



Pandemic Mental Health Support School Counseling Interventions at Each Tier

Fall, 2021

Introduction

Introductions

Stephanie Lerner

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- Counseling, Advising, and Student Supports Team
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My Role:

- Serve as primary point of contact for Texas school counselors (SC)
- Develop SC resources and conduct SC trainings
- Support the strong implementation of a comprehensive counseling program

My Background:

- School counselor in Central Texas Title 1 public schools (ES & MS): 2008-2019
- Author of counseling and ESL books
- MS in Counseling, BS in Education
- 2016-18 winner of Texas CREST award, 2018 Texas School Counselor of the Year finalist
- Classroom teacher for 13 years in USA and overseas

Agenda & Objectives

Agenda

- Introduction & Resources
- Information and research on supporting students' mental health post-pandemic
- Post-pandemic school counseling interventions at each tier
- Conclusion
- Q/A

Objectives:

1. The participant will explore recent research encouraging pandemic-related support of student mental health.
2. The participant will identify tiered interventions that school counselors can use to support their students' pandemic-related mental health needs.

Recent Research

Objective 1: The participant will explore recent research encouraging pandemic-related support of student mental health.

Identify the Increased Needs in your Community

- “Beginning in April 2020, the proportion of children’s mental health–related emergency department (ED) visits among all pediatric ED visits increased and remained elevated through October. Compared with 2019, the proportion of **mental health–related visits for children aged 5–11 and 12–17 years increased approximately 24%. and 31%, respectively.**
- **The CDC has noted that this increase continues into 2021.**
- **Critical Needs** Include:
 - **Monitoring indicators** of children’s mental health
 - **Promoting coping** and resilience
 - **Expanding access** to services to support children’s mental health

(CDC, 2020, para. 2)

(CDC, 2021)



Remove Stigma and Ensure Access

- **“To help remove the stigma and ensure students can access mental health programs** when they are available, the American Psychological Association recommends school leaders and educators:
 - **Share educational resources with staff and students** that provide a better sense of what mental health means
 - **Talk about mental health and allow students** the opportunity to speak openly about life, school, the future, and anxiety
 - **Let students know they are not alone** and that others are going through similar situations and provide them the time needed to heal.”



(APA, 2021 qtd USDE, 2021, p.11)

Provide Interventions Aligned to Needs

Ensure interventions:

- Respond to students' academic and mental health wellness (MHW) needs. TEA's [School Mental Health Website](#) highlights MHW interventions; in addition, TEA will release their School Mental Health **toolkit** on this webpage in the fall.
- Address disproportionate impact of coronavirus on student populations experiencing homelessness and foster care.

(TEA, 2021)



Adopt a Trauma-Informed Approach

- According to the USDE, “Adopting a schoolwide trauma-informed approach can help to meet students where they are, particularly for those coming from families experiencing unemployment, loss of family and friends, and the collective grief and burden of systemic racism, including the upheavals of the past year.”
- TEA’s [Project Restore](#) is one resource to meet this need. Local resources are also available.



