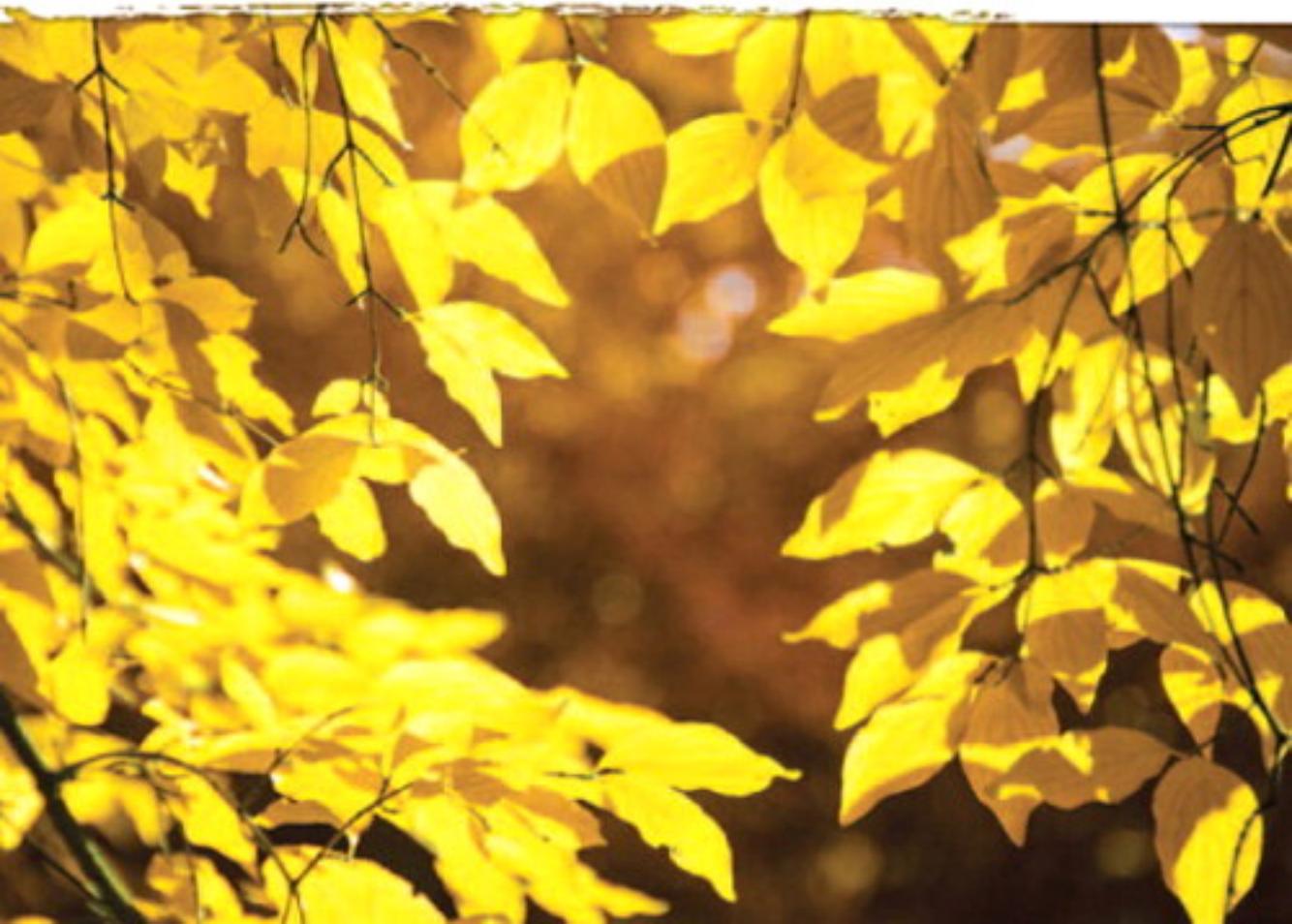


The Merrill Counseling Series

6TH EDITION

COUNSELING IN SCHOOLS
*Comprehensive Programs of
Responsive Services for All Students*

JOHN J. SCHMIDT



Counseling in Schools

Comprehensive Programs of Responsive Services for All Students

SIXTH EDITION

John J. Schmidt

East Carolina University, Emeritus

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*With affection and admiration to
Dawn and Eric Bergquist,
daughter and son-in-law,
and most important, devoted parents of
Evelyn, Erica, Aidan, and Addyson*



About the Author

Dr. John J. (Jack) Schmidt is professor emeritus of counselor education at East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, where he chaired the Counselor and Adult Education Department from 1989 through 2002. He completed bachelor and master's degrees at St. Michael's College in Vermont, and earned a doctorate in counseling from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Jack has been a social studies teacher; an elementary, middle, and high school counselor; a school system director of counseling and testing services; and the state coordinator of school counseling with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

In addition to *Counseling in Schools*, Dr. Schmidt has authored other books, including *The Elementary/Middle School Counselor's Survival Guide*; *Intentional Helping: A Philosophy for Proficient Caring Relationships*; *Social and Cultural Foundations of Counseling and Human Services*; *Invitational Counseling* with Dr. William Purkey; and *From Conflict to Conciliation*, with Drs. Purkey and John Novak.

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Jack lives with his wife, Pat, in Clemmons, North Carolina. They have one daughter, Dawn; a son-in-law, Eric; and four grandchildren, Evelyn, Erica, Aidan, and Addyson, who live in Pennsylvania.



Preface

This sixth edition of *Counseling in Schools: Comprehensive Programs of Responsive Services for All Students* continues the effort of providing information about the school counseling profession and the leadership role professional counselors have in schools. This edition advocates for the development of comprehensive programs of services that identify the role of counselors in schools while assisting all students in the areas of academic, career, and social/personal development.

As with previous editions, this revision of *Counseling in Schools* traces the development of school counseling, presents contemporary roles and functions for school counselors, and explores future possibilities for the profession. This text is for students who are preparing for a career in school counseling as well as for professionals seeking information about the nature of school counseling services.

New to This Edition

This edition of *Counseling in Schools* includes 13 chapters, updated with the most recent references, trends, research, and views about professional school counseling. In presenting this information, the revised text includes the following:

- **New tables, diagrams, figures, and forms** to highlight material in each chapter and to help readers follow content and connect it with salient issues in the profession.
- **Perspectives** placed in all the chapters that encourage readers to explore personal insights and relate them to specific content.
- **Updated websites and suggested readings** at the end of each chapter to provide readers with contemporary resources.
- **Exercises** at the conclusion of each chapter to offer opportunities for practical application.
- **Fresh information about the ASCA National Model® (2005, 2012)** and comparisons with other comprehensive school counseling approaches, such as models developed by Gysbers and Henderson (2012), Myrick (2003), and Dollarhide and Saginak (2012). Revised content offers professional counselors opportunities to examine similarities and differences among popular models of comprehensive school counseling programs.
- **Updated information about current counselor preparation standards** from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2009).
- **New competencies of professional practice** by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2008) and ASCA's 2010 Ethical Standards for school counseling.

This new content about counselor preparation, competencies, and current ethical standards of practice will help students learn what the school counseling profession believes are important knowledge bases, competencies, and standards of practice in the twenty-first century.

What Is Retained from Previous Editions

Counseling in Schools continues to illustrate a divergence of professional practice. The ways that professional counselors function in schools are often determined more by state and local educational, political, and administrative decisions than by the mission and models promoted by the school counseling profession; consequently, school counselors rely on numerous resources to expand their professional knowledge of current practice. As part of that effort, this edition of *Counseling in Schools* presents a programmatic description of school counseling giving a broad overview of professional practice. It touches briefly on many of the components and services of a comprehensive program without giving extensive treatment to specific aspects. Other courses and specialized texts in counselor preparation have that mission.

This revision continues to offer a professional foundation with which new school counselors can take leadership roles in advocating for comprehensive school counseling programs and responsive services for all students. Professional counselors who work in schools face the dual challenges of clarifying their own roles while designing an appropriate program of services to complement the mission of the school. Although the profession has made progress in meeting these two challenges, many counselors find themselves in situations in which they are unable to provide adequate responsive services to students, parents, guardians, and teachers. Other assigned functions, often unrelated to their preparation as professional counselors, frequently prevent them from providing crucial educational, career, and personal assistance. This sixth edition encourages counselors in schools to establish an appropriate professional identity through an assertive posture that conveys who they are and what they can offer to schools.

How This Book Is Organized

Counseling in Schools promotes the philosophy that the most efficient and effective way to provide counseling in schools is through comprehensive programs of services designed to meet the needs of students, parents, and teachers during the elementary, middle, and high school years. Thirteen chapters illustrate the common goals and various functions found in the practice of school counseling at these three levels of education, as well as aspects that influence the role of counselors in schools. The book is divided into three sections:

- Chapters 1 through 4 describe the historic development of school counseling; provide an overview of the diverse students, communities, and schools served by counselors; summarize the role of counselors in elementary, middle, and high schools; and present basic components of general comprehensive school counseling programs.
- Chapters 5 through 10 focus on the functions of counselors in schools and provide practical ideas for developing a program of services. Chapter 5 introduces these functions as responsive services of the school counseling profession, and Chapter 6

provides an outline of practical strategies for planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating a comprehensive counseling program. Chapters 7 through 9 illustrate how professional counselors incorporate each function and responsive service into the practice of school counseling. Chapter 10 offers an overview of educational and career development, two primary purposes for counselors to work in schools. An important responsibility of school counselors is to help students with educational and career decisions—a process that begins in the primary grades and expands in secondary schools with the involvement of parents, teachers, and counselors guiding students toward occupations, postsecondary educational opportunities, and adulthood. Three case studies close Chapter 10, and illustrate how core services of a comprehensive program come together in a collaborative effort to assist all students. The cases represent three levels of school counseling—elementary, middle, and high school.

- Chapters 11 through 13 present professional issues related to the practice of school counseling. Chapter 11 explores issues related to program evaluation and reviews methods of assessing counseling services, as well as those related to performance appraisal and supervision of school counselors. Chapter 12 summarizes legal and ethical issues related to the practice of counseling in schools and presents the ethical standards of the school counseling profession as put forth by the American School Counseling Association (ASCA, 2010b). Chapter 13 considers the future of school counseling, relating schools of tomorrow to students of tomorrow, and examining both visions within the context of school counseling programs and services. Technological advances and their impact on learning and counseling are explored, as are some of the social changes expected in years to come.

As noted earlier, lists of further readings, exercises, and relevant websites appear at the end of each chapter. Learning about a profession's heritage and the functions and responsibilities that make up its identity becomes more significant when students absorb the information through practical exercises and outside reading. These added experiences give special meaning to a person's professional development.

Also Available for Instructors

- **Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank.** A comprehensive Instructor's Manual with Test Bank is available electronically to qualified adopters. Please ask your Pearson sales representative to obtain a copy.
- **PowerPoint® Presentations.** PowerPoint® slides for each chapter are also available.

These instructor supplements are available online on the Instructor's Resource Center on the Pearson Higher Education website (www.pearsonhighered.com).

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CHAPTER 1

The School Counseling Profession

School counseling began as the guidance profession in the late 1800s, and today it is a significant specialty area within the broader counseling profession (Gladding, 2009; Granello & Young, 2012; Nystul, 2011; Schmidt, 2008). A relatively new field of study and practice compared with teaching, medicine, law, and others, school counseling has led the development of a growing counseling profession that includes members working in a variety of educational and community agency settings.

In addition to schools, professional counselors help in hospitals, mental-health centers, industries, family centers, and countless other arenas. Although they practice in different settings with divergent missions, these counselors are united by their understanding and command of basic communication and helping skills; a common knowledge base of psychological, sociological, and human development theories; and similar goals that identify them as colleagues within the counseling profession. The work settings of these counselors may differ, but their professional practices are founded in related theories of counseling and human development, an appreciation of the power of the human spirit, and a commitment to changing systems and relationships for the betterment of all concerned.

Each new school year, children and adolescents across the country enroll in classes and begin instruction to acquire skill and learn information to enhance their personal, social, and career development. In schools, students relate to many different professionals who assist them in pursuing and achieving their educational goals. School counselors in elementary, middle, and high schools are among the professionals who assist students with these developmental tasks. They also help parents and teachers challenged by the countless needs of children and adolescents in today's society. These counselors provide program leadership and offer services to students, parents, and teachers so that students have equal opportunity to reach their educational goals, choose an appropriate career direction, and develop as fully functioning members of a democratic society.

In this text, you will learn about professional counseling in schools. As noted, compared with other notable vocations, school counseling is a relatively young profession, but its growth has been remarkable since the beginning of the twentieth century, particularly in the United States. To fully appreciate the role of school counselors in U.S. education during this period and the role that these counselors continue to have in the twenty-first century, it is appropriate to begin with an understanding of the counseling profession as a whole. What is this field we call *counseling*, and who are these professionals we call *counselors*?

Counseling as a Profession

Throughout history, different laypersons and professionals have accepted roles as confidants and helpers for people who have sought assistance in making decisions, who have been less fortunate than others, or who have simply needed the comfort of a friend. Many literary and historical accounts refer to philosophers, wizards, fortune-tellers, medicine men, and others who in their unique and sometimes mythic ways were the advent of the helping professions. It is likely that the ancestors of professional counselors were the elders of ancient tribes who advised their youthful members, guiding them toward responsible decisions and behaviors. In ancient times, helping relationships among tribal members probably focused on learning basic survival skills. As civilizations progressed, these relationships developed into processes for encouraging youth to acquire proficiency in personal, social, and survival skills.

History shows that varieties of helping relationships were formed within cultures and among people. In all human encounters and relationships, people have sought the wisdom and advice of others, including friends and professionals whom they respected. It seems natural to reach out to people when you need help or when you want to help others.

