WARNS Emergency Phone Assessment Protocol

The following protocol is provided for organizations needing to assess youth during the current school closures and social distancing measures. They are provided as a temporary measure and should not be considered a permanent change to the WARNS delivery protocol documented in our User Manual.

This protocol involves the administrator reading aloud the assessment to the youth over the phone while the administrator enters the youth’s responses into the online WARNS/PSSO system under the following cautions and conditions. This could be completed via other media that the school and student may be using for online education (e.g., Zoom, Skype).

Our primary concern about administering the WARNS over the phone is if the youth has an adverse emotional reaction to any of the questions while taking the assessment.

One reason why the WARNS should be completed in person with a professional with appropriate training (e.g., counselor) is so that the professional can support and respond to the youth if such a reaction occurs.

We are not confident that such support can be viably provided over the phone or other communication online (e.g., Skype, Zoom).

If, however, you know the youth and have an established relationship with them, we leave it to your professional judgement about performing the assessment over the phone while you record their responses in the online system.

It is necessary that the person administering the assessment be able to anticipate reactions of the youth and provide appropriate support should adverse reactions occur.

It is also necessary that the person administering the assessment is able to discuss the results on the WARNS Report with the youth in an appropriate manner. If these conditions cannot occur, we would not advise administering the WARNS at this time. The priority is the safety and health of the youth.

All measures to maintain confidentiality of the responses and results are still in place and must be maintained. For example, it is especially essential that the youth is able to maintain privacy while on the call responding to the administrator and that no parents, guardians, or other individuals are listening to the questions and responses.

One other issue that we want to be clear about is that we would not support giving the youth their own login ID to access the online system to complete the assessment – even with you on the phone. There are too many security issues over doing that and too much potential for compromising the data and responses of other youth.

If you have any questions about this protocol, please contact us by email at WARNS@wsu.edu.