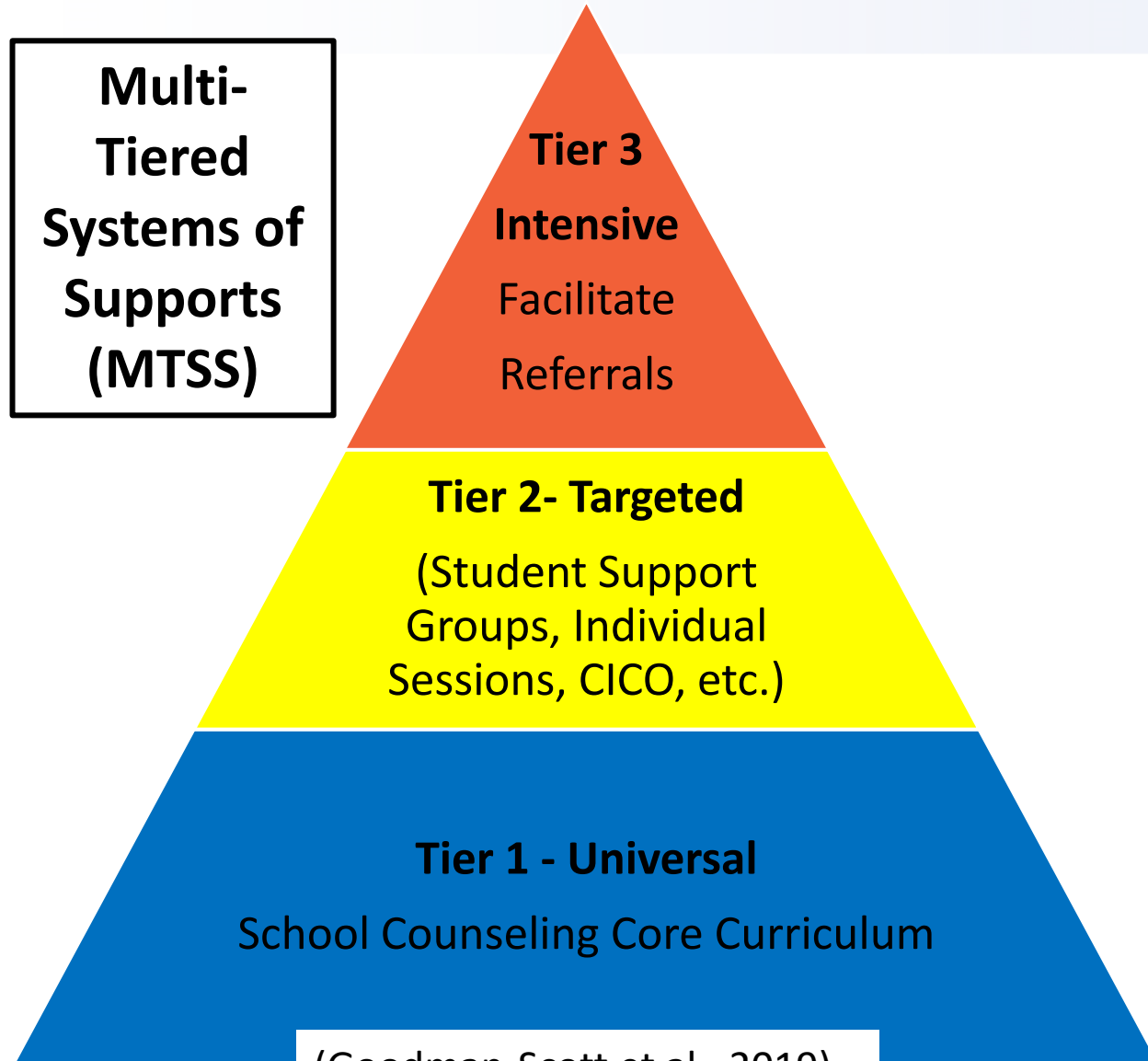
(USDE, 2021, p.15)

Tiered Interventions

Objective 2: The participant will identify tiered interventions that school counselors can use to support their students' pandemic-related mental health needs.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports in School Counseling

Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS)



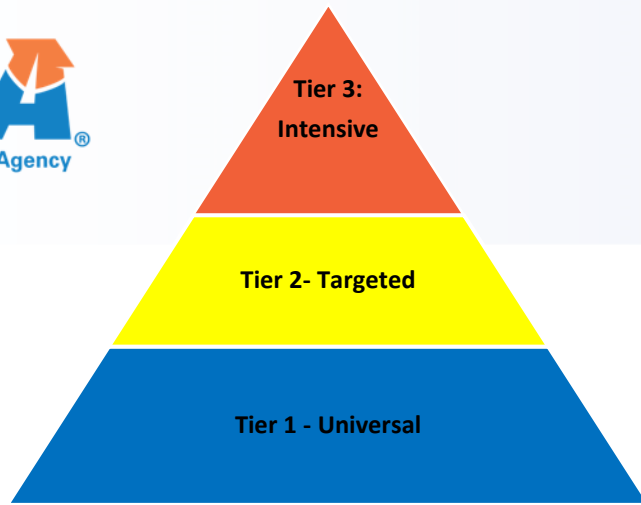
(Goodman-Scott et al., 2019)

