



Changing Minds

**5 NEW WAYS TO TACKLE TOUGH
CHALLENGES IN BEHAVIORAL AND
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

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An Urgent Need for Expanded Access to Mental Health Resources

We've had a nationwide wake-up call: today's schools and students need greater access to behavioral interventions and mental health services. In response, numerous states and local districts have committed to multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). Why? Because a mountain of evidence shows that systemic implementation of behavior interventions improve student and school outcomes, including:

- **Increased instructional time**
- **Lower dropout rates**
- **Safer schools**
- **Lower suicide rates**
- **Fewer suspensions**
- **Happier teachers/Better staff morale**

Districts that don't commit to a formal MTSS framework still have to deal with the high demand for assessments and managing behavior goals on IEPs and BIPs. With the rise in the identification of behavioral disorders and mental health needs, many districts can barely keep up, let alone expand their commitment to mental health.

Can live, online access to experienced mental health professionals help districts tackle these issues? This ebook addresses five common challenges, and explores the student benefits provided by live, online access to behavioral and mental health services.

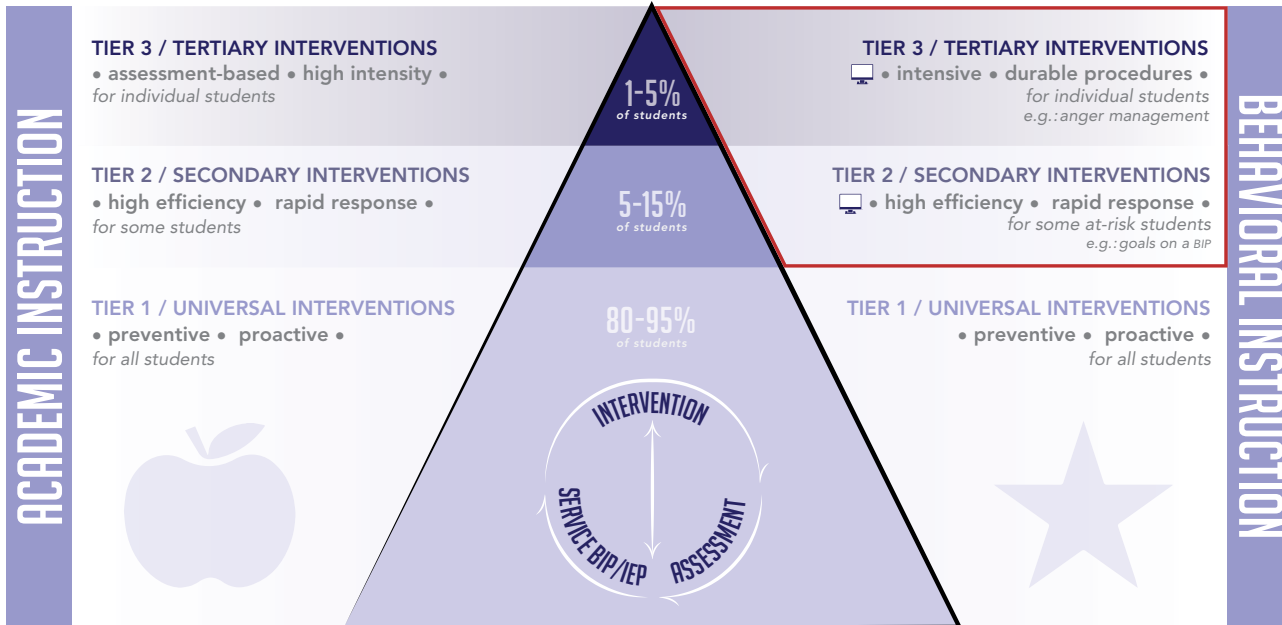
Where Do Online Services Fit Into MTSS?



Districts provide behavioral and mental health services to students as part of pre-referral interventions, behavioral intervention plans (BIPs) and individual education programs (IEPs). Online delivery of these interventions and services can augment resources for many districts. Mental health professionals can also perform assessments online, or wherever the school sees fit by varying intensity, duration, and frequency of the intervention to meet the student's need.

Schools and districts that have committed to MTSS and are using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to amplify academic and behavior instruction can effectively incorporate online services for both Tier 2 and Tier 3 behavioral interventions.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support



= Suitable for Online Delivery

Tackling the Five Challenges of School Districts

CHALLENGES

- #1 INSUFFICIENT CAPACITY
- #2 EXCESSIVE CASELOADS
- #3 HIGH DEMAND FOR ASSESSMENTS
- #4 FINDING SPECIALIZED EXPERTISE FOR EVERY CHILD
- #5 JAM-PACKED SCHOOL SCHEDULES



Challenge #1: Insufficient Capacity



CHALLENGE 1

"We just can't hire enough qualified people to meet our needs."