People who seek assistance are concerned with issues that revolve around relationships with themselves and others. Often, these relationships involve questions of personal acceptance, social belonging, and future goals. People ask: "Who am I?" "Where do I belong?" "What should I be doing with my life?" In assisting with these and other questions, helpers create a caring atmosphere where desired goals can be explored and a plan for achieving these goals can be forged. This helping process of gathering information, becoming self-aware, exploring options and goals, and choosing a direction is, in essence, a description of professional counseling.

Professional counseling consists of processes that establish relationships to identify people's needs; design strategies and services to satisfy those needs; and actively assist in carrying out plans to help people make decisions, solve problems, develop self-awareness, and lead healthier lives. Sometimes, counseling relationships help people avoid negative events and prevent harmful circumstances from impeding their growth and development; at other times, these relationships help people assess the progress they are making in life and plan strategies to ensure continued development. Another type of counseling relationship is appropriate when people experience difficulties and cannot remedy problems without support and intervention by others. An emerging form of helping relationship in the counseling profession often includes advocacy for social justice to eliminate inequities across a variety of cultural issues in schools, other institutions, and other parts of society (Comstock, Hammer, Strengsch, Cannon, Parsons, & Salazar II, 2008; Singh, Urbano, Haston, & McMahon, 2010). In summary, counselors establish different types of helping relationships to prevent problems, develop human potential, remedy difficult situations, and advocate for social change, and include direct and indirect interventions, education, and advocacy. Figure 1.1 shows how the different emphasis on development, prevention, and remediation translates into various types of helping relationships.

The first type of helping process, prevention, can be understood in historical terms. Early civilizations worked to protect their camps and villages from natural disasters and human or other animal encroachment. Survival and expansion of the tribe were predicated on security measures that members put in place. In a similar way, human survival and

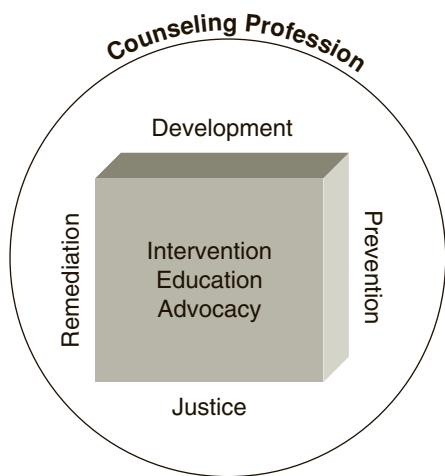


FIGURE 1.1 Emphasis and Types of Counseling Relationships

development relate to preventive plans that individuals and groups make and carry out for their own protection. Professional counselors, in schools and other settings, assist people and organizations in preventing losses, avoiding crises, and thwarting other calamities that impede progress in education and life.

Adequate prevention allows for optimal development. Counselors in schools and other institutions provide services that encourage people to develop their fullest potential. In schools, these services include a variety of interventional, instructional, and informational services. When combined into a logical plan that addresses the needs of all students in a school, these services form a *comprehensive school counseling program* that allows students to experience many developmental activities as part of a broad curriculum. It also offers direct counseling relationships between students and their school counselors, as well as other responsive services to meet the needs of all students.

Preventive and developmental services have the potential to enhance the lives of most people, including students in school, but there are times when children, adolescents, and adults have difficulties that warrant direct intervention. For example, today's students face many challenges that can affect their educational progress. Child abuse, family dysfunction, addictive behaviors, society's fascination with violence, the impact of advancing technology, and countless other factors influence children's lives every day. In schools and other agencies, professional counselors assist children and adolescents in meeting and resolving these challenges through individual contacts, group procedures, consultations with parents and teachers, and referrals to appropriate community agencies and private practitioners. Such responsiveness by counselors and the referrals that they coordinate address critical needs of children, adolescents, and adults and are, therefore, part of their comprehensive program.

In addition to helping clients with their development, assisting them with ways to prevent future problems, and counseling them to remedy existing concerns, professional counselors in the twenty-first century take an active role in addressing social inequities (Granello & Young, 2012). For counselors working in a variety of professional settings,

social justice involves actions and interventions that eliminate discrimination and advocate for equal access for all people to participate in every aspect of society. In summary, the services of professional counselors aim at preventing problems; focusing on developmental issues; addressing critical concerns that pose an immediate threat to an individual's emotional, social, and psychological well-being; and advocating with policymakers, administrators, and other officials to ensure all members of the community have both a voice and equal access.

Historical Background

We credit the ancient Greeks for creating a philosophy of living that focused on the nature of human development. The writings of Plato and Aristotle, in particular, contributed to our contemporary fields of education, psychology, and human development, which are three foundations of professional counseling. Plato's speculation about the nature of humankind began the exploration of individual development and our journey into the science of human behavior. Later, Aristotle added to this learning process by studying environmental influences and discovering the importance of individual perception.

Following ancient Greek civilization, Hebrews and Christians of the post-Roman period proposed concepts regarding free will, self-determination, and human value that contributed to the development of democratic ideals cherished by most contemporary societies. In many ways, these democratic principles parallel those that are central to authentic counseling relationships. These beliefs assume that people have the right to be free, can make choices to benefit their development, want to be accepted as equal members of the group, and can learn to be responsible members of society.

As Western civilization continued through the Middle Ages, the spread of Christianity formalized educational opportunities and helping relationships through the work of priests, monks, and other clergy. For example, in the Catholic Church, the sacrament of penance, in years past commonly called *confession*, created a type of helping relationship. Whereas the sacrament of penance placed people in a subservient relationship to God, this relationship also encouraged the confession of sins, their absolution, the forgiveness of transgressions, and the act of assuming responsibility for one's misdeeds. The priest, acting as an agent of God, helped the individual through this process of confession and renewal of faith. Interestingly, the priest maintained a vow of silence in much the same way that today's counselor honors the confidential nature of relationships with clients.

During the Middle Ages, members of the clergy were among the few who were able to read and interpret scholarly works to the common person. As a result, they informed people not only about church doctrine, but also about developmental issues such as career choices. In a historical review of early occupational literature, Zytowski (1972) noted that most writings of this time probably placed priests in the role of counselors because what was written was intended for scholarly consumption and not practical application. Interestingly, the spiritual relationship that many people have today with the rabbis, ministers, priests, mullahs, or other clergy often includes a counseling component.

Toward the beginning of the seventeenth century, books about vocational development and occupational choice began to appear. A major work by Tommaso Garzoni of Italy provided detailed descriptions of a number of occupations and professions of the times. This work, translated as *The Universal Plaza of All the Professions of the World*,

was published in 25 Italian editions and in several other languages. In 1631, Thomas Powell published *Tom of All Trades; Or, the Plain Pathways to Preferment*, a picture book of different occupations with information about how to enter these vocations and what education was necessary. This was the first career information book published in English. In the eighteenth century, authors such as Joseph Collyer, Edmund Carter, Denis Diderot, and Robert Campbell continued the focus on occupational choice and career development. Campbell's book, *The London Tradesman* (1747), offered an overview of all the trades, professions, and arts, carried out in the cities of London and Westminster. It was intended as information for parents and for the instruction of youth as they chose crafts, businesses, and professions. These and other publications provided the first information services related to vocational development and were the precursors of what was to become career guidance and counseling.

Many other writers, philosophers, and leaders through the ages have added to the legacy that contributed to the development of the counseling profession. René Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy* (original Latin version published in 1644), in which he explored the territory of human thought, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's emphasis on the freedom of natural development, Immanuel Kant's rational view of man, and later Paul Tillich and Martin Heidegger's existential teachings are among the efforts that helped build a foundation for much of what we call counseling, psychology, and human development today.

The birth of psychology as a field of study at the end of the nineteenth century began the systematic inquiry into human behavior and development. When Wilhelm Wundt began his Psychological Institute at the University of Leipzig in 1879, psychology became an acceptable area of study (Indiana University, 2007). An event that paralleled the development of psychology as a scientific field was the psychiatric movement in the medical profession, which gave an organic focus to the treatment of seriously disturbed patients. In 1908, Clifford Beers published *A Mind That Found Itself*, an exposé of the horrible conditions in mental institutions of the times. Beers himself was hospitalized as a schizophrenic patient on and off during his lifetime, and with this book and the efforts of a few psychologists, he aroused public attention and concern about the treatment of mental illnesses, and the mental-health movement began in the United States that encouraged the establishment of local psychopathic hospitals, the forerunners of today's community mental-health programs and the mental-health counseling profession.

These early events led to the emergence of several professions that helped people with social, personal, and vocational concerns. Social workers, psychologists, and counselors who practice in today's mental-health clinics, rehabilitation centers, and schools find their roots in these historic moments. The theories of practice and helping skills of the counseling profession are founded in many of the beliefs and discoveries presented by scholars and practitioners of these early times. As a result, the counseling profession relies on a broad knowledge of human development, psychology, sociology, and education. At the same time, it incorporates effective communication and leadership skills with the essential human qualities of caring, genuineness, regard, and respect for others.

Counselor Identity

All counselors, regardless of the professional setting in which they work, have this broad knowledge base and use similar helping processes. What distinguishes them from one

another and gives them a particular identity are the specific needs and developmental concerns of the clients who seek their help. For this reason, mental-health counselors practice their profession in slightly different ways than career counselors, family counselors, or school counselors do. Although the breadth of their services and nature of their activities may differ, their essential goals and purposes are similar. Likewise, a comparison can also be made among school counselors who serve different levels of educational practice in elementary, middle, and high schools. The nature of specific activities at these levels may differ as a result of the developmental needs of students, but the broad goals and general processes used in comprehensive school counseling programs are similar across all three levels.

Because professional counselors prepare from a broad spectrum of theory and knowledge in the fields of psychology, social and cultural foundations, education, and human development, and at the same time practice their professions in a range of settings, they often use titles that reflect their work environment. For example, we find mental-health counselors in psychiatric hospitals and mental-health centers, and sometimes in employee-assistance programs of business and industry. Their training generally takes place in college or university counselor education programs. In contrast, school counselors work in elementary, middle, or high schools. Counselor education programs prepare them with an emphasis on human development, learning, and school environments. Nevertheless, a fundamental knowledge of human development and a command of helping processes and skills are essential for both mental-health and school counselors. This common background is what links them and other counselors as colleagues within the counseling profession.

Although different types of counseling professionals function in a variety of settings, other helping professionals also use counseling processes in their roles. Clinical social workers, psychotherapists, marriage and family therapists, and counseling psychologists are among the professionals who use counseling processes similar to those used by counselors in schools, hospitals, mental-health centers, prisons, and elsewhere. In some instances, these individuals consider themselves members of more than one profession. For example, some members of the American Counseling Association (ACA) also belong to the American Psychological Association (APA). They consider themselves counselors and psychologists. The APA has a division for counseling and development. Figure 1.2 depicts some of the professionals who use counseling processes and pertinent websites where you can find more information about their practices.

Not all members of the professions illustrated in Figure 1.2 agree with the relationship depicted. Some, including many school counselors, view their professions as distinct from all the others, and certainly there are clear differences on how each profession functions. Nevertheless, the descriptive literature from each of these professions includes references to the use of counseling and other helping processes.

The emergence of these seemingly overlapping professions has been particularly noticeable in the United States. Perhaps this is because, as this country developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and accelerated through the Industrial Revolution into the twentieth century, personal, social, career, and educational issues became increasingly important. These factors, combined with the multicultural realities of the United States, have contributed to the complexity of living a productive and well-adjusted life in this country. Because the individuals in the United States pride themselves on democratic

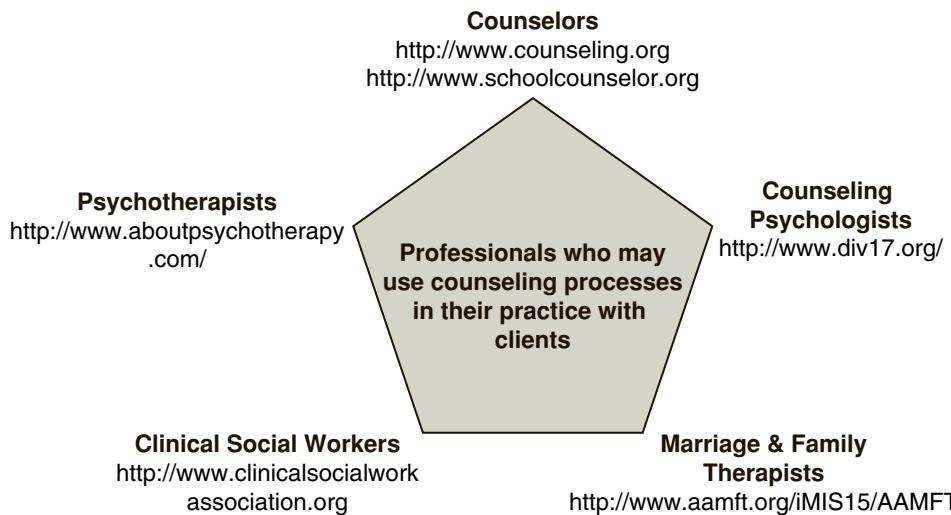


FIGURE 1.2 Sample of Professionals that Use Counseling with Pertinent Websites

principles, equal opportunity, and human service, it is understandable how so many related helping professions could develop. In particular, it is especially clear why counselors have had such an important role in our schools, which themselves incorporate principles of democracy, equity, and opportunity for all students. It is within this context that we now examine the development of the school counseling profession.



PERSPECTIVE 1-1

Perspectives throughout this text help you reflect and process material presented in each chapter. Many historic events have influenced the school counseling profession. What influences led you to this career choice?

