



As an **Essential Business**, we wanted to share with you how we are continuing to serve clients through our Program Spotlight series. This spotlight will focus on our **Screening, Assessment and Support Services (SASS)** program and a **Q & A** with **Stephanie Barisch**, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator/Assistant Clinical Director.

SASS provides crisis intervention services in an effort to stabilize children experiencing emotional or behavioral problems due to a mental illness. Services are available to youth who meet certain criteria and reside within McLean County.

**Q:** SASS has moved to provide services via phone or video, correct? How has this transition worked for clients and for our therapists?

**A:** The SASS team has moved to providing follow-up counseling and supportive services, such as case management, to phone or video modalities, however, **they continue to provide in-person, face-to-face screenings when a youth is in psychiatric crisis.** There's quite a bit of variability in how clients and our therapists have transitioned to telehealth. Some are embracing it, while others are less engaged in services and less able to benefit from our services.

**Q:** Tell us some of your biggest wins during this crisis and the transition to provide services remotely- what are you proud of?

**A:** The SASS Supervisor and team are coordinating with the local emergency departments, police departments, and with the surrounding SASS providers to ensure that our mobile crisis response will continue even if our program is unable to respond.

**Q:** What are your biggest obstacles in this delivery method, if any?

**A:** There are a couple challenges that are important to note. One the bulk of our clients are youth and their families who are most often of reduced financial means. This means that fewer of them have access to advanced technology to participate through video means. Additionally, clinical work with children is often very hands on, so providing services virtually means changing how we work with families pretty significantly. Finally, our youth seldom have as much privacy at home as we would like, making it challenging to provide sessions with in-depth content.

*A heartfelt cheers to our **SASS workers** who still continue to provide in-person, face-to-face screenings when a youth is in psychiatric crisis. You are true heroes!*



Achieving Solutions Together

