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A Technology Resource Guide for The Safety Nest

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The Safety Nest Wellness Center at Everett Alvarez High School

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Abstract

The Eagle Safety Nest (hereafter Safety Nest) is a new mental health and emotional support center located at Everett Alvarez High School. The program is a pilot that will be used as a model for other Salinas Union High School District schools. The Safety Nest is designed to serve as a place where students will be able to access a wide-range of resources to support their academic success and overall well-being. In order to assist the program standardize internship experiences for future interns, a resource guide was developed to include a broad range of resources, activities and information for future interns. The Technology Resource Guide for The Safety Nest Wellness Center provides information on mindfulness, coping with stress, self-care and a tool-kit. The tool-kit includes a variety of stress coping supplies. Future interns will find this tool invaluable to their ability to integrate themselves into the Safety Nest and begin to support students towards success.

Keywords: Intern handbook, mental health, Safety Nest, Mending Matters, and High School Students.

Agency Description

The Safety Nest is located at Everett Alvarez High School is part of the Salinas Union High School District. The Safety Nest focuses on supporting students emotionally, mentally and academically. The way they help students is by offering different types of resources. One of these resources is The Eagle Academy is a Saturday support program for students who need extra academic help or attendance recovery. Students who have too many absences may recover their attendance so it will not affect their overall class standing. The Safety Nest has group support for students who feel more comfortable sharing in a group. Tuesday's they have a group for boys and Thursdays they have girls group. In the group, they talk about feelings and problems they are facing, the teacher leading the group teaches them strategies to cope with problems at home and school and also how to deal with stress and depression. They also have two intervention specialists, that helps students who have problems emotionally and mentally.

They support students when they are struggling in classes or have problems in school or at home. Some students come to the center because they need space to relax from the problems they have. They let those students stay inside the office while they do homework and have a snack that the agency offers. They want students to feel safe and have a support system they need (H. Newman, 2018). The mission statement for The Safety Nest is to "Provide social/emotional and academic support to all students so that they can grow into healthy adults. Afford all students the opportunity to reflect, learn, and grow while providing additional support as needed Demonstrate that all students are valued members of our community" (H. Newman, 2018). The agency wants students to become successful by offering them different resources. This is the first high school to have this type of program, which will now be offered in other high schools of Salinas.

Mending Matters

One of the resources they have is a program called, Mending Matters. This program focuses on having boys and girls groups during homeroom, who have mental health problems and are dealing with serious problems. According to the Mental Health America “Sometimes teens feel so depressed that they consider ending their lives. Each year, almost 5,000 young people, ages 15 to 24, kill themselves. The rate of suicide for this age group has nearly tripled since 1960, making it the third leading cause of death in adolescents and the second leading cause of death among college-age youth” (Mental Health America, n.d). This is why Mending Matters was created for students to have extra support. As the Mending matters website states, “Nearly 80% of youth defined as needing mental health services do not receive care” (Mending Matters, n.d). As people can see, 80% is a high number of teens who are not getting help.

Mending matters is a space where students are free to talk about their feelings and express their problems. They also do activities about how to cope with stress and anxiety. The mission statement for this specific program is “Mending Matters was created because we care deeply about youth and believe that all students are valuable. This is a place where we can engage in conversation in a safe, supportive setting about strong emotions and life social events. Students will learn about tools to help us cope with stress, anxiety, anger, or depression. We will also learn about self-care and self-love to support our journey of academic and personal pursuits. High school is hard sometimes, and it is nice knowing you are not alone” (H. Newman, 2018). Students come from different backgrounds; they come from one single family household, migrant background, broken relationships, etc. The Safety Nest is a great center that helps students become better people and love themselves by having Mending Matters students feel safe that they are not alone.

The communities served are high school students. The whole school has access to these services. In 2015-2016 there were 2,466 students at Alvarez High School (School Accountability Report Card, 2016). At the beginning of the school year, an intervention specialist did a presentation about the agency for students to know about the resources offered. Any student can be sent to The Safety Nest when they feel that they need help or need someone to talk to.