Development of School Counseling

The counseling profession entered the U.S. schoolhouse early in the twentieth century. Up to that time, classroom teachers provided whatever social, personal, or career assistance students needed. Perhaps the delay of the profession's entry into U.S. schools occurred because the earliest schools were highly selective in admitting students. They were exclusive academies, selecting only the wealthiest of students. The curricula of these schools prepared young men for professions, such as law or medicine, or for the religious ministry. As the country expanded and progressed, the selectivity of schools decreased, and equal opportunity in education became a reality for men and women. At least this was true for White men and women. The beginning of publicly supported schools opened educational doors to women as well as men from all economic levels of society. Thus, an increasingly

diverse population began entering schools, and teachers alone could no longer meet the broad spectrum of needs expressed by these students.

The school counseling profession began as a vocational guidance movement that emerged from the Industrial Revolution at the beginning of the twentieth century. Some negative by-products of the tremendous industrial growth of this period were city slums, ethnic ghettos, and apparent neglect of individual rights and integrity. In response to these conditions, proponents of the Progressive Movement, a reaction to the negative effects of industrial growth, advocated for social reform. Vocational guidance was one aspect of this response. For example, in 1895, George Merrill began experimental efforts in vocational guidance at the California School of Mechanical Arts in San Francisco (Brown, 2012). Merrill's program offered exploratory experiences for students enrolled in the occupational trades at the California school and included counseling, job placement, and follow-up services.

Generally, the *guidance movement* of this period instructed school children, adolescents, and young adults about their moral development, interpersonal relationships, and the world of work. Jesse B. Davis is thought to be the first person to implement a systematic guidance program in the public schools (Gladding, 2009; Wittmer & Clark, 2007). From 1898 to 1907, he was a class counselor at Central High School in Detroit, Michigan, and was responsible for educational and vocational counseling with eleventh-grade boys and girls. Davis became principal of a high school in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1907, and during this time began a school-wide guidance program. He encouraged his English teachers to include guidance lessons in their composition classes to help students develop character, avoid problem behaviors, and relate vocational interests to curriculum subjects.

Programs in other parts of the country complemented Davis' work. Frank Goodwin organized a system-wide guidance program for the Cincinnati, Ohio, schools in 1911, and, in 1908, Eli Weaver at the Boys High School of Brooklyn gained national recognition for his efforts in organizing guidance services in New York City. About this time, Anna Y. Reed developed guidance programs in the Seattle school system that focused on the employability of students, and incorporated business ethics and concepts about the free enterprise system. These and other efforts in guidance established the beginnings of what was to become the school counseling profession (Brown, 2012; Gladding, 2009).

These facts notwithstanding, Frank Parsons is often mentioned as the "Father of Guidance" and is credited by most historians as the person who began the guidance movement in the United States. In 1908, Parsons organized the Boston Vocational Bureau to provide assistance for young people. The bureau was established by philanthropist Mrs. Quincy Agassiz Shaw and was based on Parsons' ideas and plans for vocational guidance, which stressed a scientific approach to selecting a career (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). According to Parsons, "No step in life, unless it may be the choice of a husband or wife, is more important than the choice of a vocation" (1909, p. 3).

Parsons' attention to vocational development was framed by his concern about society's failure to develop resources and services for human growth and development. At the same time, he was concerned about helping young men make the transition from their school years into the world of work. In his book *Choosing a Vocation*, which was published after his death, Parsons (1909) highlighted three essential factors for choosing an appropriate vocation: (1) clear self-understanding of one's aptitudes, abilities, interests, resources, and limitations; (2) knowledge of the requirements, advantages, disadvantages,

and compensation for different types of employment; and (3) an understanding of the relationship between these two groups of facts. This conceptualization of successful career development still holds credence today. Self-understanding, knowledge of one's career interests, and general knowledge about careers go hand-in-hand for a person to be successful in life.

Parsons' plan also included training counselors to help young students with vocational development. Nine months after establishing the Vocational Bureau, he began a program designed to train young men to become vocational counselors and managers of vocational bureaus for YMCAs, schools, colleges, and businesses throughout the country (Miller, 1968). A few years later, the School Committee of Boston created the first counselor certification program. Requirements included study of education and experience in a vocational school or a vocational service, and the program was eventually adopted by Harvard University as the first college-based counselor education program.

Frank Parsons' work had a significant impact on the vocational guidance movement. In Boston, the superintendent of schools designated more than 100 elementary and secondary teachers to become vocational counselors (Nugent, 2000). As noted earlier, the guidance movement spread to many other parts of the country, including New York City, Grand Rapids, and Cincinnati, and within a few years, city school systems across the country had developed guidance programs.

Early developments in the guidance movement were complemented by the creation of the National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) in 1913, which began publishing the *National Vocational Guidance Bulletin* on a regular basis in 1921. Over the next several decades, it underwent several name changes, eventually becoming the *Career Development Quarterly*. In 1952, when the NVGA joined with the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA), the *Personnel and Guidance Journal* became the major publication, and was later renamed the *Journal of Counseling and Development* of the American Association for Counseling and Development (AACD). The creation of the NVGA is significant because it began the unification and identification of what has become the counseling profession of today. This is especially true for the school counseling profession.

Emergence of Guidance and Counseling in Schools

The work of Jesse Davis, Anna Reed, Eli Weaver, Frank Parsons, and a host of other pioneers created the momentum for the development of a school counseling profession. From the 1920s through the 1940s, several events occurred that gave impetus, clarity, and direction to this emerging profession. Coincidentally, many of these developments, with their roots founded in the vocational guidance movement, raised questions about the profession's narrow focus on vocational development. Eventually, some leaders of the counseling movement began to encourage a broader focus that included issues of personality and human development beyond vocational guidance. This broader view laid the groundwork for many of the counseling theories and approaches that were created in the years that followed. Some of these were developed in the years before World War II and helped define school guidance and counseling of that period.

Before World War II. After the vocational guidance movement of the early 1900s, World War I had a major impact on the developing counseling profession. During that

time, the United States military began using group-training procedures to screen and classify draftees. Intelligence testing, developed in the beginning of the 1900s, was the catalyst for this movement. In particular, work begun by French psychologist Alfred Binet and later expanded by Lewis Terman and Arthur Otis, was adapted by the military. Otis developed an intelligence test that could be given to large groups and administered by unskilled examiners. This test became the basis for the military's *Army Alpha Examination*, a paper-and-pencil test, along with a second test, the *Army Beta Examination*, developed as a performance test (Baker & Gerler, 2008).

During this time and in the decade immediately following the war, a great number of tests were developed and marketed, but inadequate design and inappropriate standardization made many of them inferior measurement instruments. Nevertheless, the military's interest in using group measurement techniques was embraced by schools and the education profession when the war ended. The potential for applying testing and other measurement techniques to pupil assessment helped catapult the development and expansion of standardized testing in U.S. schools.

The 1920s also saw the rise of progressive education in the schools. This movement, introduced by John Dewey, emphasized the school's role in guiding students in their personal, social, and moral development. As noted by Brewer in 1932, schools began incorporating guidance activities into the curriculum for developing skills for living. This movement was short-lived and criticized by parents, teachers, and others as being too permissive and anti-educational. These critics wanted to focus on fundamentals of education and claimed that moral development was in the purview of the home and church. This criticism, in addition to declining public funds brought on by the Great Depression, all but caused the abandonment of support for guidance activities and counseling services in the schools.

One by-product of the emphasis on data collection through group testing used by the military during this period was the development of counseling approaches that stressed the measurement of students' traits and characteristics. The late 1930s saw the first theory of guidance and counseling, called *Trait and Factor Theory*, developed by E. G. Williamson at the University of Minnesota. Using Parsons' vocational program as a springboard, Williamson and his colleagues became leading advocates for what became known as the *directive* or *counselor-centered* approach to school counseling. In his book *How to Counsel Students*, Williamson (1939) wrote that counselors should state their "point of view with definiteness, attempting through exposition to enlighten the student" (p. 136). In this direct approach, counselors dispensed information and gathered data to influence and motivate students.

Later, Williamson softened this view to some degree. He wrote that the counselor is responsible for helping

the student become more sophisticated, more matured in understanding the value option that he faces and to identify clearly those that he prefers. The search is the important educational experience—not a control of a behavior, a rigging in favor of one choice or the other, even though the counselor may have his personal preference. (Dugan, 1958, p. 3)

At the same time, the directive approach maintained that counselors could not give complete freedom of choice to students who were not capable of making the best decisions

for themselves. According to this view, counselors were obliged to protect the interests of society, the school as an institution, and the student. Williamson believed that the development of individuality on the part of students must be balanced with concern for self-destructive and antisocial behaviors. He declared that people achieve individual freedom through effective group membership, interdependence, and adherence to high social ideals.

In his approach to counseling, Williamson (1950) developed six steps for assisting students:

1. *Analysis*: The gathering of data about the student and the student's environment
2. *Synthesis*: The selection of relevant data and the summary and organization of these data to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the student
3. *Diagnosis*: The development of a rationale regarding the nature and etiology of the student's problems
4. *Prognosis*: A prediction of outcomes based on the actions chosen by the student
5. *Treatment*: Various approaches and techniques selected for the counseling relationship
6. *Follow-up*: An evaluation of the effectiveness of the counseling relationship and the student's plan of action

About the time that Williamson and his colleagues were developing their directive counseling approach, others continued to question the narrow focus of the vocational guidance movement. Counselors and psychologists alike echoed this concern, and stressed that vocational choice is simply one of many developmental issues with which counselors should assist students. These views began to broaden the goals of guidance and counseling in education, and as a result, resurgence in school counseling began.

World War II to the Space Age. The 1940s saw major changes in the counseling profession, and these developments had significant impact on the practice of counseling in schools. Among the influences during this period, three major events seem to have shaped these developments: (1) the popularity of the client-centered approach to counseling developed by Carl Rogers; (2) the onset and impact of World War II on U.S. society; and (3) government involvement in the counseling and education professions after the war. In addition, organizational changes within the profession and emerging theoretical models of counseling were significant influences during this period. Each of these events had an impact on the developing identity and direction of the counseling profession.

The Rogerian Influence. Carl Rogers probably had more influence on the counseling profession and the development of counseling approaches than any other individual. Two of his books, *Counseling and Psychotherapy: New Concepts in Practice* (1942) and *Client-Centered Therapy: Its Current Practice, Implications, and Theory* (1951), had a significant impact on counseling in both school and nonschool settings. Most important, Rogers gave new direction to the profession by focusing on the helping relationships established between counselors and their clients and by recognizing the importance of personal development in these relationships. This focus moved the profession away from the counselor-centered perspectives of earlier times and emphasized a growth-oriented counseling relationship as opposed to an informational and problem-solving one.

This new vision for the profession challenged both the trait-factor approaches that emerged from vocational guidance and the testing movement following World War I and the therapist-centered views embraced by Freudian psychoanalysts of the early 1900s. At the same time, Rogers' acceptance of self-concept theory as a foundation for effective therapeutic relationships disputed the strict behavioral views of the psychological movement in the United States, which was gaining prominence during this period. His works marked the beginning of a debate that continues today in discussions within the counseling and psychology professions. Ironically, both counseling and psychology identify Carl Rogers as a significant contributor to each profession's development.

For nearly 50 years, Rogers' contributions to the development of counseling theory and practice helped strengthen and identify the emerging counseling profession. Most important, he encouraged counselors to attend to the person in the process. Rogers and his followers highlighted this view in the 1970s and 1980s as they gradually changed from a client-centered approach to a person-centered one.

Opinions about Rogers' influence on the school counseling profession are not uniformly favorable. Wittmer and Clark (2007) noted that inordinate attention placed on the individual by the client-centered approach "somehow took us off-track in school counselor preparation and may have contributed to the inappropriate training of many school counselors" (p. 3). In particular, the emphasis on individual counseling processes tended to neglect preventive and developmental interventions needed in school environments. Nevertheless, the impact of Rogers' work on counseling practices both in and out of schools was remarkable.

World War II and Government Influence. World War II and increased government involvement in the counseling and psychology professions influenced the counseling profession greatly during this period. As the United States entered the war, the government requested assistance from counselors and psychologists to help in screening, selecting, and training military and industrial specialists. This emphasis gave impetus to another area related to the counseling profession—personnel work in business and industry. After the war, the Veterans Administration (VA) provided funds for graduate students to train as counselors and psychologists. About this time, the term *counseling psychologist* emerged in VA specifications, further distinguishing psychology from vocational guidance (Gladding, 2009).

Another example of governmental influence in the counseling profession was the George–Barden Act of 1946, which provided funds to develop and support guidance and counseling activities in schools and other settings. For the first time in history, school counselors and state and local supervisors received resources, leadership, and financial support from the government, an action that fueled the start of a period of rapid growth for guidance and counseling services in schools.

One governmental change that occurred in the 1950s was the reorganization of the Guidance and Personnel Branch of the U.S. Office of Education. In 1952, this office was disbanded under the Division of Vocational Education, and from 1953 to 1954, a Pupil Personnel Services Section operated in the Division of State and Local School Systems. In 1955, a Guidance and Personnel Services Section was reestablished. The development of this office helped move the school counseling profession further away from its original vocational emphasis to a broader student services perspective, a trend that continued through the 1950s and into the 1960s.

In 1957, the Soviet Union (which dissolved into several independent countries in the 1990s) lofted the world into the Space Age with its successful launching of *Sputnik I*, the first human-made Earth satellite. This single event rang a tremendous national alarm about the capability of the United States to stay ahead of the Russians in the space program, with industrial and technological advancements, and in military strength. The “indirect but nevertheless significant result of [Sputnik] … was the ‘lift off’ of the counseling and guidance movement in the United States” (Gibson & Mitchell, 1999, p. 12). The ensuing public outcry and criticism of educational institutions eventually led to the passage of Public Law 85-864, entitled the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (NDEA).

