

# Mental Health Promotion in the School Setting ECHO®

## Session 3 Notes and Resource Sheet



March 27, 2023

### DIDACTIC PRESENTATION

#### *Promoting Rational Thinking using Cognitive Theory*

Presenter: John Crocker  
Methuen Public School  
Director of School Mental Health & Behavioral Services

[Recording](#)

[Presentation Slides](#)

### CASE SUMMARY

We explored the complicated case of a 16yo female Latino/Indigenous sophomore that became an identified McKinney-Vento youth due to both family functioning and abuse allegations. She lacks long-term suitable, supportive housing, is experiencing continuous acute anxiety, which is impacting her day-to-day functioning. She has recently become disengaged from school, often eloping classes and appears to be practicing non-suicidal self-injury along with other high-risk behaviors.

### KEY QUESTION

- What creative long-term housing placements have you identified for youth experiencing homelessness?
- How do we create consistency for students living in a trauma-response, when we are part of a larger system?

### CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

Is she estranged from her family/guardian? Is she on her own?

*YES, she has been on her own since age 14, and is now age 16.*

How long has she been in your district? All along or is she new?

*She has been in this district all along.*

Can you elaborate on her “risky behaviors”? Are they in or out of school? What methods of discipline are utilized during these behaviors? What are staff reactions to this?

*We no longer isolate her, we have learned to create space of her to have a reflective moment, we challenge her to reflect on her behavior, this is more of a restorative approach for her. Behaviors are class/schoolwork refusal, she goes to her dean to work through it. Other risky behavior is outside of school, but it trickles in.*

What are her peer relationships like? Does she have any community connections? Groups?

*Peer relationships are difficult for her, they are not long lasting. She doesn't feel like peer groups or activities are available to her.*

Does she attend a school with a School Based Health Center?

*Yes, she does and she is very connected to the staff there.*

Is she included in her own planning and creating solutions to her problems?

*Yes, she gets a say “the whole way through.” We do try to honor her voice; we are gentle with her. We are honest with her and often say, “we don't know until we try.” She is always full-on board with any plans and attempts.*

Does she have her driver's license? Can she access Drivers Ed?

*She gets rides from staff at her Transitional Living program. She has friends that help, but even if she had a license, she would not have access to a vehicle.*

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS - Reconnect to Psychiatry/Therapy

You all at the school have done a spectacular job working with this student. Her attendance alone shows how supported and connected she feels there. What you are doing for her now is taking root. Continue to care, she can tell that you do. There may be a delayed onset of her reaping what you've sowed for her. Anything that can be done to help her reconnect with psychiatry would give her a leg up on her journey.

She is likely disengaged and eloping classes due to emotional dysregulation. Help the student connect with someone (maybe this person is you or a therapist she truly connects with.) Finding a space to meet her trauma so she can process her pain, will help soothe her nervous system and find some relief. This process, while difficult, would likely help her re-engage in schoolwork because her body and brain will be better equipped to take in information.

Be mindful of the language we use to frame this issue - *adultification* of young people puts an inappropriate onus on them and we should be framing the responsibility as that of the adult supports and services.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS - Increase Connection

Feeling connected to others can help her build resilience and find relief.

Consider making a referral for community case management for additional supports and services. This can be a helpful resource to reduce her being overwhelmed by the navigation and decision making that she has had to take on, as an almost adult. The school may do this, or it may also be available through her transitional housing program.

Give her an opportunity to mentor younger students who are experiencing difficult home situations. Support a connection with someone outside of school, a positive adult mentor.

- Big Brothers/Big Sisters <https://www.somebig.org/>

Connecting her with peers who can relate to her identity might help her uncover a sense of mattering and purpose, such as an Indigenous and/or homeless youth group or organization.

Consider connecting with [Wabanaki Public Health](#) (they have wonderful youth programming and have recently opened a healing center), or even an online community. Also, [Mano en Mano](#) or [Presente Maine](#) for Latinx connections. This connection with people she identifies with could help her feel less isolated and alone.

Consider volunteer opportunities through community centers, churches, etc., or an event like car repair for single moms, could be an opportunity for her to learn car repair in a safe environment.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS - Direction for Future Goals

Provide access to a career/technical school program.

Trio programs are good ideas when it is time to transition to community college type programs. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html>

Upward Bound is a Trio program that offers high school students support through the summer prior to college. <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/trioupbound/index.html>

Consider a referral for Vocational Rehabilitation. [https://www.maine.gov/rehab/dvr/youth\\_transition.shtml](https://www.maine.gov/rehab/dvr/youth_transition.shtml)

Military training opportunities might also be another avenue with motivation for her future.

Questions regarding McKinney-Vento can be referred to [amelia.lyons@maine.gov](mailto:amelia.lyons@maine.gov)

[ME DOE McKinney website](#)