The MTSS framework clearly defines the school counselor's role in providing MHW services. School counselors:

- Provide or coordinate Tier 1 support for all students
- Provide or coordinate Tier 2 targeted interventions for identified students
- Collaborate and consult with Tier 3 level support. (ASCA, 2019)

It is important to support students' pandemic-related mental health at all 3 levels.

Let's talk about how to do this specifically at each tier...

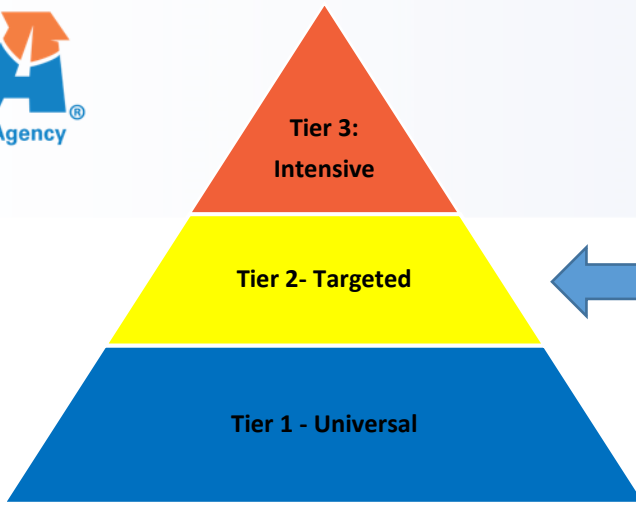


Tier 1 Supports

All students' mental health is supported at this universal level.

- **School Counselor Role:** Providing direct services to students through “school counseling classroom instruction, large group/schoolwide activities and initiatives, and student appraisal and advisement” (Goodman-Scott et. al., 2020, page 115).
- **Pandemic Interventions:**
 - [Needs assessments](#): work with administration and student support team to identify and address pandemic mental health needs that are most pressing in your school population. TEA’s School Mental Health Toolkit will contains a needs assessment; this toolkit will be [released here](#) in the fall.
 - Whole class stress reduction techniques: teach students how to manage and reduce their stress in your guidance lessons. [Mind Yeti](#) has 15 stress-reducing mindfulness program sessions that are free for anyone to use.
 - Pandemic processing class discussions: process the pandemic experience with students in guidance lessons using these [questions and activities](#), especially on page 3.

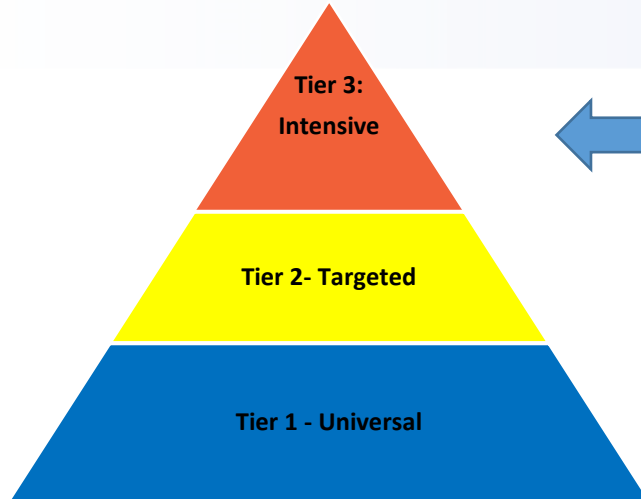
Tier 2 Supports



← **Some students will need additional targeted supports at this level.**

- **School Counselor Role:** Providing direct services to students through individual responsive services and group supports. (Goodman-Scott et. Al., 2020)
- **Pandemic Interventions:** Facilitate student support groups and short-term individual counseling on the topics of:
 - Grief: TEA's [grief-informed webpage](#) has links to various curricula such as The Blues Program, Changemakers, and Coping Cat.
 - Anxiety: TEA's [School Mental Health webpage](#) has links to various resources, such as through the Positive Youth Development site.
 - Social skills for reintegration: [This ASCA toolkit](#) has links to social awareness/relationship lessons, listed under the social learning video lessons category.