The NDEA was preceded by several national studies sponsored by the Office of Education, the National Science Foundation, and the Committee on Financing Higher Education during the early 1950s. These studies concluded that

1. Schools needed to improve their testing of student aptitude and to design systems to identify students’ potential earlier in their educational careers.
2. Counselors were needed to encourage students to stay in school, concentrate on academic courses, and enter college.
3. Scholarships were needed to assist talented students who were financially unable to attend college after high school.

These findings and conclusions set the stage for the immediate action that followed the launching of Soviet *Sputnik I*. As a result, public opinion was amenable to the swift passage of the NDEA to

- Provide loans to students in colleges and universities
- Offer financial incentives to secondary schools to improve mathematics, science, and foreign language instruction
- Create National Defense Fellowships for graduate students interested in teaching at the college level
- Support the improvement of guidance and counseling programs in secondary schools
- Establish language institutes and research centers to improve the teaching of foreign languages
- Encourage research to develop the effective use of television and related media for improved instruction
- Establish vocational education programs
- Create a Science Information Services and a Science Information Council
- Improve statistical services for state educational agencies (Miller, 1968)

Title V of the NDEA focused specifically on school counseling and guidance services in two important ways—first, it provided funds to help states establish and maintain school counseling, testing, and other guidance-related services; and second, it authorized the establishment of counseling institutes and training programs in colleges and universities to improve the skills of those who were working with students in secondary schools or of persons who were training to become school counselors. These special institutes began during the summer of 1959 at 50 colleges and universities where more than 2,200 counselors were trained (Miller, 1968). Title V, section A, of the NDEA provided \$15 million a year to assist

local school systems in developing and strengthening guidance and counseling services, and section B provided approximately \$7 million a year for universities and colleges to establish training institutes to prepare school counselors (Shertzer & Stone, 1966).

As a result of the NDEA, Title V, every state, the District of Columbia, and three territories expanded school counseling services during the late 1950s and early 1960s. The Counseling and Guidance Branch of the U.S. Office of Education added consultants to its staff, thereby increasing its leadership role in the development of programs at the state level. The following changes occurred in the years immediately following the passage of the NDEA (1958–1963):

1. The number of full-time counselors increased 126 percent, from 12,000 to 27,180, and the ratio of counselors to students dropped from 1:960 to 1:530.
2. The number of state guidance consultants increased from 99 to 257.
3. More than 400 counseling institutes were funded by government, with more than 13,000 counselors trained.
4. Local school district expenditures for guidance and counseling services rose from \$5.6 million to more than \$127 million. (Miller, 1968, p. 37)

Organizational Changes and Professional Influences. Because of these national initiatives, the 1950s saw a continued acceleration of the school counseling profession. This development was marked by particular events that altered the national counseling associations spearheading this professional movement. The first of these events was the establishment of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) in 1952. The APGA grew out of an alliance of organizations called the American Council of Guidance and Personnel Associations (ACGPA), which began in 1935. This group of organizations aligned with each other to share concerns about educational issues, vocational guidance, and other personnel matters. Initially, the four organizations that formed the APGA were the American College Personnel Association, the National Association of Guidance Supervisors, the National Vocational Guidance Association, and the Student Personnel Association for Teacher Education. Shortly afterward, APGA began a fifth association, the American School Counselor Association, which became Division 5 of APGA. In the years that followed, many more divisions emerged and joined the larger parent association.

Another phenomenon that influenced the development of the counseling profession during this time was the introduction of several new theories of counseling. As noted earlier, Carl Rogers opened the debate between the directive and nondirective schools of thought in the 1940s. The 1950s continued this dialogue and witnessed the emergence of several new theories, including behavioral approaches and a host of other counseling and developmental theories. The humanistic and existential movements, illustrated in the writings of Combs (1962), Jourard (1964), May (1966), and Maslow (1957), and the emergence of group counseling also influenced the profession. Although there was much overlap among the concepts of some of these theories, there were enough differences in terminology and philosophy to create an array of counseling models, methods, and strategies. In 1976, Parloff identified more than 130 counseling theories and approaches, and since that time the number has continued to grow. Remarkably, Corsini (2008) found more than 400 approaches to counseling and psychotherapy across the globe. Generally, these theories fall under one of several categories that include psychodynamic, person-centered,

behavioral/cognitive, humanistic/existential, and eclectic/integrative (Granello & Young, 2012). Some approaches to counseling, such as Adlerian counseling (Sweeney, 1998), invitational theory and practice (Purkey & Novak, 2008; Purkey & Schmidt, 1996), reality therapy (Glasser, 1965), and solution-focused brief therapy (De Jong & Berg, 2002), are compatible with school counseling programs.

Expansion of School Counseling

The 1960s saw continued development and expansion of the counseling profession, in part as a result of legislation to increase services and enhance existing programs and the refinement and clarification of the role of the school counselor. This coincided with a shift toward the developmental role of counselors, as illustrated by C. Gilbert Wrenn's now classic book, *The Counselor in a Changing World* (1962), which set the stage for a broader focus for counseling programs and services.

The 1960s. The United States and other developed countries were moving from the industrialization of the early part of the twentieth century to the technological advances of the twenty-first century. Among these technological changes would be a host of social, economic, educational, and career adjustments that encouraged people to seek the assistance of counselors in solving personal and social difficulties and in locating information to make career decisions and plans to attend college. Automation in industry had an impact on employment and career counseling for adults as well as for students in schools. Changing roles of women affected family structures, and the accelerated pace of society increased daily stress in most people's lives. A number of other developments, including altered sex roles and sexual preferences, a widening economic gap between lower and upper classes, an increased fear of nuclear war, and astonishing medical discoveries that promised to lengthen the life span, all contributed to human challenges and critical decisions for which counselors were needed.

Federal legislation during this period continued to have an impact on the counseling profession and the role of counselors, particularly school counselors. For example, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-10) provided funds and supported special programs to help schools improve educational opportunities for students of low-income families, as well as providing funds for services that would not usually be available in most schools.

The counseling literature of this time, particularly *The School Counselor* journal and a few major texts, began to delineate the role and functions of counselors in schools. Books such as C. H. Patterson's *Counseling and Guidance in Schools* (1962) and E. C. Roeber's *The School Counselor* (1963) gave impetus to the development of a clear professional role and defined specific functions of counselors in schools. These descriptions and definitions complemented the emerging roles of other student services workers such as school social workers, school psychologists, attendance officers, and health workers. During this period, the term *guidance* was targeted by some authors as a vague and sometimes confusing label for counselors, teachers, and other people who attempted to define the role and functions of counselors in schools. In 1966, Shertzer and Stone wrote

Guidance has been defined in many ways. An examination of the plethora of books and articles ... indicates that the word ... has been used to convey each author's opinions and

biases. Indeed, a major criticism ... is that the word “guidance” has been rendered relatively meaningless by the variety of ways ... it is used. (p. 30)

Nearly five decades later, the discussion about the terms *guidance* and *counseling* and the choice of an appropriate language to identify the school counselor’s role and functions continue to be important professional issues (Baker & Gerler, 2008).

In the period following 1960, the role and functions of school counselors emphasized in the professional literature included programmatic and process functions. Programmatic functions included strategies to develop comprehensive programs of services, such as defining goals and objectives, assessing students’ needs, aligning services with the school’s curriculum, coordinating student services, and evaluating results. In addition, educational and vocational planning, student placement, and referral systems frequently were included in this category. Process functions described specific activities by which counselors provided direct services to students, parents, and teachers, and included individual and group counseling, student assessment, parent assistance, and consultation with teachers and parents. In many respects, these components, discussed in Chapters 5, 7, 8, and 9, remain as important responsive services of counselors in today’s schools.

Clarification of the school counselor’s role and functions during the 1960s paved the way toward a broader professional perspective on programs of services offered by counselors in schools. Many writers at this time emphasized comprehensive guidance and counseling programs as essential aspects of the school curriculum. The intent of these programs was for school counselors and classroom teachers to play a vital and collaborative role.

In 1968, Miller wrote that an “effective guidance program requires the cooperative effort of every teacher in the school” (p. 75), yet this cooperative role for administrators and teachers remained unclear because of several factors. For example, guidance continued to be associated strictly with the role of the school counselor. To this day, this perception endures in many schools where the mere mention of the word *guidance* has teachers and administrators turning their heads toward the counselor’s office.

Second, there was a narrow focus on the subject matter that teachers were responsible for teaching. This is true in today’s schools as well. Sometimes teachers, particularly in secondary schools, place so much emphasis on the instruction of English, mathematics, science, and other subjects that they forget the broader, developmental concerns of students. Although many attempts have been made, the U.S. schools have not infused guidance—that is, lessons of self-development and social skills—into the curriculum and daily instruction.

Expansion into New Areas. Emphasis on the role of teachers in guidance in the 1960s and 1970s highlighted specific functions for establishing a foundation of collaboration between school counselors and teachers, such as the development of helpful cooperative classroom environments, assessment of students, orientation of students to classroom procedures, establishment of helping relationships, integration of educational and career information, promotion of social and personal development, encouragement of healthy study habits, development of effective referral procedures, and cooperation with school-wide guidance activities (Miller, 1968; Shertzer & Stone, 1966, 1981), that continue to be an essential ingredient of today’s comprehensive school counseling programs. Many of these elements were also found in research on excellent teaching and effective schools (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991; Purkey & Smith, 1983).

Counseling in Elementary Schools. This reexamination of guidance and counseling occurred at the same time that the expansion of counseling services into elementary schools began. Although some elementary counselors were employed in the Boston schools in the early 1900s and a few elementary child consultants were found in other metropolitan areas during this time, educational and vocational development at the secondary level overwhelmed serious efforts in the primary and intermediate grades until the early 1960s. The introduction of the elementary counselor during this period influenced the development of the school counseling profession and the expansion of services in schools.

During the initial decades of school counseling's development and growth, little was written or designed to help elementary counselors define and describe their role in schools. There is some indication that counseling in elementary schools was advanced by William Burnham in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly his book, *Great Teachers and Mental Health* (1926; reprinted 1971). Burnham emphasized the vital role of classroom teachers in ensuring the mental health of children; however, there were few notable elementary counseling programs established at this time (Gladding, 2009). As a result, no clear model for elementary counseling existed.

For the most part, traditional secondary guidance views and approaches were borrowed by the few elementary counselors who were employed before 1950. According to Faust (1968a), the first signs of the contemporary elementary counselor appeared in the late 1950s and early 1960s. A national survey in 1963 reported that elementary counselors performed the following activities (McKellar, 1964):

- Counseling with individual children
- Conferring with teachers to assist them with understanding of children's needs and developmental characteristics
- Conferring with parents about student development and progress
- Referring children and families to agencies

In 1964, the government expanded NDEA to include elementary school counseling as well as counseling in junior colleges and technical schools. As a result, NDEA training institutes added a focus on counseling in elementary schools. Despite this added emphasis, elementary counseling was slowly accepted by school systems and by the public in general. In part, this is because of uncertainty about the counselor's role in elementary education. One event that helped elementary counselors identify their distinct role in the schools was a 1966 report by the Joint Committee on the Elementary School Counselor (ACES-ASCA, 1966) that outlined the role and functions of elementary school counselors under the headings of "Counseling, Consulting, and Coordinating." Subsequent writings in the 1960s and 1970s differentiated and expanded these three major functions (Brown & Srebalus, 1972; Hill & Luckey, 1969).

In 1967, Greene surveyed a large sample of elementary counselors with an inventory of 104 counselor functions. More than 1,100 counselors across the country responded; 65 percent of the sample were full-time certified counselors. Greene's study found a large difference in the functions performed at the upper elementary grades when compared with those at the lower grades. Counselors at the intermediate grades seemed to have more direct contact with children, whereas primary counselors spent more time consulting with parents and teachers. The most common services in both intermediate and primary grades

were referral services. Another study at this time surveyed the role and functions of elementary counselors as perceived by teachers, principals, counselors, and counselor educators (Foster, 1967). An *Elementary School Counselor Questionnaire*, consisting of 84 items, found that all five groups ranked counseling types of activities as most important to the role of the elementary counselor.

The proliferation of these types of studies gave visibility to elementary school counseling. As a result, more counselors were employed to work in elementary schools. In 1967, a national survey found almost 4,000 elementary counselors employed in 48 states (Van Hoose & Vafakas, 1968). Four years later, elementary counseling continued its growth with the total number of elementary school counselors reaching almost 8,000 (Myrick & Moni, 1976). This growth was complemented by the publication of the *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling Journal* by the American School Counselor Association in the late 1960s.

Early studies of elementary school counselors' functions not only gave clarity to the emerging role of elementary school counselors, but also contributed in a larger sense to the direction of contemporary school counseling. In particular, the elementary movement gave a clearer identity to the school counseling profession as a developmental force in the education of children and adolescents. The elementary counseling movement, in combination with national legislative action, broadened the scope of school counseling services. This expanded perspective included a role for counselors to provide services to audiences beyond students in the school. In particular, it encouraged counselors to assist parents and teachers with the challenge of ensuring optimal development of all children. This challenge was instrumental in moving school counselors into consulting roles: providing in-service help to teachers, offering parent counseling and education programs, and being team members with other student services professionals (Faust, 1968b).

