele-mental health and include positive coping, gains in mental health and wellness, and the therapeutic benefits of talking through challenging feelings. To ensure skills and practices stay consistent graduate interns will be sharing specific goals and tools with parents and teachers/counselors to ensure holistic improvement.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA TO PARTICIPATE?

For schools to participate and to be in compliance with HIPPA regulations, criteria need to be in place to provide a safe and private telehealth environment. Schools will be responsible for providing a secure device and private space for student use, emergency contact information for on-site school contacts and families, and community referral sources. Parent permission is required as well as authorization to exchange information, videotape sessions and participate in a study by the UM team.

HOW MUCH DO SERVICES COST?

Thanks to a grant that the Montana Safe Schools Center received from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, all VAST support is free to participating schools and families.

HOW CAN STUDENTS AT OUR SCHOOL RECEIVE SERVICES FROM VAST?

Contact Tammy Tolleson Knee, School Support Liaison for MSSC at tamara.tollesonknee@mso.umt.edu or 406.243.4974