

KESHER Program - Policy Manual

Mission

It is the goal of the KESHER School Program to provide educators with the support they need to help students succeed academically, behaviorally and socially.

Eligibility/Population Served

The KESHER Program provides services to religious and secular studies teachers, administration members, and specialty staff members, in Jewish private schools serving students from preschool through high school. The schools' population may include a Day School with co-ed population, a Bais Yaakov type all girls school or an all boys Yeshiva. KESHER also provides service in special education school settings. However, a school educating children with autism, Down's Syndrome or other special populations is considered outside the scope of KESHER's services.

KESHER is appropriate for any teacher or administration member regardless of their teaching experience or level of training. Services are available for teachers who may be experiencing difficulty in or as a result of the classroom or school environment, educators who are experiencing any difficulty in their relationship with students, educators who are unsure of how to direct or advise students, administration members who are struggling with their relationship with staff, and any educator or administrator who is interested in attaining a different perspective on issues they may be grappling with.

In order to join the KESHER program, the school's hanhalla must:

- Fill out a comprehensive questionnaire
- Meet in person with the director(s) of the program
- Sign a contract of understanding which includes agreement to: allow teachers to do KESHER during the regular school day, provide classroom coverage when teacher is meeting with KESHER and to provide a private location to meet with teachers.
- Arrange for an orientation to be presented to all teaching staff and hanhalla.

Program Structure

The KESHER School Program provides clinical support to a given school for up to four hours per week in any one school. KESHER providers meet with teachers in a meeting place within the school that is conducive to a private conversation. KESHER providers will not meet with students at any time. KESHER providers will not observe classes. KESHER providers will meet with teachers/administration members, as needed, for anywhere from 3 minutes up to a maximum of 30 minutes at any one session. KESHER Providers will under certain circumstances meet with a parent together with a teacher/administration member in order to support the teacher in helping the child.

Eligibility of KESHER Providers

KESHER providers are mental health professionals who meet with teachers outside the classroom.

- A KESHER provider must have a minimum of a Master's level degree in social work, psychology or other related area of study.
- Unless the KESHER program is providing services for a specific school via Webcam, a KESHER provider must reside in the city in which the school serviced is located and provide services in person. When the school is serviced via Webcam, there are no residential restrictions for the clinician.
- A KESHER Provider must have some experience and understanding of school age children and adolescents, as well as familiarity with the educational systems that the KESHER Program provides services for.
- A KESHER Provider may be employed elsewhere as long as specific hours have been allocated weekly to provide KESHER services in the school.

Screening and Recruitment of KESHER Staff

Recruitment of new staff for the KESHER Program is done via advertisements in local newspapers.

Screening of new staff is done through:

- review of resume and completed written application
- one or two personal interviews
- one or two references contacted

Following attendance at a KESHER Staff Training, a new staff member's name and contact information is included in our database. (S)He will be called upon as new staff is needed.

There is no screening of school staff being serviced. KESHER provides consultation services to all teachers and administration members.

Staff Training and Supervision

KESHER Program staff receives a two hour orientation similar to that presented to the schools. This includes a review of basic scripts, discussion of previous KESHER interventions, and questions and answers from trainees.

Supervision of Clinicians

Supervision of providers with a trained KESHER supervisor takes place on a weekly basis at an appointed time, preferably in person and otherwise via Webcam or by phone. The supervision process will allow the provider to reflect on his/her discussion with the teacher/administration member as well as to provide the provider with tools to support the teachers and guide them to help the students succeed academically, behaviorally and socially.

The provider must fill out a Record of Intervention form after each time (s)he meets with a teacher/administration member. This form will be used during the provider's weekly supervision discussion.

Group supervision for KESHER providers will take place semi-annually periodically as well.

School Orientation

A comprehensive 60-90 minute orientation takes place before the beginning of the KESHER Program in any school. The orientation covers basic information on the structure of the program, a review of the aspects of relationship building, introduction of actual "scripts" to be used by teachers when communicating with students, safety and confidentiality issues and issues of boundaries. Following the orientation, all attendees complete an evaluation of the content of the trainings and the trainer performance.

Participation in Program

Individual conferences between the KESHER provider and a school staff member are

voluntary unless the administration negotiates with KESHER to provide all staff members, on a rotating basis, with an initial conference. A principal may suggest to a teacher to consult with a KESHER provider regarding challenges that (s)he may be facing. The maximum amount of sessions allotted for each teacher in a school is determined by the school's administration. There is no fee to the individual teachers.

Matching

In order to ensure the best possible match between the school and the KESHER provider, the Director of KESHER will determine suitability based on

- Gender
- Understanding of school's values and religious outlook
- Provider experience and qualifications
- Availability
- Geographic proximity

If a problem arises with the match, the director will attempt to resolve it, however, in the event that a problem cannot be resolved, the director may choose to change providers, based on availability, to one that will be more acceptable.

If a teacher is uncomfortable with the KESHER provider working in his/her school, KESHER will not provide the school with another provider to work with that teacher. The teacher is not mandated to accept KESHER services.

The director will maintain monthly contact with administration members in each school, to monitor progress and satisfaction with the program and to resolve issues in a timely manner as they arise.

Safety

The KESHER Program has been designed with assurance for safety of teachers, administration members and clinicians. KESHER activities take place during school hours and at the location of the school.

In the event of a Webcam conference, the teacher will be at the school and the KESHER provider will be at the Project YES office or his/her home. KESHER providers

are not obligated to disclose their private contact numbers to teachers/administration members, but may choose to do so at their discretion.

KESHER providers are expected to use the weekly supervision sessions to ensure their emotional safety by sharing any concerns about the effects of their working in the school or with specific individuals.

Confidentiality

It is the policy of the KESHER Program to protect the confidentiality of its participants. Therefore, staff members are required to sign a confidentiality form prior to employment.

With the exception of the limitations listed below, confidentiality includes:

- Protecting the privacy of students by not using their last names. For example, a teacher will refer to a child as Josh K.
- Protecting the privacy of teachers, by not revealing information that has been discussed with the teacher to the administration,
- Protecting the privacy of the school by not divulging the school name when discussing a specific case (e.g. among clinicians for the purpose of supervision)
- Teacher's names or a prearranged code number will be used on intervention forms or in the database, only for purposes of referring to his/her previous issues and interventions. (e.g: Mrs Cohn who teaches 5th Grade at Yeshiva Tiferes Chaim can be coded -YTC-5C)

Limits of Confidentiality

- KESHER providers will direct mandated reporters to disclose information regarding abuse, suicide, harm to others and any other reportable actions to administration members and/or to the appropriate state and/or local agencies.
- Identifying information (including names, photographs etc.) of program participants may be used in agency publications or promotional materials, only upon (written) consent of the teacher/administration member.
- KESHER Program providers encourage teachers to reassure students that conversations with their teachers are strictly confidential. This assures the student that their privacy is protected and will enable the student to openly and comfortably discuss issues with a teacher.

Violation of Confidentiality

- A known violation of the agency policy on confidentiality by a staff member may result in disciplinary action and/or dismissal from employment for the agency.

Program Monitoring

An important aspect of the KESHER School Program is measuring changes in educators over time as a result of KESHER interventions. An educators' survey will be completed at both the beginning and end of the academic school year. It is designed to measure the efficacy and comfort of the educator in the classroom as well as the degree (s)he perceives himself developing/maintaining productive relationships with students.

Appendix:

1. Contract with School
2. Educator's Survey #1,#2
3. Record of Intervention
4. Initial School Questionnaire
5. Confidentiality Policy for Providers
6. Orientation/Training Outline
7. Orientation evaluation form