Counseling for Special Needs. The Education Act for All Handicapped Children of 1975, which we discuss in Chapter 2, was a catalyst to the realization of this consulting role. This bill, commonly referred to as Public Law 94-142, mandated that schools provide free public education for all children, and it established a formula for distributing financial aid from the federal government to the states and local school districts. Although the role of school counselors was not specified, this law addressed special education and related support services. Today, the school counselor's role with exceptional students generally consists of a range of services that includes the following:

1. Participating in school-based meetings to determine appropriate services and programs for exceptional students
2. Assisting with the development of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) required for every student who has an identified exceptionality
3. Providing direct counseling services for students
4. Counseling and consulting with parents
5. Consulting with classroom and special education teachers
6. Planning, coordinating, and presenting in-service programs for teachers
7. Planning extracurricular involvement for special education students
8. Keeping appropriate records of services to students

Counselors' involvement in special education has been a mixed blessing in helping them decipher a clear role with appropriate functions. The inclusion of exceptional children in public education has expanded the role of school counselors by involving them in program planning, parent counseling and consulting, and curriculum monitoring. At the same time, however, clerical and administrative tasks required to ensure proper placement and protection of children's rights are sometimes cumbersome and time consuming. A combination of federal, state, and local regulations contribute to a maze of paperwork, hearings, and meetings. Where counselors are delegated the responsibility for these procedures, they find themselves removed from the expanded role of serving all students in comprehensive programs of services and, instead, relegated to the role of coordinator or administrator of special services. By contrast, in schools where counselors are not responsible for procedural aspects of special education, they are more likely to establish and implement counseling programs that offer a wide range of responsive services to a larger portion of student populations. With regard to exceptional students, these counselors are able to provide direct counseling and consulting services, which is the intent of Public Law 94-142.

Legislative and Governmental Influence. Other legislation of the 1960s and later years influenced the changing and emerging role of school counselors. For example, various vocational education acts stimulated career guidance projects and refocused the school's role in vocational development. Also, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, commonly known as the Buckley Amendment, gave students access to records about themselves, requiring counselors to form closer relationships with students and parents. Since the late 1970s, several bills have been in the federal legislature to support comprehensive programs in elementary school counseling. Although all these initiatives have not become law, they have inspired a nationwide movement to address the need for services to elementary children.

The publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 by the National Commission of Excellence in Education focused national attention on the purported decline in achievement of United States students and alarmed the country in much the same way that the launching of Soviet *Sputnik I* did in 1957. Not everyone, however, viewed this report as a credible assessment of U.S. education. Two researchers, Berliner and Biddle (1995), questioned the report's validity, and maintained that it was part of a "disinformation campaign" (p. 3) that provided little evidence about the failure of U.S. schools.

Nevertheless, *A Nation at Risk* had a tremendous impact on what was reported in the media, and this subsequently led to a plethora of reform initiatives in public education. Although no specific references to, or recommendations for, school counseling were found in this report, the emphasis on developing effective schools became synonymous with a call for accountability in the classroom and in special services, such as school counseling programs.

Accountability received attention somewhat earlier in the counseling literature of the 1970s and 1980s (Krumboltz, 1974; Myrick, 1984; Wheeler & Loesch, 1981). During this period, counselors were encouraged to design methods to assess how they spent their time, and whether the effects of counseling and related services made a difference in student development and performance. This focus was particularly sharp at the high school level, where Myrick (2003) noted that counselors were criticized for not providing organized services to address the needs of adolescents. In the 1980s, the attack on high school counseling continued, and positions were eliminated in some school districts (Herr, 1986).

At the same time, counselors were being placed in elementary schools without a clear definition, description, and focus on what their role should be at this level of education. In spite of the literature that attempted to describe a comprehensive role of these new counselors, local school systems and states seemed unable to create consistent expectations of the counselor's role and function. On one hand, elementary counselors attempted to create programs that replicated the one-to-one models of senior high school counselors; on the other, they adapted the role of guidance teachers, traveling from classroom to classroom and presenting lessons in affective education. Neither of these models encouraged counselors to lead the development and delivery of integrated services within comprehensive programs.

Counseling in Middle Schools. There was a similar dilemma in the early middle schools that evolved from the junior high schools of the 1960s. Again, the counseling literature during this time attempted to describe a comprehensive role for middle school counselors (Stamm & Nissman, 1979; Thornburg, 1986), but in many instances counselors struggled to find an identity and define their purpose. During the 1980s and 1990s, the need for school counselors to develop a clear identity and describe their role and functions at the various levels of school practice became paramount, a need that continues today (Baker & Gerler, 2008).

The Twenty-First Century

The most influential event to affect U.S. schools during the early part of this century has been the reauthorization of the elementary and secondary education act by the federal government under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, a bill that reformed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The passage and implementation of NCLB was not without controversy, both among school counseling professionals and the greater education profession (Houston, 2005; Thomas, 2005). Counselors in schools revealed both positive and negative perceptions of NCLB (Dollarhide & Lemberger, 2006); among the positive aspects are the emphasis placed on accountability processes for schools to demonstrate overall effectiveness, as well as counselors to show that the programs and services they develop and deliver make a difference in student learning. This includes the use of data to make programmatic decisions for all students, and particularly those who are at risk. However, the negative perception about high-stakes testing has put great and perhaps inappropriate pressure on students, parents, and teachers to perform simply for test results. Although assessment processes are necessary to measure academic progress, this undue weight placed on testing by NCLB may ignore the importance of individual differences, developmental stages, and issues of diversity that are foundational to determining appropriate curriculum, instructional methods, and other services for the broad audience of students attending schools today (Comer, 2005; Dahir & Stone, 2012).

The historical events, professional movements, and legislation that occurred from the late 1800s to the present helped create and direct the development of the school counseling profession. Table 1.1 provides a synopsis of significant events.

Today, federal initiatives continue to address changes in NCLB/ESEA legislation, and among the goals are student academic success, narrowing the achievement gap among students, and appropriate accountability systems for schools to follow. However, at the time this text revision was done, a reauthorization of ESEA by the U.S. Congress had not

TABLE 1.1 *Significant Events in the History of School Counseling*

PERIOD OR YEAR	EVENT, MOVEMENT, OR LEGISLATION
1800s	The Industrial Revolution in the United States refocuses career and educational choices for students.
1895	George Merrill initiates vocational guidance at the California School of Mechanical Arts in San Francisco.
1898–1908	Jesse B. Davis integrates vocational guidance in classes at Central High School in Detroit; later, he moves to Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he instructs teachers to integrate vocational information into class lessons.
1908	Eli Weaver, a principal in Brooklyn, New York, develops a vocational guidance program and publishes <i>Choosing a Career</i> ; about this time, Anna Reed organizes a vocational guidance program in Seattle, Washington.
1908	With assistance from philanthropist Mrs. Quincy Shaw, Frank Parsons starts the Vocational Bureau of Civic Services to provide systematic career counseling in Boston; after his death in 1909, his book, <i>Choosing a Vocation</i> , is published.
1908	Clifford Beers publishes <i>A Mind That Found Itself</i> , raising attention about the difficulties of patients with mental disorders.
1913	The National Vocation Guidance Association (NVGA) is founded in Grand Rapids, Michigan; it was the forerunner of today's national counseling associations.
1917	The first group intelligence tests, Army Alpha and Army Beta, are developed (World War I).
1920	Sigmund Freud emerges as a significant influence in mental health practice.
1920s	There is a significant rise in the number of school guidance professionals and social workers with a stronger focus on mental health services.
1926	William H. Burnham publishes <i>Great Teachers and Mental Health</i> , which advocates elementary guidance and counseling.
1926	Several states, such as New York, initiate the first certification of school counselors.
1939	E. G. Williamson publishes <i>How to Counsel Students</i> .
1939	U.S. Department of Labor publishes the first edition of the <i>Dictionary of Occupational Titles</i> .
1942	Carl Rogers publishes <i>Counseling and Psychotherapy</i> .
1945	The end of World War II; there are new social trends and increasing emphasis on career development, and Carl Rogers begins to influence the counseling process.
1948	U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes the <i>Occupational Outlook Handbook</i> .
1952	The American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) is formed and merges with the NVGA.
1952	American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is established; it joins the APGA as the fifth division in 1953.
1953	The ASCA begins publishing its journal, <i>The School Counselor</i> .
1953	The U.S. Office of Education creates the Pupil Personnel Services Organization.
1957	The Soviet Union launches <i>Sputnik I</i> , sending the first satellite into orbit and beginning the "Space Race."

(continued)

TABLE 1.1 (continued)

PERIOD OR YEAR	EVENT, MOVEMENT, OR LEGISLATION
1958	The U.S. Congress passes the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in response to the Soviet Union's inaugural space launch. The act focuses attention on the preparation and recruitment of future engineers, mathematicians, and scientists, and also provides funds to prepare school counselors and support school counseling programs.
1960s	School guidance and counseling expands in many states, and counselor education programs grow.
1962	C. Gilbert Wrenn publishes <i>The Counselor in a Changing World</i> .
1964	The NDEA is amended, which extends counseling to elementary schools.
1965	The U.S. Congress passes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).
1966	Two divisions of APGA, Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) and ASCA, release a report of the Joint Committee on the Elementary School Counselor.
Late 1960s	The ASCA begins publishing the <i>Elementary School Guidance and Counseling</i> journal.
1975	The U.S. Congress passes Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act.
1981	The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) is formed as an affiliate of the APGA.
1982	The National Board of Certified Counselors is formed to begin certifying professional counselors at the national level.
1983	<i>A Nation at Risk</i> is released by the National Commission on Excellence in Education.
1985	The APGA changes its name to the American Association for Counseling and Development (AACD).
1988	Norm Gysbers and Patricia Henderson publish <i>Developing and Managing Your School Guidance Program</i> , a major textbook that emphasizes comprehensive programs.
1991	The NBCC offers the National Certified School Counselor (NSCC) credential.
1992	The AACD changes its name to the American Counseling Association (ACA).
1997	The ASCA publishes <i>National Standards for School Counseling Programs</i> .
1997	DeWitt Wallace's <i>Reader's Digest</i> Education Trust Fund begins its transformation of school counseling initiative.
2000	Renewal of ESEA includes funding under the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Demonstration Program.
2002	Reform of ESEA becomes the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.
2003	The ASCA publishes <i>The ASCA National Model for School Counseling Programs</i> .
2005	The ASCA releases the second edition of <i>The ASCA National Model for School Counseling Programs</i> .
2009	The CACREP revises counselor preparation standards, including a section on school counseling.
2010	The ASCA revises <i>Ethical Standards for School Counselors</i> .
2012	The ASCA releases the third edition of <i>The ASCA National Model for School Counseling Programs</i> .

occurred. Notwithstanding the positive and negative perceptions by counselors and other school professionals of NCLB's reform of ESEA, the legislation helped propel the movement toward comprehensive programs of services in the school counseling profession in recent years (Dahir & Stone, 2012), a result that contributed to the evolving professional identity of counselors that work in schools.

A Professional Identity

The counseling literature in general, and the school counseling literature specifically, continue to stress the importance of clear professional identity. Many achievements and decisions by the counseling profession in recent years have helped create and solidify such an identity. Among these is the more consistent use of the terms *counseling* and *school counseling*, such as in the names of the professional associations: American Counseling Association (ACA) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). Today, the ACA has a membership of approximately 45,000, a decline in recent years. The association consists of 19 chartered divisions (Table 1.2) and has more than 50 chartered branches in the United States, Europe, and Latin America.

TABLE 1.2 ACA Divisions

American College Counseling Association (ACCA; chartered in 1991)
American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA; chartered in 1978)
American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA; chartered in 1958)
American School Counselor Association (ASCA; chartered in 1953)
Association for Adult Development and Aging (AADA; chartered in 1986)
Association for Assessment and Research in Counseling (AARC*; chartered in 1965)
Association for Creativity in Counseling (ACC; chartered in 2004)
Association for Counselors and Educators in Government (ACEG; chartered in 1984)
Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES; chartered in 1952)
Association for Humanistic Counseling (AHC; chartered in 1952)
Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Issues in Counseling (ALGBTIC; chartered in 1997)
Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD; chartered in 1972)
Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW; chartered in 1973)
Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Value Issues in Counseling (ASERVIC; chartered in 1974)
Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ; chartered in 1986)
International Association of Addictions and Offender Counselors (IAAOC; chartered in 1972)
International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors (IAMFC; chartered in 1989)
National Career Development Association (NCDA; chartered in 1952)
National Employment Counseling Association (NECA; chartered in 1962)

*AARC is formerly known as Association for Assessment in Counseling and Education (AACE)

Each of these associations represents a portion of the thousands of professional counselors practicing in the United States as well as in other countries. Although they practice in diverse professional settings, these counselors adhere to the same ethical standards, come from similar training programs, and have common professional goals. What differentiates them, as noted earlier, is the focus of their professional setting—the clients and counselees they serve.

Among the organizations representing professional counselors, the American School Counselor Association has one of the largest memberships—more than 23,000 members. Although impressive, this membership represents only a portion of the professional counselors who work in elementary, middle, and high schools across the United States. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Statistics (2011), nearly 247,000 school, educational, and vocational counselors were employed by schools in 2010. The fact that less than 10 percent of the practicing counselors in schools are members of the primary professional association is a matter of concern. Stronger professional collegiality on the part of school counselors across the country will help create a clearer identity in the future.

Professional Development and Accreditation

Another factor that has contributed to an identity for school counselors is improved preparation programs that place them on equal footing with counselors in other work settings. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) has been instrumental in creating standards of counselor preparation. In addition, the profession's national certification process, under the direction of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), has elevated professional identity, including a specialty certification for school counselors (NCSC).

Historically, the public and other professions have viewed school counselors differently than counselors in clinical settings such as mental-health and family counseling centers. In part, this is because the licensure and certification requirements for school counselors vary from state to state. Most states require a minimum of a master's degree to enter the school counseling profession, but this is not true of all state requirements. Admittedly, this lack of consistent criteria for professionals who call themselves school counselors has challenged efforts to establish consensus about their role and function.

