

Living with the Uncertainty

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I don't know about you but I like to have a plan. It doesn't have to be a highly structured plan, with every minute accounted for. But I like to know where I am going, so to speak. I do this when I travel somewhere, planning the best route and allowing enough time to get to point B with ease. WAZE is a great app to help me with this as it will tell me what time I need to leave to get to my destination on time. Unfortunately we don't have an app to get us through these current times. But wouldn't that be great? An app that can look at the current situations and forecast for us the best way to traverse the landscape of "what's next?" In Massachusetts alone we have the pandemic and the unknown impact it has on our student's academically and emotionally, as well as an unbalanced budget, which means funding cuts throughout the state agencies.

I know that all of this uncertainty is hard on me, and I assume on you as well. But what's even more disturbing is the impact that it is having on our students. As professionals advocating for our students, you are the person that is expected to know and understand your student, academically and emotionally, understand the lay of the land in Special Education, so that you can help the team to set the student up for success. But how are you supposed to do all of that when you don't even know what the school districts are doing about reopening, let alone how much regression has happened for your student during the closure?

These are challenging times for an SESP, but I would also like you to take a moment and think about how all of this uncertainty has impacted our students. These students live with the uncertainty of their situations as young people living in congregate care, separated from their families and community. They are also expected to live with the uncertainty of when they will see their classmates and friends again, and when they will resume any structure or routine.

Why do you bring this up? Well, you can be that "WAZE" app for them. Find out what they need and when they need it. Be that consistent person who is always "on" for them to help guide them through this time as schools begin announcing their reopening plans. Be the communicator of what's happening with schools and discuss how you can help them to play a role in the direction that they are headed.