Tier 3 Supports



A few students will need intensive supports at this level.

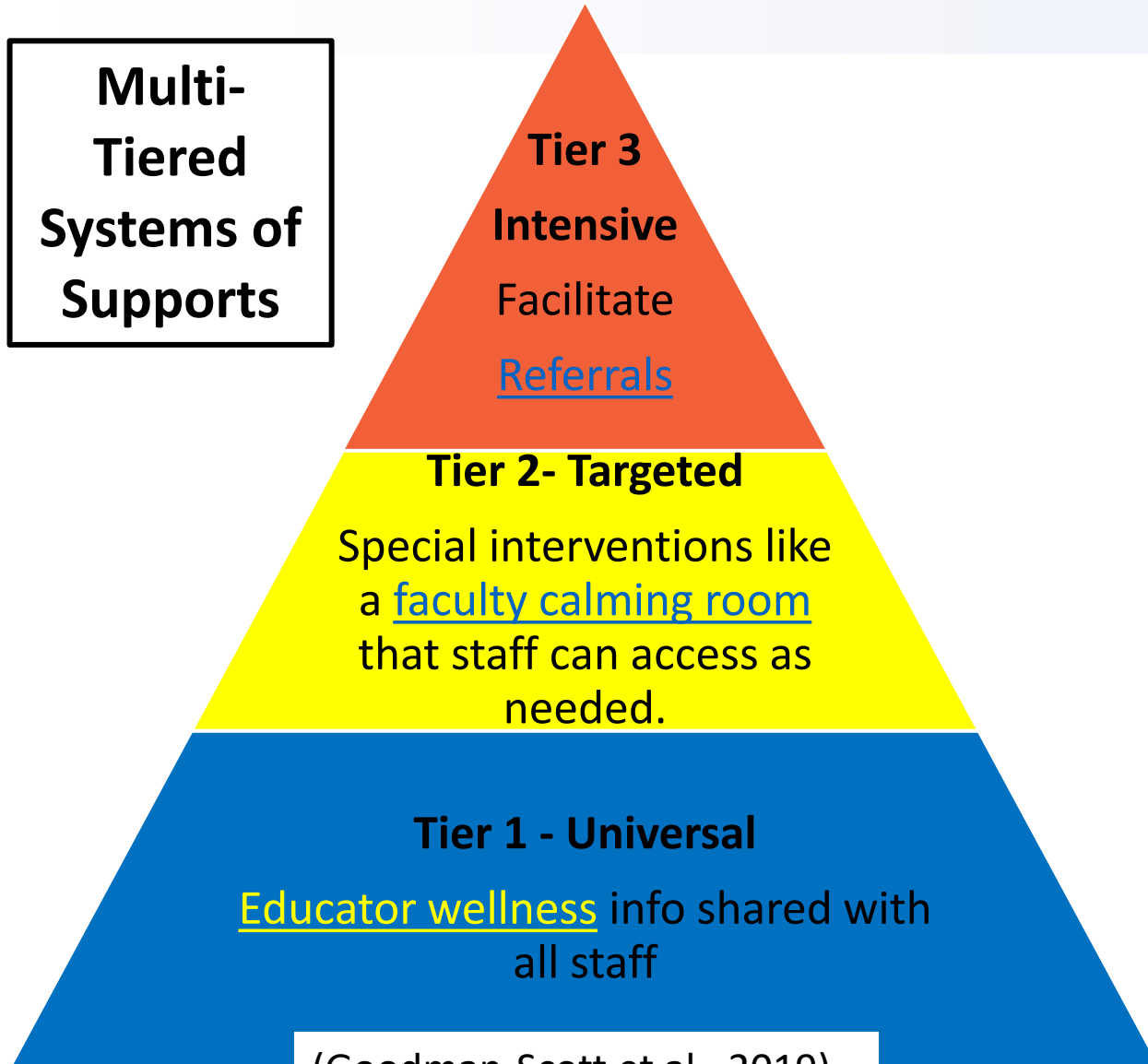
- **School Counselor Role:** Providing “referrals to school and community resources that treat mental health issues (suicidal ideation, violence, abuse and depression) with the intent of removing barriers to learning and helping the student return to the classroom” (ASCA, 2020, para. 2).
- **Pandemic Interventions:**
 - You can use [TEA’s Mental Health Resources](#) as a starting point and add local resources.
 - Follow up on referrals to community partners (i.e., therapists, etc.) by creating a counseling program protocol of checking in with referred students, staff, parents, and community partners.