Inconsistent perceptions by administrators and teachers have added to the confusion about the school counselor's role. In some cases, administrators view counselors as special classroom teachers, and require schedules and assignments that prevent the establishment of comprehensive counseling programs. For example, in some elementary schools, counselors are required to spend a majority of their time presenting classroom guidance as a means of giving teachers breaks or planning periods. Classroom guidance is important and appropriate for both counselors and teachers to integrate in the school's curriculum, but assigning counselors sole responsibility for this activity leaves little time for other equally important aspects of a comprehensive school counseling program. In contrast, other schools view their counselors as therapists or magicians with mystical powers, and therefore keep them apart from teachers and other school personnel. These counselors are shielded from everyday responsibilities and functions of school life, and typically not asked to account for their role in the greater educational program. Because what they do is so mysterious, such counselors are not accountable to measure the value of their services

in the school. This myth and others like it contribute to the challenge counselors have faced in creating beneficial programs with clear goals, realistic expectations, and measurable outcomes that enable them to become integral members of elementary, middle, and high school environments.

Neither view of school counselors as special teachers or magicians facilitates the development of effective services for students, parents, and teachers. What the profession and consumers need is an understanding that school counselors are highly prepared professionals who offer specific skills and services to help students with their educational development. This is the primary role of counselors in schools. Although their role and function may be different from counselors who practice in clinics, hospitals, and other settings, this difference is not because of a lack of preparation or level of expertise; rather, it is a reflection of the educational and developmental focus of their programs and services. This focus on a programmatic planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating of services, interventions, and activities of guidance and counseling in schools has fueled the development of a fresh identity for the school counseling profession (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Erford, 2011a).



PERSPECTIVE 1-2

As you have learned in this chapter, the school counseling profession has evolved over the years and now embraces a programmatic approach to delivering services. Before you began your entry into the profession, what views and opinions did you have about school counselors? How, if at all, have those views changed today?

Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

As the twentieth century drew to a close, several proponents of the school counseling profession began to emphasize a programmatic focus with more attention given to developmental approaches and group processes than to therapeutic, one-on-one counseling models as a response, in part, to the educational reforms of the 1980s (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). The thrust of this movement highlighted an important difference between professional counselors who chose to practice in schools and those who chose to work in mental-health or other clinical settings. That difference is found in the design and implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs and use of developmental approaches to address the academic, social/personal, and career needs of all students. Several school counseling texts of this period gave added impetus to this movement (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Myrick, 1993; Schmidt, 1993; VanZandt & Hayslip, 2000).

The twenty-first century continues the focus on comprehensive programs with increased interest in re-examining and transforming the role of school counselors (Dahir & Stone, 2012; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Education Trust, 1997, 1998, 2003; Erford, 2011a). Supported by the Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, the Education Trust identified six universities in 1996 to participate in the first redesign of school counselor preparation programs. Essentially, these reconfigured school counseling programs intend to prepare professional counselors to work in schools as leaders and student advocates that focus their energy on student academic success. After the identification of the initial six universities,

another 26 companion universities were selected to redesign their preparation programs according to the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) of the Education Trust (2003). Today, the Education Trust supports the National Center for Transforming School Counseling (Education Trust, 2009) to work with state departments of education, school districts, and professional organizations to help school counselors become agents of change in helping their schools close achievement gaps and improve the academic success of all students.

This transformation movement gained favor, in part, because of recognition that many students were not being served under traditional models of school counseling, which some authorities believe placed too much emphasis on one-to-one helping relationships while neglecting the power of group processes to meet the needs of a larger population. They advocate for a more proactive leadership role by counselors in schools to include teachers and other professionals in advising students and providing other services along with individual and group processes delivered by professional counselors.

Combined with the interest and initiative to transform school counselor preparation has been the development of the National Model for school counseling programs by the American School Counselor Association (2003, 2005, 2012). This model, presented in detail in Chapter 4, proposes that school counselors develop comprehensive programs of services around four themes: leadership, advocacy, collaboration and teaming, and systemic change. Through a programmatic implementation of these four themes, school counselors move beyond delivery of specific services to a leadership, collaborative, and change agent role to help schools address the academic, social, personal, and career needs of every student.

In this text, you are introduced to the scope and breadth of a comprehensive school counseling program and to the professional preparation and knowledge needed to become an effective school counselor. It is an overview of the elements and ingredients that give an identity to the school counseling profession and enhance the credibility of practicing school counselors. The following suggestions offer a framework for counselors to create a clear identity and purpose for working in schools, and are presented as a summary of the professional themes and issues addressed in this text. To develop a clear professional identity, school counselors

1. Understand the history of school counseling and appreciate the significant events that led to its development and expansion. Knowledge of one's professional roots and the events that have contributed to the profession's growth gives clarity to future goals. Without knowing where we have been, it is difficult to know where we are going.

2. Establish consistent preparation standards on a par with professional counselors who practice in other settings. If the nature and level of preparation are inconsistent between different types of counselors and among counselors in the same groups, misunderstanding and misinterpretations about these counselors' roles will persist, increasing public uncertainty and contributing to less-than-adequate programs of services.

3. Expect consistent certification standards. Counseling is a profession that begins study at the graduate level of training. Specific standards and guidelines developed by CACREP have the potential to generate nationwide standards for school counselor training and certification. Certification standards should be associated with roles and functions

stressed in the professional literature and research about effective counselor performance. Criteria that are unrelated to counselor performance should be discarded. For example, some states continue to require teaching experience for counselors to be certified as school counselors even though research fails to show any correlation between school counselor effectiveness and teaching experience (Baker & Gerler, 2008). In support of this claim, a study of school counseling interns found that candidates with teaching experience “appeared to have had no less difficulty in adjusting to their new roles than those without teaching experience” (Peterson, Goodman, Keller, & McCauley, 2004, p. 254). Certification standards that lack evidence of support from research detract from the uniqueness of the counselor’s role and his or her potential contribution to the school’s mission.

4. Follow national guidelines for comprehensive school counseling programs at the high school, middle school, and elementary school levels. School counseling continues to be an emerging field, and as such, its overall purpose needs to be assessed and adjusted regularly. The ASCA developed national standards for school counseling programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997) that establish “goals, expectations, opportunities, and experiences for all students” (p. 4). An ASCA manual for implementing comprehensive school counseling programs followed the publication of these standards (Dahir, Sheldon, & Valiga, 1998). More recently, ASCA (2010a) posted on its website “The role of the professional school counselor,” which outlines the preparation, certification, and role that counselors in schools have in implementing the ASCA National Model®.

The historical perspective in this chapter is intended to enhance your understanding and appreciation of contemporary school counseling practices and trends. School counseling, as with many aspects of life, might appear to be cyclical in its development. Some events and ideas that contributed to its early development are seen again in current professional literature. For example, Goodnough, Pérusse, and Erford (2011)—as well as others—encouraged a developmental approach in which counselors move their work out of their offices and onto playgrounds and into classrooms and hallways to have better access to more students. This theme is similar to an earlier view expressed by Wrenn (1973), who wrote, “I believe that the counselor must accept the responsibility for helping teachers and other staff members as well as directly helping students. . . . Counselors who appear indifferent to school improvement or incompetent to contribute to such improvement will be vulnerable” (p. 261). Today’s counseling literature emphasizes strong teacher involvement in counseling programs similar to the position taken in 1955 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) in its annual yearbook, *Guidance in the Curriculum*, which viewed guidance not as a separate or supplementary service in the school, but rather as an essential part of the curriculum, integrated every day by teachers and counselors. All these positions are consistent with the philosophy of ASCA’s National Model for School Counseling.

The 1970s were marked by action in many states—including California, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin—to develop guidelines for comprehensive school counseling programs. Today, the school counseling literature continues to emphasize the comprehensive nature of school counseling services (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Erford, 2011a; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). More important, research demonstrated a relationship between the implementation of comprehensive programs by school counselors and students’ perceptions of school safety, relationships with

their teachers and others, the relevance of education, and students attaining higher grades (Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2001). In the remaining chapters of this text, you will learn about the nature of comprehensive school counseling programs; the necessary facilities and resources in counseling centers at elementary, middle, and high school levels; the responsive services offered by school counselors; the background and preparation of counselors; the importance of leadership and collaboration with teachers and student services personnel; and professional issues related to school counseling practices.

The future of school counseling as a profession depends on the ability of counselors to become an integral part of the school setting while maintaining their unique role and contribution to student welfare and development. To accomplish this goal, successful counselors identify their role; select appropriate functions; choose appropriate models with which to plan programs of services for students, parents, and teachers; strengthen their professional development; and evaluate their effectiveness in schools. All these tasks and role developments are performed by professional counselors in schools that today reflect an increasingly diverse society. Student populations and school communities in the United States no longer reflect audiences that existed when the profession began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The challenge and necessity of creating comprehensive programs of school counseling services is dictated by the reality of increasingly diverse student populations and ever-changing school communities. Chapter 2 examines this notion of diversity, and explores what it means for developing comprehensive school counseling programs.

Additional Readings

Baker, S. B., & Gerler, E. R. (2008). *School counseling for the twenty-first century* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall, Pearson. Chapter 3: “A Comprehensive Model for Professional School Counseling: A Balanced Approach.” Introduces the notion of balancing a comprehensive program of services so that counselors address responsive and developmental goals for all students.

Wrenn, C. G. (1973). *The world of the contemporary counselor*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Written more than 30 years ago, this classic book has withstood the test of time remarkably well. Wrenn’s message to counselors then still holds true today.

Websites

As technology enhances the way that we communicate with students, parents, teachers, and others, so too does it enable us to find abundant resources of information at our fingertips. In addition to the suggested readings, lists of websites at the end of each chapter offer ways to access information over the Internet. By listing these websites, neither the author nor publisher makes an endorsement of any product, material, or information presented on these or other locations on the Internet; sites are listed only as examples of how counselors can access information. Every counselor who uses the Internet has professional and ethical responsibility to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of information obtained when offering it as a resource to clients.

American Counseling Association
www.counseling.org

American School Counselor Association
www.schoolcounselor.org

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)
www.cacrep.org

National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC)
www.nbcc.org

Occupational Outlook Handbook: Counselors
stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos067.htm

Exercises

School counseling is an action-oriented profession. For this reason, the end of each chapter includes a few activities and exercises that may help the information come alive and take on additional meaning. Some of the activities are suggested for small groups in your class; others are designed for additional exploration of professional issues and for you to share your findings with the class.

1. In this introductory chapter, you learned that the school counseling profession began as a reaction to social and political forces in the early 1900s. Over the next several decades, the profession grew and changed as a response to other significant events in the United States and around the world. What relationship, if any, do you see with this heritage and the role of counselors in the school? Discuss this in a small group, and ask someone to record the highlights of your discussion to share with the class.
2. This chapter presented major events that contributed to the development of school counseling across this country. On your own or with a small group, research the development of school counseling in your state. What were major events, legislative action, or other occurrences that influenced the profession? What role does teaching experience play in the employment of school counselors in your state? What is your belief about teaching experience and being a successful school counselor?
3. Professional identity is an important issue presented in this chapter. If you were hired by a school tomorrow as its new counselor, what five actions would you take to begin establishing a professional identity? Discuss and compare your actions with a group of your classmates.
4. What actions do you think individual counselors and their professional associations should take to help clarify the identity and role of school counselors? What strategies might be most successful in this effort?

CHAPTER 2

Diverse Students, Communities, and Schools

A shifting culture has been constant in U.S. society, resulting from such dramatic changes as the abolition of slavery during the Civil War and the waves of immigrants from around the globe who were attracted to this country in hopes of finding a better life. Despite the historic abolition of slavery, acceptance of African Americans into the fabric of daily life in this country has been a slow and often brutal process. Similarly, the abundant attempts by culturally diverse groups to join the bountiful American life have too frequently confronted discriminatory laws, harsh immigration procedures, blatant racism, dismissive school policies, and other acts of oppression or indifference that causes conflict rather than coalition, and dissension rather than collaboration. These realities challenge communities and institutions across society, especially within the counseling profession.

Counseling, and school counseling in particular, has not readily adjusted to this influx of diverse cultures. Nor have U.S. public schools been particularly efficient in creating curricular choices to meet the needs of diverse learners, including students with exceptionalities. Some authorities have been critical of the lack of motivation by schools and school systems to make appropriate adjustments to serve a broader population of students and of the school counseling profession to do likewise (Pederson & Carey, 2003). Instead, critics maintain that schools and counselors have taken a reactive posture, relying on state and federal bodies to pass laws and set guidelines to address the learning needs of the steadily changing population they serve.

Today, the school counseling profession is attempting to formulate a more proactive stance and is moving from the reactive posture of past decades to a more programmatic stance for the future. By implementing comprehensive programs of services, future counselors in schools will better address the learning needs of a wider audience of students, embrace the diversity of families and communities, and accept the variety of communities within rural, suburban, and urban settings in which schools exist and function (Dahir & Stone, 2012; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011; Schmidt, 2010). It is an awesome challenge, but counselors can no longer focus on a limited number of students, whether it is those of greatest emotional, social, or educational need or students of academic promise. Today's professional counselors who choose to work in schools design programs that are inclusive of all students and create collaborative relationships with teachers, parents, and other professionals to ensure this reality.

This chapter provides an overview of diversity issues that challenge contemporary counselors in their effort to design, implement, and evaluate comprehensive programs of services for schools. It briefly summarizes current issues of diversity that affect schools and

counseling practices, necessary competencies required by professional counselors in schools, and practical ideas to help counselors address issues of diversity through comprehensive programs. Because of its brevity, readers are encouraged to move beyond this chapter and examine references cited to expand understanding and learning about this topic.