Problem Description

One problem of the agency is that sometimes students do not know about the services that the safety nest offers. Some of the students need extra support because they do not have enough support at home. Many students don't know what mental health is. There is a lot of stigma about mental health and students are embarrassed to talk about it. According by the Mayo Clinic some people don't seek services because they are scared that people will discriminate those who are seeking for the services. They believe that people might think they are crazy or dangerous to other because of their mental health. (Mayo Clinic, n.d). The two units that the agency teaches students are: self-care and a tool kit. These are skills that they will learn day by day. As stated on The Importance of Life Skills for Adolescents by Dr. Garima Srivastava (2019), teaching life skills to adolescents is important because they need to develop an independent thought process. These are the years of creativity for them and that is when they are developing new skills.

Self-care

One of the units being taught by the agency is self-care. They believe self-care is important especially when they are going to a stage where they need extra support. When people don't take of themselves can cause them mental health problems. As stated by NAMI,

“Improving your physical wellbeing is one of the most comprehensive ways you can support your mental health. You will have an easier time maintaining good mental habits when your body is a strong, resilient foundation” (NAMI, n.d.). This is why self-care is important to talk about, and people need to learn how self-care can affect them.

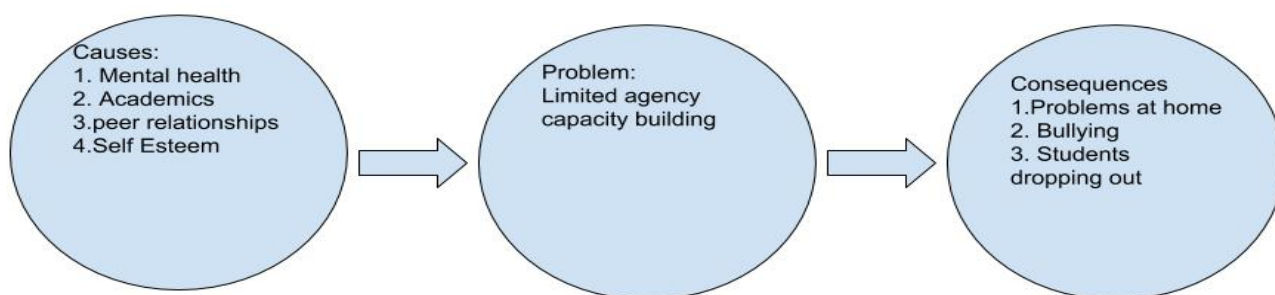
Tool kit

Creating a tool kit is part of the curriculum of the agency. The tool kit is based on a pencil pouch that will have things that help students to cope with stress, anxiety, and sadness. The tool kit will include stress balls, earphones, Play-doh, and positive quotes that will help them and can be used while they are in spring and summer vacations. Stated by the Helpguide it talks about how important is to create something to cope with stress. “ Toolkit is a step-by-step guide to controlling troublesome thoughts, managing stress and difficult emotions, improving your relationships, and following through on positive intentions. The Toolkit can help you to: Change self-defeating moods and attitudes. Quickly manage stress and anxiety” (HelpGuide, 2019). All the students are welcome to create one that will benefit any student that wants that support at home or any place they are located at.

Project Description and Justification

The Safety Nest is brand new this year and barely beginning to work with interns. That is the reason why the intern handbook was created. The intern handbook is an excellent way for interns to learn about the agency and what tasks to expect. The Safety Nest is a new agency that it was introduced to help students, which it hired interns to learn about the new agency that benefits the community to work at the agency to get experience about mental health services.