HOW CAN ONLINE SERVICES HELP?

Live, online delivery helps fill in service gaps with highly qualified, licensed mental health professionals to which you might not otherwise have access. And because you pay only for service time, your district can save on costs including travel time, training and employee benefits.

PresenceLearning provides schools with access to a nationwide network of high quality, certified mental health professionals, including licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs) and school psychologists.

Challenge #2: Excessive Caseloads



CHALLENGE 2

"Our district can't begin to cover the volume and diversity of students' behavioral and mental health needs, let alone meet recommended caseload guidelines."

HOW CAN ONLINE SERVICES HELP?

When your existing staff is stretched thin, online services can augment your program in a variety of ways: managing special cases, handling check-in and check-out meetings, serving virtual or homebound students, filling in during medical or maternity leaves and more.

PresenceLearning eliminates the need to hire additional full-time staff to manage your district's caseloads more effectively. We provide mental health professionals to match your specific requirements and our world-class providers will partner with you to ensure the needs of your students are met.

Challenge #3: High Demand for Assessments



CHALLENGE 3

"I can't keep up with interventions and IEP obligations because ongoing demand for assessments is so high. In fact, I'm having a hard time just getting assessments completed on time."

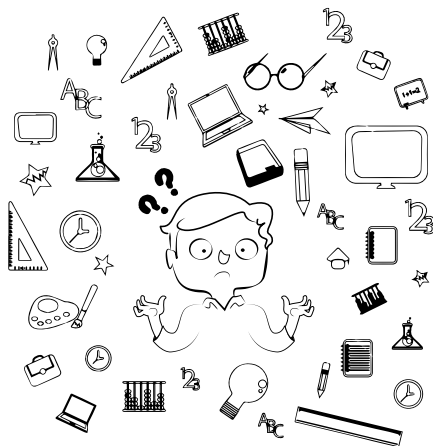
HOW CAN ONLINE SERVICES HELP?

Assessments take up an inordinate amount of time for most school mental health professionals. Online services can assist in two ways: either by performing assessments directly and allowing your staff to concentrate on interventions and direct services, or by providing direct services and interventions and allowing your staff to concentrate on assessments.

Using the same techniques and materials as onsite evaluations, the online mental health professionals in PresenceLearning's network use our secure, web-based platform to:

- Perform direct student assessment
- Perform clinical observation (via webcam)
- Conduct parent/teacher/student interviews
- Review developmental/medical histories
- Use norm-referenced standardized rating scales

Challenge #4: Finding Specialized Expertise for Every Child



CHALLENGE 4

"Our district is committed to PBIS, but we cannot make it work for every kid. We just don't have the expertise in-house to do the right interventions for some situations."

HOW CAN ONLINE SERVICES HELP?

No school has access to specialized staff members trained to meet every individual student's need, and many tiered systems are at risk for this reason. Online services can fill service gaps by expanding access to a nationwide network of mental health professionals.

The PresenceLearning team works with you to coordinate a workable schedule for your students and to accommodate the need for rescheduling.

Challenge #5: Jam-Packed School Schedules



CHALLENGE 5

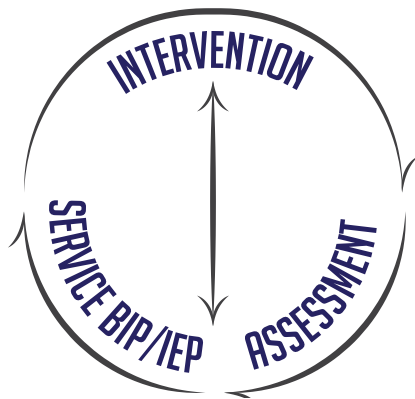
“Scheduling interventions can be a real nightmare. Between student schedules and staff workloads, finding consistent and workable times is often impossible.”

HOW CAN ONLINE SERVICES HELP?

Student schedules change all the time: absences, field trips, extracurricular activities and testing can all impact a school's ability to provide consistent services. Online behavior interventions and other mental health services eliminate scheduling conflicts.

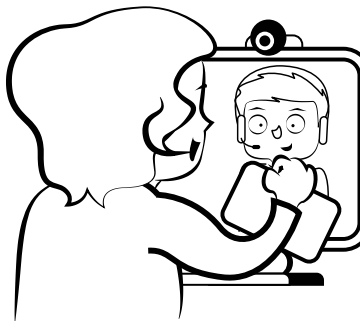
With flexible scheduling, PresenceLearning mental health professionals can work around your students' schedules, and easily reschedule when circumstances require it.