Increased Diversity

The changing face of U.S. society and culture and its effect on the practice of professional counseling has been widely reported (Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011; Pedersen & Carey, 2003; Schmidt, 2006). The 2010 U.S. Census indicated the continuing progression and alteration of the country's population landscape. For example, more than half of the population growth between 2000 and 2010 is the result of an increasing Hispanic and Latino population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011a). At the same time, the Asian population proportionately outpaced the growth of the African American community, increasing by more than 43 percent, becoming the fastest growing major race group. During this period, White membership continued to slow. Verifying the complexity of race as a social construction, the 2010 U.S. Census results showed that when people self-selected more than one racial heritage, varying multiple race identification occurred (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011a). Given these changes, it is clear that school counselors, today and in the future, will need to become increasingly diligent in designing programs of services to reach a more diverse population of learners who will bring varied cultural and ethnic perspectives, different languages, valued family traditions, and an array of other traits and characteristics through the schoolhouse door.

In this chapter, we consider a few of these factors, including race, ethnicity, immigration, sex, gender, spiritual and religious beliefs, family influence, and socioeconomic status. We also briefly examine regional considerations such as rural and urban schools and their influence on programmatic decisions. We begin by presenting a brief discussion of culture.



PERSPECTIVE 2-1

Who are you? What history, culture, and values do you bring to the school counseling profession? How will this background and belief system influence your daily practice as a counselor in schools?

Culture

Several authorities defined culture in terms of its meaning for professional counseling (Baruth & Manning, 2012; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011; Locke, 2003; Schmidt, 2006). In the counseling and other helping professions, the term *culture* receives a broad definition and interpretation. Locke (2003) noted more than 150 definitions of culture in the literature. For the purpose of this section, culture consists of common behaviors, traditions, and beliefs demonstrated, followed, and valued by societal groups. One example

from the counseling literature, Baruth and Manning (2012), defined *culture* as varied “institutions, communication, values, religions, genders, sexual orientations, disabilities, thinking, artistic expressions, and social and interpersonal relationships” (p. 6).

Contemporary counseling literature broadens the definition of culture as a more inclusive notion. Therefore, when considering the concept of culture in the context of counseling in schools, its influence on student development and decisions made by students and their families regarding educational development, academic success, career decisions, self-development, and conformity to the culture and mores of the school community are all important. In addition to understanding the concept of culture, competent school counselors also comprehend processes related to culture that help them become more self-aware of their own posture and development as well as appreciating students’ development, self-views, and worldviews. Among these concepts are enculturation, acculturation, assimilation, encapsulation, collectivism, individualism, and subculture. Table 2.1 lists these concepts with a brief definition of each.

Enculturation

Enculturation is a process of people becoming members of a particular culture (Aponte & Johnson, 2000; Schmidt, 2006; Smith, 2004). Through this process of socialization, people establish relationships that enable them to learn about a culture and immerse themselves in its language, traditions, and customs. As such, enculturation begins and continues through varied ways and relationships with parents, family, peer groups, and institutions of society, such as schools, that embrace a particular culture.

School counselors working with diverse populations want to be aware of their own enculturation as well as that of the students and families they serve. Some students from diverse populations may have stronger ties to their cultural beliefs than others have—that

TABLE 2.1 Cultural Concepts and Processes

Enculturation: the process of socialization into a particular culture

Acculturation: change in behaviors and beliefs of an individual or group as a result of contact with a dominant culture

Assimilation: a process by which one group of people is absorbed by and takes on characteristics and traits of a larger group

Encapsulation: being unaware, disinterested, and intolerant of divergent views, and behaving as if only one culture or perspective exists

Collectivism: a philosophy that the larger group holds more value and takes priority over individuals within the group, such as the family, tribe, or other organized group

Individualism: a philosophy that society exists for the benefit of the individual, with value placed on personal growth, self-fulfillment, and individual desires

Subcultures: identifiable separate social groups within a larger culture

Worldview: a construct formed by each person as a product of ongoing life experiences; a particularly private process in which the *self* incorporates an array of encounters within family, society, schools, ethnic groups, religions, peers, and a multitude of other life experiences

is, the strength of their enculturation has greater influence on their adjustment to a school with traditions, belief systems, and mores that these students find unfamiliar. At the same time, the enculturation of the counselor may impede her or his ability to establish genuine and empathic helping relationships with certain students and families. By addressing such barriers and understanding their impact, counselors are able to dismantle them and become more successful in helping a broader client base.

Acculturation

The literature describes *acculturation* as the “adaptation of the beliefs, traits, and behaviors of a dominant culture by persons of a minority group who have significant contact with the dominant group” (Schmidt, 2006, p. 6). When students of divergent cultures enroll in new schools, they face the possibility and challenge of acculturating into an unfamiliar environment. They make decisions about adopting new behaviors, customs, and ways of being that often are different from, and sometimes at odds with, their culture of origin. This process of acculturation includes attempts by students and families to retain aspects of their native culture while fitting into a new school culture.

Acculturation occurs in various ways. For example, immigrants to a new country experience this process, as do people who move from one region to another in a society composed of multiple cultures. Counselors in U.S. schools are familiar with these experiences because this country continues to accept many immigrants and, at the same time, it is common for families to relocate from one region or state of the country to another. When immigrant or relocated students receive help in adjusting to these moves and are successful with the acculturation process, the overall school experience improves.

Acculturation may include stressors that come from peer pressure, lack of family support or resources, perceived or real threats of discrimination and rejection, language difficulties, and other aspects of adapting to new ways of living or to belief systems that threaten cultural and family traditions (Baruth & Manning, 2012; Schmidt, 2006). Such stress can be debilitating to students, so it is imperative that counselors be sensitive, aware, and skilled in helping diverse students adjust to a new learning environment.

Assimilation

Another process related to cultural change is *assimilation*, which, from a cultural perspective, occurs when individuals or groups of people become accepted by or absorbed into a new culture. In contrast to acculturation, where the person or group is doing the decision making, assimilation is the purview of the dominant culture that chooses to accept, absorb, and integrate diverse people. Assimilation is a powerful process where the dominant culture often demands, either outright and or covertly, that newcomers embrace its standards, traditions, ways, and beliefs. Even though the United States has had a long history of immigration, we see this phenomenon often in our country; for example, the hesitancy to accept other languages has been a perpetual debate.

For school counselors, an understanding of assimilation processes within the fabric of American culture can encourage them to take an advocacy role for all students. Balance is an important concept for counselors to use when helping new students adjust and acculturate, while monitoring how the school uses assimilation processes.

Encapsulation

When people remain unaware, disinterested, and intolerant of divergent views and behave as if only one culture exists, they *encapsulate* themselves from other perspectives. Successful school counselors avoid becoming encapsulated, and genuinely accept and empathically understand the views of diverse students and families. Cultural encapsulation prevents counselors from seeing all the possibilities that exist in helping students become excellent learners, socially successful peers, mentally and emotionally healthy persons, and contributing members of the larger society. Such a posture is contrary to the mission of counseling in schools.

Collectivism

Many cultures embrace and cultivate a *collectivistic* philosophy, which maintains a belief that the larger group takes priority over individuals within the group. As such, it is the family, tribe, or other organized group that holds greater value than any particular individual (Robinson-Wood, 2009). In addition, every individual contributes to and is indebted to the group with which he or she identifies. This collectivistic belief is foundational, because each individual member of the larger group benefits, survives, and thrives because of the group's influence and resources used in contributing to the member's development (Schmidt, 2006).

School counselors who are successful in working with diverse students have a keen understanding of the influence that a collectivistic philosophy has on human development. For example, students of Asian heritage who embrace a collectivistic view may struggle with the individualism sometimes promoted in American culture, folklore, and educational policies. Counselors understand that Western views embraced by professional counseling processes, such as self-confidence, self-reliance, and independence, sometimes conflict with more socially centered concepts such as social interest, reliance on group process, adherence to community goals, deference to group responsibility, and dependence on group authority. In schools, counselors embrace these notions of collectivism in balance with concepts related to individualism.

Individualism

Some cultures adhere to and advocate for *individual* development, sometimes to the extent that they may appear to ignore the importance of the larger group or organization. These cultures place enormous value on personal growth, self-fulfillment, and individual needs and desires. During its first 200 years, the United States of America became a culture that placed tremendous value on the individual's ability to persevere and become self-reliant. This belief system was to a large degree the foundation on which the United States expanded its territory, built an industrial powerhouse, accumulated its financial wealth, and took its place as a world leader. Today, with the United States continuing to accept diverse peoples from all over the world into its community, it seems imperative that the individualistic philosophy become balanced with collectivistic views. That challenge faces every counselor who chooses to practice in school settings.

Services, interventions, and activities of a comprehensive school counseling program need to maintain balance between collectivism and individualism. This begins with

the counseling theories that school counselors rely on in using both individual and group counseling with students (Arredondo, Tovar-Blank, & Parham, 2008; Baruth & Manning, 2012). Strict adherence to theories that overemphasize individual development and neglect the power of group influence may limit a counselor's ability to help diverse students. In contrast, counselors who use extensive group work, value the contribution of the family, respect collectivistic beliefs, and view the individual student as part of a greater whole are likely to be successful. Such school counselors maintain a healthy understanding and appreciation for individual development while respecting the important role and influence of the family, community, tribe, or other group to which the student-client belongs. In some instances, the group or groups most influential in a student's life are subgroups or subcultures of the larger society.

Subcultures

Subgroups or *subcultures* exist in every larger society or culture. People build personal identities by joining particular subgroups, becoming members of subsystems, and identifying with subcultures within their larger cultural identity because of particular identifications that may relate to racial, ethnic, educational, social, economic, artistic, athletic, or other ascription.

Schools, as communities of students, also include subgroups and subsystems. Sometimes these groups are established by school policies and procedures, and other times they are established and self-selected by students. For example, schools enroll students in classes or place them in particular courses or classrooms. At times, these assigned classes and courses cause students to group according to achievement or academic ability. Counselors often play a significant role in this identification and placement process, and the consequences of such placement can affect student relationships and associations throughout their educational careers.

Students can also join subgroups in schools through participation in organizations and programs such as athletics, cheerleading, band, thespian society, debate club, yearbook, and newspaper staff, among others. Such clubs, teams, and organizations are formal opportunities to join subgroups, which are supplemented by the everyday peer groups they join (Schmidt, 2006). Sometimes, peer groups they join outside school influence, positively or negatively, their associations inside school. For example, religious association may encourage students to join formal or informal spiritual groups in school. Similarly, a student's affiliation with a gang outside of school may have an impact on his or her relationships inside the school. What this means for school counselors is that they not only understand the effect of a student's primary culture and its interaction with society's dominant culture on student development, but also the countless subgroups, both in school and out in the larger community, that make a difference in students' lives (Pedersen & Carey, 2003; Schmidt, 2006). Counselors also appreciate how all these influences contribute to students' development of a worldview.

Worldview

Worldview is a construct established by each person as a product of ongoing life experiences. This particularly private process incorporates an array of encounters within family,

society, schools, ethnic groups, religious groups, peer groups, and a multitude of other life experiences. A person's construction of a worldview is an extension of self-concept development (Schmidt, 2006), and therefore is a unique product influenced by life experiences and by a person's distinctive personality and psychological composition.

For students, their unique construction of both self-concepts and related worldviews provides an identity with which they interact and relate to fellow students, teachers, and others. This is an important notion for counselors as they attempt to establish helping relationships with diverse students. A student's worldview not only interacts with a primary cultural worldview (e.g., the family), but also with the worldview of the counselor. Similarly, the counselor faces the same challenge in attempting to establish a successful helping relationship with the student, a challenge compounded by the multitude of diverse factors that particular students might bring to counseling relationships, including—but not limited to—issues of race, ethnicity, sex, gender, religion, and exceptionality.

Race and Ethnicity

In literature and oral communication, people often use the words *race* and *ethnicity* to mean the same thing. This sometimes contributes to confusion about multicultural definitions and issues (Schmidt, 2006). The counseling profession, through its multicultural research, has attempted to explain the differences between the two terms (Baruth & Manning, 2012; Comstock, 2005; Robinson-Wood, 2009; Schmidt, 2006).

Race

The etymology of the word *race* suggests it may have come from French or Italian words, *razza*, meaning breed or lineage, and from early English translations during the 1500s indicating peoples of common descent, a group of people with similar occupations, and generational relationships. The modern meaning of *race* focuses on attributions related to physical traits such as skin tone, hair texture, and facial features. However, biologists, geneticists, and anthropologists have debated this meaning since the sixteenth century. Despite this debate, the U.S. Census Bureau has used the term *race* as a biological category since its inception in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, scientists have failed to generate research that reliably identifies genetic or other biological distinctions that enable us to classify races consistently. In fact, findings from “research of biological traits has found greater within-group variation among particular group members than between supposed different groups when examining the same traits (e.g., skin tone, blood type)” (Schmidt, 2006, p. 60).

The lack of scientific evidence to support the categorization of people according to biological differences has not deterred the United States or other countries from using race in a classification system. As agents of the U.S. system, public schools join this process of classification, which sometimes results in negative consequences for diverse students, depending on perceptions and myths held by teachers, administrators, counselors, and other personnel. Because race is a social construction, we may assume that perceptions people have about physical appearances, and the conclusions they draw from these perceptions, are also influenced and sometimes contaminated by social or personal speculation and unfounded beliefs. Competent school counselors are aware of these influences and

examine their own unproven beliefs about racial categorization as part of their ongoing professional development.