Project Description. The intern handbook is implemented at The Safety Nest at Everett Alvarez High School. This project has a description of the agency and its mission statement. The intern handbook explains show the agency works and what is required to do. It is important to have an intern handbook at a workplace for employees to know their expectations. As stated by Halpern, J “An employee handbook can be a valuable orientation tool for a new employee who has just joined a company. The handbook can describe the background of the company and include the employer’s “mission statement,” providing new employees with a preview of their new employer’s “company culture.” (Jule, Halpern,, 2008). As mentioned, there are two intervention specialists. One of them is the primary person running the agency. She is in charge of the interns from CSUMB by giving tasks to each intern. The technology resource guide for The Safety Nest Wellness Center has all the functions of the whole year. For example, an intern implemented the Technology Resource guide for The Safety Nest Wellness Center by going back to her notes of all the things the interns have done and also the tasks she has completed. She created a Google Doc of the description of each task and the projects they have done. Many people are visual learners, which means that she included images such as screenshots on how to do each task. The agency has created flyers and social media. Many students do not know about good websites to create flyers, that is a reason why she has images for each step. She printed the handbook and laminated them to put it in binders. Each intern will be given the handbook once they arrive for their first time at the agency. The other intern created a website for the agency, in collaboration with the other intern it helped her brainstorm ideas on what the website needs. She also has a section for the student handbook included in the website.

Figure 1. Problem Model for The Safety Nest

Benefits to agency and Communities Served

Intervention specialists have a lot of things going on, that means sometimes it is hard to be with the interns and explain every single task. The student handbook benefits her and the interns because whenever she gives tasks to interns, and she is out of the office, the interns can look at the intern handbook on how to do things. It helps interns to get an idea on what to expect from the agency, and the examples provided by the handbook are helpful. The intern handbook can have an impact whenever people want to intern at the agency, they can go to the website created by the other intern, and they can search for the intern handbook to see what the agency expects from each intern. The interns can get an idea if they are ready to accomplish what the agency is looking for. Mentors will feel more comfortable giving out tasks when they are out of the office because they will be confident that interns have a resource to look on for further questions. This is a reason why the primary mentor gave this project because she feels that it is beneficial for the agency.

Project implementation plan

The intern did her research on how to implement this project this semester. She thought it was a lot of work but with the help of her mentor and another intern was able to complete the

project. The people who participated in the project is the other intern, Leslie Gonzalez, mentor Hayley, the intervention specialists, the clients, staff that works at the agency and teachers that work at the school. She asked for permission from her mentor on interviewing the other specialists and workers at the agency to see what needs they want her to include in the intern handbook. She believes asking the other workers is important because they will also benefit from the projects because later on, they will get volunteers or interns, and this will give them an idea of what to do and use the intern handbook.

She worked on her capstone at home but most of it at the agency. The resources she used as an example was the student handbook of the high school. She asked her mentor to meet once a week with her colleague on the project. Each week she asked for feedback. It is essential for interns to get honest feedback to become better at their projects. She will only need paperwork and ink for the hard copy printouts and binders and dividers to have each section separated for the intern handbook to be organized.

The challenges she had with implementing the project is the amount of time she had between December and May. Because she was not able to work on her capstone at the agency, she also needed to work on other tasks given by her mentor. She felt that it was a challenge not having enough time to make it perfect and interview all the people. She was also scared that things were not going to go as planned because, she is at a high school and they have many vacations, for example, they had winter vacations, and for next semester they have spring break vacation. Those days she cannot go to the internship; she can only communicate with her mentor and colleagues by emails. She prefers to discuss important stuff in person.

Another challenge she was also worried about is the amount of time the mentor has to discuss the project. She is flexible with all the interns working together but, sometimes each

intern has different questions and needs. One thing she did was create a calendar where the interns and mentor will have schedule the dates of the meetings, so she had an idea what days she needed to be available for the interns. Overall she felt that all interns are successful because they have a mentor that is good at communicating because she cares about her interns. As stated by the School of Medicine (n.d). “Listening to learn something new (rather than to confirm what you already know) is essential to good mentoring. When you get curious about the other person’s story, you open up the possibility of greater connection and value for both parties”. They had excellent communication, and that is what makes it easier for the project to be successful.

