

## Jordan's Clinical Support Specialist (a.k.a. "Social Worker") FAQ

### What is a school-based Clinical Support Specialist (CSS)?

A licensed mental health professional whose primary role is to offer school-based clinical mental health services and interventions for students.

### What is their job?

<b>School-based therapeutic interventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide mental health interventions and supports for high-risk or high-need students.</li><li>• Serve students and families by doing individual/group/family therapy as coordinated with other school team members.</li><li>• Provide crisis intervention as well as follow-up care for individuals affected by suicidal ideation, including working with community-based treatment in supporting student's safety and healing.</li></ul>
<b>Bridge to community mental health resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assist students and their families in accessing specialized mental health services in the community, including referrals through the Mental Health Access Program (MHAP).</li><li>• Support students who are transitioning back to school from acute care or hospitalization and establish partnerships with those community-based providers.</li><li>• Connect and engage with community mental health providers and partners to assist families with services outside of school.</li></ul>
<b>Support school-based mental health efforts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support school teams in meeting student's behavioral, social, and mental health needs.</li><li>• Support school teams in prevention programming related to suicide, bullying, and violence prevention and intervention.</li><li>• Support school teams in meeting student's unique needs, which may include counseling services related to a 504 plan or IEP plan.</li><li>• Provide consultation through each school's MTSS team or other teams that address social and emotional health.</li></ul>

### What is the expected student caseload for a Clinical Support Specialist?

Although there isn't an "assigned" caseload based on alphabet or enrollment status, a full-time CSS should be seeing about 60 students, with a smaller number who are working with them more regularly (weekly or twice weekly). Ideally, a CSS's caseload is established through an MTSS process that includes coordination with school administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, and others who are involved in student mental health interventions.

### What training and educational background does this person have?

All of our clinicians have a DOPL issued clinical mental health license, similar to an individual you may meet with through a community-based mental health clinic. They are also trained in a variety of evidence-based therapeutic interventions. To learn more about these interventions, ask your school's CSS what "modalities" they use to learn more about their approach to student interventions.

### How is their role unique in a school setting?

Although individuals with this licensure provide a diagnosis and treatment plan in other clinical settings, in this school-based role they do not diagnose mental illnesses. The intent of this role is to provide proactive, therapeutic interventions that support student flourishing. If student concerns fall outside the scope of school-based services, the CSS may provide clinical recommendations for other relevant mental health services to student's families.

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### **Why are they also called "Social Workers"?**

It is common for community-based therapists and our CSS's to be a "Licensed Clinical Social Worker" or LCSW, which refers to their DOPL issued license. However, not all of our District's hired CSS's are LCSWs, some of them are "Clinical Mental Health Counselors (CMHC)." Though both of these DOPL-issued mental health licenses are similar, technically not all CSS's are "social workers."

### **When, how, and why did this role get created?**

In 2018, Jordan District created the "Health and Wellness Specialist" position to focus on suicide prevention and intervention. The District also hired Hope4Utah's Greg Hudnall, as a consultant to support the newly hired Health and Wellness Specialist's suicide prevention efforts. A primary recommendation from Hope4Utah was to place a full-time therapist at Herriman High School, with the opportunity to expand these positions as funding became available. This recommendation was based on a model that worked well for Lone Peak High school who had experienced a severe suicide cluster several years prior.

Through the Health and Wellness Specialist, Jordan District partnered with Valley Behavioral Health to place a school-based therapist at Herriman High. Shortly after placing this school-based therapist, it was clear that using a partnering agency introduced many barriers to supporting student's mental health needs. Due to these barriers, it was determined in 2019 that it would be beneficial for the District to hire their own therapists rather than placing agency-hired therapists in schools.

Then, in 2019, the Utah State Legislature passed a bill that offered funding for "school-based mental health services." There was enough funding to hire a full-time therapist for each of our District's high schools using this State grant. Since then there has been additional funds from the State to expand the number of school-based therapists and CSS's have been added as funding has come available.

### **Which schools have a full-time CSS and how is it funded?**

There is funding available for each secondary school (all middle and high schools) to have a full-time clinical support specialist. The majority of the funding for these positions continues to come from the State grant mentioned above. The Jordan Board of Education also authorized six additional positions to fund a full-time CSS at each secondary school and further meet student's mental health needs. A few of our high schools have chosen to fund a second CSS at their school, which has been funded using the school's own budget.

As our District works to hire and fill all of our CSS positions, we would anticipate that each secondary school will have a full-time CSS by the start of the 2023-24 school year, with several high schools choosing to pay for a second CSS.