What Services Can Online Mental Health Professionals Provide?



- **Pre-Referral Interventions** (Tier 2 and Tier 3 behavior interventions) Daily (e.g. check-in/check-out, Time To Think, Steps for Success) or weekly (BIP) sessions and reporting to the student's support team.
- **Assessments**
 - Social-Emotional & Behavioral (S/E/B): Gilliam Autism Rating Scale – Third Edition (GARS-3), Conners, CBRS, BASC-3, Autism Spectrum Rating scales (ASRS), BRIEF-2
 - Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs): Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales, ABAS-3
 - Manifestation Determination
- **Direct services provided to student as prescribed on a BIP or an IEP** Support in meeting plan goals and tracking progress.

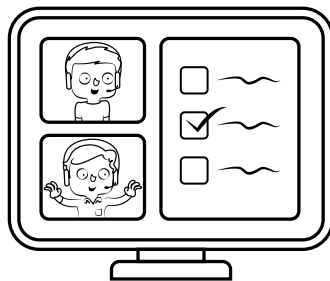
How Do Online Assessments Work?



Online assessments follow the same basic format as in-person assessments:

- Teacher interviews focused on educational impact
- Parent interviews focused on the student's developmental and medical history
- Norm-referenced, standardized rating scales
- Student observation via web cam
- Creation and distribution of full report to evaluation team
- Summary of evaluation for eligibility consideration

How Do Behavioral and Mental Health Services Work Online?



"Online interventions have really fit into our program seamlessly. The kids meet online with their social worker in a private area using the same materials and techniques that an onsite social worker would use. There has also been less student resistance to attending since they are working on the computer." – A special education director from Michigan

Online mental health professionals maintain the same code of conduct and confidentiality practices as onsite staff, using the same methods, activities, and best practices. The only difference is that the modality of delivery is online.

All online mental health professionals must have a contingency plan and protocol, along with a point person who can be reached by phone if necessary.

Click **here** to learn how one school uses online mental health services to supplement their existing staff.

Is Online Service Delivery Effective?

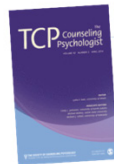
Research about online mental health services has been ongoing for over 15 years, and demonstrates that it is essentially equal to onsite, in-person services. Some Research also shows that online delivery can be even more effective for kids and teens since they are extremely familiar with technology and use it for social purposes. Online behavioral and mental health services have been shown to work as well as onsite services and interventions for a number of problems including depression, mood disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, emotional distress, family distress, as well as health skills, family skills, and social skills.

CLICK HERE FOR
MORE INFORMATION
AND RESEARCH.

www.presencelearning.com/resources/online-bmh-research-summary/



Alleman, James R. "Online Counseling: The Internet and Mental Health Treatment." *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training* (2002)



SAMHSA, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Considerations for the Provision of E-Therapy* (2009)

Mallen & Vogel, "Online Counseling: Reviewing the Literature From a Counseling Psychology Framework." *The Counseling Psychologist* (2005)

Anthony, K and Nagel, D "The Use of Technology in Mental Health: Applications." *Ethics and Practice* (2010)



What Do Kids Say?



"It's really cool to talk to somebody online about my life."

– High School Student from Florida

"She teaches me to not keep things inside and to talk to people if I'm feeling a certain way, not to hide it. She's made it better for me to talk to people."

– High school student from New York



"I tell them all my issues, we talk about it for 30 minutes at a time and it definitely helps"

– High school student from New York

"I couldn't make friends till I met Mrs. Garcia. She helped me understand people better."

– Elementary school student from California



Additional Resources

Want to learn more?

- **Online Behavioral & Mental Health Research Summary**
www.presencelearning.com/resources/online-bmh-research-summary/
- **Behavioral & Mental Health Services**
www.presencelearning.com/schools/online-behavior-interventions-and-mental-health-services
- **SPED Ahead On-Demand Webinars for Professional Development**
www.presencelearning.com/resources/sped-ahead-special-education-resources-webinars
- **PBIS Resources:** pbis.org and pbisworld.com

Get a Quote or Live Demo

www.presencelearning.com/schools/get-a-quote/



About PresenceLearning

PresenceLearning (www.presencelearning.com) is the leading telehealth network of providers of clinical services and assessments to educational organizations. Speech-Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, and Mental Health Professionals have provided over one million sessions of live, online speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, behavioral interventions and mental health services, and early childhood services for children with special needs.

Learn how a Buffalo area school is using online behavioral and mental health services [here](#).

Online behavioral and mental services are reimbursable by Medicaid in many states; view our [Medicaid reimbursement map](#) for more information.



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schools@presencelearning.com