Figure 2. Scope of work

Goal: Create a Intern handbook and help to create a website about the safety nest	Primary objective of the project: To help interns,mentors, staff to find resources faster than looking for one resource one by one.	
Activities	Deliverables	Timeline/deadlines
1.Discuss capstone ideas with mentor	Final Capstone project idea approved	Oct-Nov 2018
2. Identify “the best practices” and develop training materials/curriculum	Final approved curriculum/materials	Nov-Dec 2018
3.Look for examples of a website and an handbook	Alvarez high school	Nov-Dec 2018
4.Research about the agency and confirm meetings with mentor/start capstone	Mentor meetings, dates,agenda	Jan 2019
5. Keep on working with the capstone	Participants, ideas and opinions of mentor and staff	Jan 2019
6. Finish Capstone for revision and approval by mentor	Safety Nest approval and principal	Feb-March 2019
7. Complete questionnaires and reporting requirements	Final agency and capstone reports	April 2019
8. Prepare for capstone presentation in selected format	Instructor approval and dress rehearsal of final capstone presentation format (posters submitted for printing)	May 8-10, 2019
9. Final preparation for Capstone Festival	Final presentation at Capstone Festival	May 15 or 16, 2019

Expected Outcomes

This capstone had several outcomes. The primary outcome of the project is that the intern learned how to create an intern handbook for the new agency at Everett Alvarez High School. Future interns will get a more straightforward ideas on how to do tasks given by their mentor. It will be easier for her to assign tasks to each intern. Another outcome is that interns from CSUMB need information about the agency or presentation and they will be able to to find resources for their assignments or presentations.

Findings and Results of Assessment Process

The intern handbook was created in Google Docs, but it is linked to each page of the index. The project was assessed by giving it to the mentor to look at it and approve it. She also discussed the project with other staff members which helped her make changes to it. After the mentor approved the project, the intern created a survey that was sent out the CHHS students and future students that will start their internship during the fall.

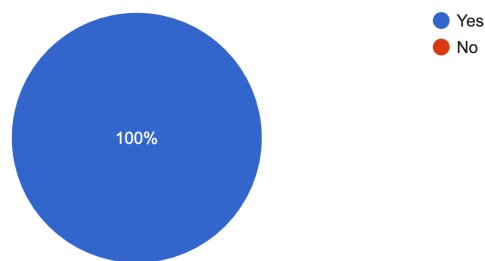
After collecting all the data, the intern did some changes suggested by the CHHS students who did the survey as shown in the appendix. CHHS students were able to provide feedback and include some great suggestions for the inter handbook. In the following images people will see some of the questions from the survey and the percentage received after reading the survey.

In this chart students provided feedback on how easy they understood about the Safety Nest. This question was created in order for students to understand the major outcomes of the agency and the expectations of the agency requires for a perfect intern. As people can see 7 people were sent this survey which are future interns and all of them said yes.

Figure 3. Understanding The Safety Nest

Does the information provided was easy to understand about the safety Nest?

7 responses



Recommendations

The recommendations I would give is to keep updating the intern handbook with new services they get or new tasks given by their mentor. Hayley liked the project that I created, and she believes that it will be beneficial for future interns. they should always try to have new information about the agency. This project is getting positive responses which means that is a great tool for staff, mentors and interns to look at. Since this is the first high school wellness

center implementing this type of project will mean that this will be an example to build a new wellness center for other high schools of the district.

Conclusion

The intern handbook is an 18-page book which was challenging to create because of the amount of time I would have at the agency and also completing new tasks. Learning how to use Google Docs and using strategies to implement this project was hard because I was stressed with homework and work. At the end of the project, I felt accomplished and relieved because at the beginning I never thought the project was going to be successful. With the help of my mentor, Hayley, I was able to succeed throughout my semesters of internship. I still remember when I started at the agency, I was only at a desk in the back of a classroom while she was teaching her students. Seeing the agency growth makes me happy and feel proud to know the agency grow each semester.

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Appendix

Safety Nest Intern Handbook

The intern handbook was created for future interns to understand the needs of the agency.

*** Required**

What is your gender? *

- Female
- Male
- Transgender/male
- Transgender/female
- Other

Are you a student or staff? *

- Student
- Staff

Does the information provided was easy to understand about the safety Nest? *

Yes

No

Do you believe future interns will be able to find the information useful? *

Yes

No

Do you have any suggestions for the Intern Handbook? *

Your answer

SUBMIT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.