



SCHOOL COMMUNITY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

10 Myths vs. Facts about SCIP for Teachers

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- 1. MYTH:** Students are referred to SCIP because they are in trouble at school.
FACT: SCIP is a student assistance program that works to identify and assist students who are not finding success at school. It is not designed to be a disciplinary approach, although, there may be necessary disciplinary measures taken by the administration.
- 2. MYTH:** A teacher makes a SCIP referral only if they know the student is using drugs or alcohol.
FACT: Teachers don't have to have hard facts in order to make a SCIP referral; they may notice changes in a student's behavior and it has raised their level of concern for that student.
- 3. MYTH:** I'm a bad teacher if I have to make a SCIP referral; it looks like I am unable to handle my students.
FACT: Making a referral to the SCIP team is not a reflection on your teaching abilities; rather it is an indication of your care and concern for the student. You have noticed a change in his/her behaviors and may have even tried some strategies to address these without success. The SCIP team can gather information from all the people in the building having contact with the student to see if the concerns are widespread.
- 4. MYTH:** SCIP can't really do anything to help.
FACT: The SCIP team can use a confidential method of gathering documentation on a student to determine how many teachers have concerns and the level of concern for the student. If the SCIP team determines an intervention with the parent is necessary, the SCIP team can share a list of community resources for the family to choose an agency where they can take their child for a professional screening.
- 5. MYTH:** SCIP is just for drug or alcohol concerns.
FACT: SCIP has expanded its scope to include not only drug and alcohol issues but also mental and behavioral health concerns. Studies have shown that more and more youth who are experiencing concerns in one area also experience concerns in the other area. For example, a student who is in emotional pain due to a family situation may look to drugs and alcohol to relieve that pain.
- 6. MYTH:** A SCIP referral means there's a problem.
FACT: When a teacher receives a documentation form from the SCIP team to complete on a student, it does not necessarily mean there is a problem. The documentation process is one tool the SCIP team uses to help determine the level of concern for a student's success, based on the behaviors the staff is noticing in the student.
- 7. MYTH:** I don't know anything about drugs, alcohol or mental health issues; my filling out this form won't help.
FACT: A school staff person doesn't have to have a great deal of knowledge about substance abuse or mental health issues. The information they provide to the SCIP team is based on concrete, observable behaviors that are unusual for this student or for students of this age.
- 8. MYTH:** I'm a teacher and it's none of my business what this student is doing or talking about.
FACT: Any behavior that interferes with a student's ability to be successful in school is a teacher's business. If several teachers notice these behaviors, perhaps it is time to call it to the attention of the parents, so they can address the concerns.
- 9. MYTH:** I don't need to contact the parent regarding a student's unacceptable behavior if I refer that student to SCIP.
FACT: A teacher should always contact home regarding unacceptable behavior in their classroom; if SCIP documentation doesn't show enough to contact the parent, the parent may never know, unless the teacher has shared the concerns seen in the classroom. Additionally, your first-hand report of what's happening is always important to share with the parent.
- 10. MYTH:** I should talk to the student and the parent when I receive a documentation form from the SCIP team to alert them that the student has been referred to SCIP.
FACT: The SCIP process is a confidential one. When a school staff member receives a documentation form for a student, the staff should complete the form and return it to the designated SCIP team member without discussing it with the student or the family. The SCIP team will determine, on the basis of all the information from staff, whether or not to discuss the concerns with the student and/or the parent.