- Work with your administration to determine how to facilitate lessons/sessions for students who still are not able to attend school in person.
- Utilize [ASCA's guidance](#) on how to best facilitate working with students in different remote settings.
- For students who are still virtual, record yourself teaching your guidance lesson and upload it to your online platform with necessary materials. Have students work through the lesson on their own or with a family member and then submit responses, screenshots, or video clips, etc. to you.
- Consider individual sessions by phone if video chat technology is unavailable.
- Consider the confidentiality limitations of running virtual groups.
- Post outside counseling referrals info on your counseling website, district or campus platform and/or virtual classroom. Direct families from your website on how to find the referrals.



Multi-tiered System of Supports: Staff Wellness

Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports



(Goodman-Scott et al, 2019)

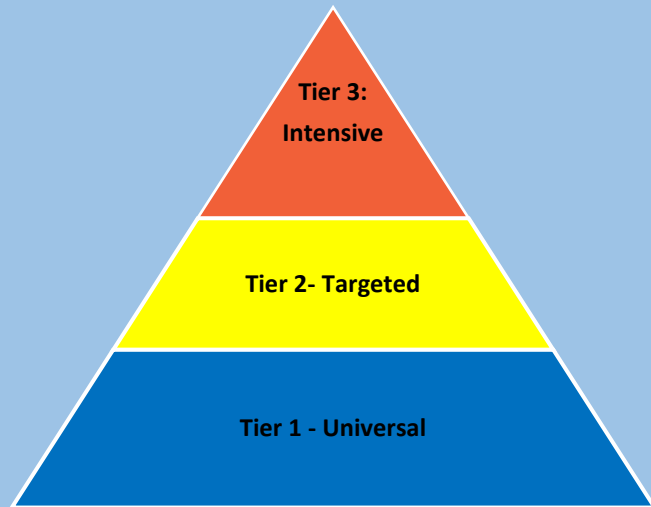
While the school counselor role is primarily to serve students, you might also consider using the MTSS framework to assist administration in supporting staff's post-pandemic mental health.

Staff members' post-pandemic mental health can also be addressed at all 3 levels- see the MTSS triangle for examples and resources.

Critical Thinking Takeaway: Analysis

Intervention

Draw an MTSS triangle on your paper. Write an student intervention that you can conduct at each level of the triangle.



Let's discuss:

Which of the activities will be easiest and most challenging to facilitate on your campus? Why?



