Google calendar

A Google calendar is a very useful tool for scheduling appointments at a SHIIP site. Using this calendar, the person who takes the call from the client can see available appointment times, and schedule an appointment on the spot. The client has an appointment after one phone call, no waiting for a counselor to call back. No need to call the counselor and ask them to contact the client. It’s once and done, saving everyone time and giving the best possible customer service to the client.

To use a Google calendar, one person at the site will need to set up a Gmail account for the site. It doesn’t matter who does this; it could be the coordinator or one of the counselors. After that, any counselor can sign into the associated calendar, using the site’s Gmail address and password.

Each counselor enters dates and times they are available for appointments on the Google calendar, using a title such as “Judy available”. When someone calls the site for an appointment, the person taking the call opens the Google calendar and can see what appointment times are available. The client can be offered a choice of available times, and the scheduler can change the appointment on the calendar to show a client has been scheduled. Counselors can check the calendar from anywhere they can access the internet. This eliminates the need to call or email the counselor to tell him or her that an appointment has been set up.

It is a very good idea for the office assistant or counselor to call the client a day or two ahead of the appointment to reconfirm.

For questions about Google calendars, contact Judy Brannon.

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Google calendar
Google calendar

Step one: Set up a Gmail account.

Go to www.google.com. Click on Gmail.
Google calendar

Click on “create an account”
Complete the information requested:

The red (upper) arrow shows where the Gmail address is entered. Select a name that will be easy for the volunteers to remember. For example, sponsor site West Des Moines United Methodist Church set up their Gmail address as WDMUMCSHIIP@gmail.com. The green (lower) arrow shows where the desired password is entered. Again, select an easy to remember password, since all the volunteers will need to remember it.
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To use the calendar:

Each volunteer will need the Gmail address and password that has been set up for the site.

Sign in to the calendar by going to www.google.com/calendar, and entering the site’s Gmail address and password.
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To enter a time a counselor is available for an appointment, click on the date and time desired.
In the “What” box, enter the counselor’s name and the word “available”. Note that the time for the appointment will default to one hour. If this is acceptable, click on “create event”.
Google calendar

If the appointment time should be longer or shorter than an hour, instead of clicking “create event”, click on “edit event details”. The time can then be changed to something other than one hour. Then, click “save”.

Tip: If a counselor is going to be available, for example, for a four hour period, and can see four clients during that time, set up four separate one-hour appointments on the Google calendar. Don’t enter one four-hour appointment.
The appointment time shows on the calendar.
Google calendar

When a client calls for an appointment, the person scheduling appointments will open the Google calendar by signing in at www.google.com/calendar, using the site’s Gmail address and password (as explained on page 5). The scheduler can see available appointment times for all counselors and offer those times to the client.
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When the client selects an appointment, the scheduler clicks on that appointment time on the Google calendar. Details of the appointment will appear.
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Change the title of the appointment to show the counselor’s name, the client’s name and the client’s phone number. Tip: It’s very important to leave the counselor’s name as part of the title at sponsor sites where there are more than one counselor.
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The “description” box can be used to add a brief comment about the purpose of the appointment, such as “turning 65” or “wants drug comparison”
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When entry is complete, click on “save”
Google calendar

The calendar has been updated to show the appointment scheduled.

Anytime the counselor wants to see what appointments are scheduled, he or she can sign into the Google calendar.

Tip: It is a very good idea for the office assistant or the counselor to call the client a day or two before the appointment, to reconfirm.