Conclusion

Survey

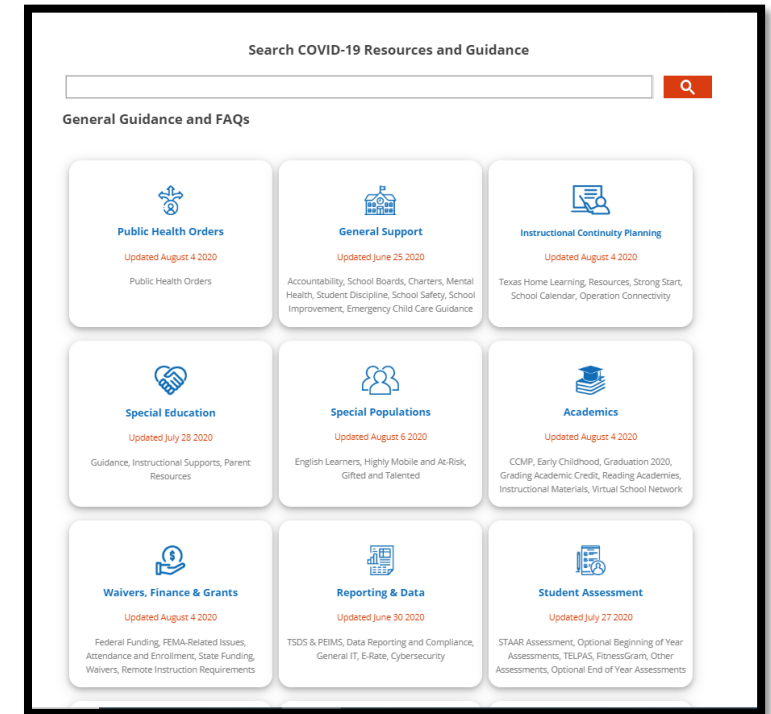
**Please fill in the presentation survey so I can best meet your counseling needs with future presentations and resources.
Thank you.**

Link to survey in chat box.



Helpful Resources

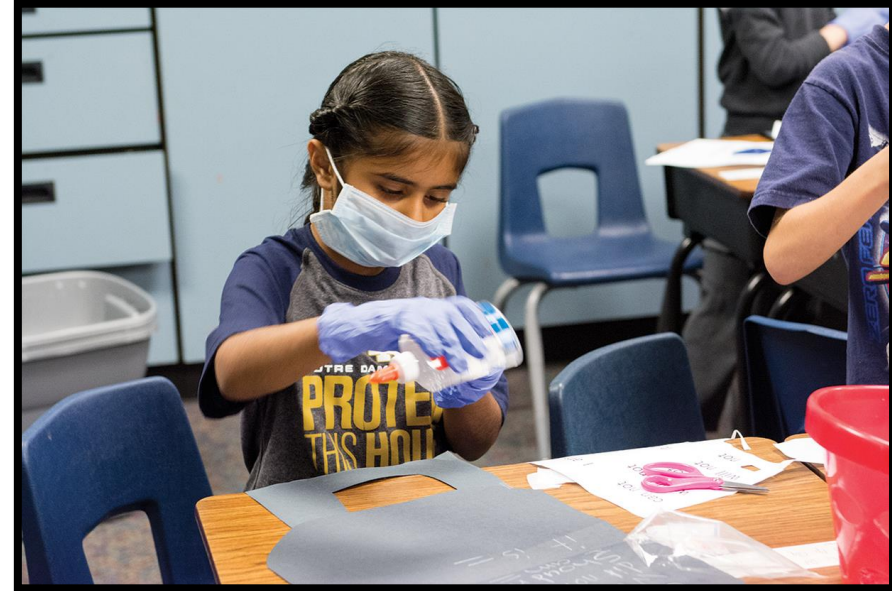
- [TEA COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [ASCA's Crisis & Trauma Resources](#)
- ["Build Trauma-Informed Practices" \(article\)](#)
- [*Helping in Hard Places: Trauma-Informed School Counseling*](#)
- [*What Happened to You?*](#)
- [ASCA's Back to School Resources](#)
- [TEA School Counselor Webpage](#)
- [Counselor Listserv: Join Today!](#)
- [TEA At-Risk Resource: Guidance in reaching absent students during/after COVID](#)
- [TEA's Trauma-Informed Webpage](#)



Let's Review...

Today we discussed:

- The **recent literature** encouraging post-pandemic support of student mental health
- **Various tiered interventions** to support students'/staff post-pandemic mental health



Questions & Thank You

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