Jackson and Vontress (2003) encouraged counselors to pay greater attention to a client's culture than to supposed racial groups. They argued, "A client's race or heritage may have little or nothing to do with culture or the presenting problem. Counselors who respond stereotypically to their clients run the risk of being anti-therapeutic" (p. 10). This may be an important distinction for school counselors to make as well. In designing programs and selecting interventions to help diverse students, it is probably more important to understand students' perceptions of their cultural heritage and its influence on their development than it is to make assumptions about the color of their skin, their hair texture, or some other physical characteristic. In sum, what students believe about their cultural and ethnic heritage is more important than what society constructs about supposed identified races.

Ethnicity

The ancient Greeks used the word *ethnos* to identify non-Greeks and other groups that shared physical and cultural traits. From that Greek word, we have the English term *ethnicity*. Over time, European cultures used derivations of the Greek word to denote groups of people with similar racial and physical traits.

Today, social scientists use *ethnicity* and related identifiers to categorize cultures and people of various heritages, separate from their supposed racial characteristics. The social construction of race does not necessarily apply to ethnic identity. Therefore, a student's racial identity may be separate and apart from her or his ethnic identity, which develops over time through many individual, family, and social experiences. For school counselors working with diverse clients, this distinction is important. *Race* is constructed and perpetuated by the social group and its institutions, such as schools. In contrast, *ethnicity* is learned and embraced (or rejected) by students through interactions with family members and social groups. As such, *ethnic identity* is the process of associating and connecting with a particular cultural group that exhibits distinctive beliefs, behaviors, languages, and traditions. However, not all members of a particular ethnic group embrace the same beliefs, adhere to traditions, or behave in identical ways. As noted earlier, subgroups within larger ethnic groups form and sometimes deviate from beliefs and traditions held by the greater culture. Knowing this helps counselors resist the temptation of assuming all members of a particular ethnic culture hold beliefs and behave exactly the same way.

The process of ethnic identity is complex and inconsistent among people, even those from apparently similar ethnic groups. For example, some students may be passionate about their heritage and ethnicity, practicing traditions and embracing social beliefs, whereas other students from the same ethnic groups may appear disinterested or even opposed to the beliefs and traditions to which their families adhere. How counselors in schools address these differences is important to individual students as well as their families and the larger ethnic groups to which they belong.

In today's schools, counselors, teachers, administrators, and others recognize the impact of changing social conditions and personal experiences on ethnic identity. Students enter schools from all over the country and the world, as well as from diverse families. Immigrant, relocated, and adopted children are among those who make up school populations in the twenty-first century. These students acculturate to new environments, customs, and

beliefs, and their experiences often cause stress for individual students at school or at home in relating to peers and family members. Understanding the complexity of this process and empathizing with both students and their families is key to forming beneficial helping relationships in schools.

Immigration has a long history of controversy in the United States. Although the country prides itself on being open to people from across the globe, the passage of laws limiting immigration by the government, beginning with the Naturalization Law of 1790 through the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act, has attempted to distinguish rights among foreign-born groups, restrict immigration policies, and tighten the borders. Although the United States has moved toward more positive and pro-immigration legislation, today we witness a backlash of sentiment exemplified by attitudes toward Mexican immigrants and fears perpetuated by terrorist activity worldwide. These are important trends. They are particularly significant in areas of the country where illegal immigration places a burden on social, health, and educational institutions.

All expectations are for the U.S. population to continue to grow and become increasingly diverse in the coming years. Immigration will contribute to this diversity as political unrest, social change, food shortages, economic instability, and terrorism around the world increase the likelihood of more people trying to immigrate. The world's changing climate and natural disasters will also encourage people to search for new homelands, and the United States will receive many of these refugees.

School counselors in the twenty-first century will serve diverse students and families. Some of these clients will migrate from other parts of the United States, whereas others will arrive from distant shores. Among this diverse population will be students who struggle with adjustment to new cultural beliefs and behaviors, harbor fears of violence and oppression, suffer the effects of poverty and neglect, or in some other ways require the knowledge and skills of empathetic counselors. This diversity increases through the additional aspects of gender, religious beliefs, disabilities, and other characteristics considered in the following sections.

Sex, Gender, Activity, and Orientation

One aspect of cultural diversity that has expanded the focus of school counselors in recent decades involves issues of sexual development and identity, gender, sexual activity, and sexual orientation (Carroll, 2010; Dahir & Stone, 2012). Diversity of sexual development is an important factor at all levels of schooling because of the range of children and adolescents who attend particular schools; differences in the onset of puberty across ages and sexes; and student, family, and community attitudes toward sexual activity among youth today. Added to the certainty of sexual development and the possibility of sexual activity are realities surrounding issues of gender differences, sexism, and sexual orientation. All of these challenge professional counselors working in school settings to design comprehensive programs of services and address the diverse needs of students.

Sex

Although some private schools restrict their enrollment to boys or girls, public schools typically enroll both sexes. Biologically, the distinguishing trait between the sexes is a single pair

of chromosomes, the twenty-third pair called the *sex chromosomes* (XY, normal male; XX, normal female) (Broderick & Blewitt, 2010). The existence or omission of the Y chromosome determines the sex of a person. When this development does not follow normal patterns and fewer or additional chromosomes result, genetic aberrations occur that lead to various disorders, including Turner Syndrome and Klinefelter Syndrome (Schmidt, 2006).

Although much more remains to be learned, genetic and other scientific research has concluded that the chromosomal differences between males and females contribute to physical and behavioral variances. Nevertheless, when such findings are published, they influence popular opinion and public perceptions and have an impact on how society, especially our schools, functions regarding the learning and social activities of girls and boys.

School counselors want to keep abreast of scientific discoveries in the area of sexual development. Equally important, they want to use published findings wisely, remembering that such research usually involves group data and, as with other types of group studies, there are variances found across participants in any given study. Competent counselors are cautious not to apply research findings with absolute precision to students because of statistical variances involved. Such counselors comprehend, for example, that if spatial task abilities are different between males and females, it does not mean that all boys and girls in their school will perform in accordance with the research. There is always room for individual differences. Generalizing research results to particular girls or boys may be a critical error that harms students.

Biological differences are part of the countless factors that influence student development, behavior, and learning. These factors interact with a host of other variables, including family structure and relationships, culture, and students' individual perceptions of life events. Interaction among these factors leads to a determination (or selection) of gender roles.

Gender Identity

Although the sex of a person may be determined biologically, *gender identity* evolves as a result of the ways that family members, both immediate and extended, and society at large value males and females and how the person perceives this process of valuation over time, particularly in early development. Consequently, a baby enters a world already predisposed to certain characteristics by being either male or female—boy or girl—with cultural beliefs and traditions perpetuating this identity. Such beliefs and traditions vary according to the culture and ethnicity into which a person is born. For this reason, in a pluralistic society such as the United States, we see a range of traditions and beliefs about male and female roles across groups, including African American, Latino, Native American, Asian, and among families of various Euro-American heritage.

Schools often reflect the beliefs and traditions of the dominant culture. Yet, as noted earlier, U.S. schools enroll students from many cultural groups and different nationalities. This reality is another challenge for professional counselors who work in schools. Gender roles valued by particular cultures and groups influence choices students make regarding course selections, career pathways, social relationships, postsecondary education, and other decisions related to their educational, social, and personal development.

Successful counselors are knowledgeable about cultural differences that influence students enrolled in their schools and how these differences relate to gender identity. At

the same time, such counselors are aware of stereotypical views they hold about gender that might impede their work with diverse students. Just as important is the fact that successful counselors understand that stereotypical views of gender roles are often culture-specific, and as members of particular cultural groups, students sometimes struggle with the views of their group as they acculturate and adapt to the dominant culture of society.

How individual students perceive various attitudes about gender roles, include these perceptions in the construction of their self-concept, and choose behaviors that reflect their beliefs about feminine and masculine roles is a unique process of creating a gender identity. It is not a static process. As students move through various stages of development and as changes in attitudes about sex and gender occur in society, their views about sex and gender may also change.

Gender roles and attributes relate to *masculine* and *feminine* characteristics assigned by society. As noted earlier, these characteristics are not static conditions; nor are they absolute and definable traits. In a way, feminine and masculine characteristics exist on a continuum of behavioral traits. Therefore, male students might express feminine characteristics such as sensitivity and sincerity in some situations while demonstrating male characteristics such as competitiveness in others. Likewise, female students may exhibit a range of gender characteristics across identified masculine and feminine behaviors, depending on the situation.

In the course of developing from childhood to young adulthood, a student's perception about sex, gender roles, and masculine and feminine characteristics interacts with cultural beliefs, acculturation into the school and larger society, and his or her biological structure influencing decisions about sexuality, sexual activity, and acceptance of sexual orientation. This significant process has tremendous implications for student development personally, socially, and educationally.

Sexual Orientation

The process of sexual orientation remains an unexplained part of the course of human development. Volumes of reports and numerous research studies on this topic exist, but no single explanation has emerged. No consistent findings indicate whether sexual orientation is a product of biology, environment, or a combination of both. What these studies seem to indicate is that sexual orientation is the result of a complex process through which an individual develops biologically, interacts with environmental factors, and draws conclusions about his or her sexual identity. Therefore, the process of being a heterosexual or homosexual person is not simply a matter of choice, but rather influenced by a multitude of factors including biology, cognition, and environment (Broderick & Blewitt, 2010).

Successful school counselors working with students who express confusion about their sexual development, gender identity, or sexual orientation understand current research findings, reject stereotypical thinking, and are knowledgeable of various models of sexual identity development (Schmidt, 2006). Such counselors approach gender issues and sexual identity concerns with empathy, awareness, and knowledge, and the first step in establishing the helping relationship is being aware of biases, if any, the counselor has toward gender roles and sexual identity issues. A second step is to be informed of research findings about sexual development and gender differences. School counselors, as with other professional counselors, must be able to locate recent findings, interpret them to students

in an understandable manner, and offer students resources to answer additional questions about their development.

When counselors stay informed, it enables them to educate parents, teachers, administrators, and others who provide daily guidance to students. Knowledge of research findings about sexual development and sexual activity can be incorporated into comprehensive programs to provide services that inform students and others, help remove or diminish stereotypical thinking, eliminate discriminatory school policies, and otherwise make the school environment a safe place for all students regardless of their sex, gender, or orientation.

Safety for all students is paramount. Shifting cultural views about sexual orientation has opened gay and lesbian students up to ridicule and bullying. In recent years, the school counseling literature has increased attention on bullying and how counselors can intervene (Carney, 2008; Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007; McAdams & Schmidt, 2007). Jackson (2011) urged counselors to go beyond basic anti-bullying school policies and encouraged them to become proactive in using three tools to create and implement in their schools:

1. Help write clear nondiscrimination policies that mention gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning students (LGBTQ).
2. Establish ally clubs for gay and straight students to join together, communicate, and diminish harassment of LGBTQ students.
3. Create safe spaces in the school where students can find supportive adults. Start with your counseling center.

Helping students with issues of sexual orientation is a particularly sensitive area, and school counselors want to be aware of local board of education policies or state mandates that guide them in these matters (see Chapter 12). How counselors use information about sexual development, activity, and orientation in the overall school counseling program, including individual and group counseling with students, depends in part on the policies and laws that exist about these matters. At the same time, counselors want to be aware of their beliefs and attitudes regarding heterosexual and homosexual behavior while also being in tune and comfortable with their own sexuality. In addition to the tools mentioned here, Table 2.2 lists counselor behaviors to be effective when working with a broad range of students.

TABLE 2.2 Counselor Behaviors for Working with LGBTQ and other Students

Establish accepting relationships so students feel safe and willing to share intimate thoughts and feelings.

Accept students' perceptions and understand their confusion about sexual development and identity.

Present students with alternative perceptions as a means of helping them understand other possibilities and explanations.

Encourage students to explore their fears and perceptions about heterosexuality and homosexuality.

Explore with students the option of involving their parents in these discussions because family support is essential in the process of forming sexual identity.

Encourage all students to create healthy relationships with people of different sexes and sexual orientations.

Families and Communities

Since the first celebration of U.S. independence, families have been changing. These changes have occurred in part by the country's movement from an agrarian society to an industrial and now technological world leader. Modern technology, altered values, evolving gender roles, and a host of other conditions have contributed to these changes. In addition, continuous waves of immigrants have enriched and diversified family structure in the United States. These social and cultural forces continue to influence family structure and function and similarly the meaning and importance of community in student development.

Today's students come to school from a variety of family structures and community influences. There does not appear to be a normal family in the traditional sense. What some counselors and educators might perceive as normal family structure and function may be in contrast to the views and experiences that students bring to school, and these opposing perceptions sometimes cause conflict. Successful school counselors know their cultural values regarding family structure, beliefs, and traditions and balance these views with dissimilar perceptions about family structure and function that some students may share.

As students develop and make choices about educational goals and career pathways, family influence is an important element in the decision-making process. The degree to which particular students accept or reject their family's values affects the ease or difficulty with which they move through developmental processes. All students deal with these realities, but students from diverse cultures who are adapting to and acculturating into U.S. society may find this process more challenging.

School counselors who know their families and communities, accept the diversity that enriches the school environment, and appreciate the challenges faced by all students are in better position to create comprehensive programs of appropriate services to meet student and family needs. At the same time, such openness and understanding helps counselors work with diverse students to navigate through their school life while reducing stress and tension as a result of family and community beliefs. As noted throughout this chapter, when working with diverse students, it is especially important for counselors in schools to control their personal beliefs and resist the temptation to interject their perspective about family bonds. When counseling diverse students, therefore, the objective is to help them make appropriate decisions while remaining respectful toward family members and their cultural traditions. In many instances, the involvement of family members in the counseling process enables the student to adhere to family and community values while assisting them with educational, career, and social/personal decisions. Religion is a major cultural factor that influences many aspects of self-development, as does the broader concept of spirituality. We consider these two cultural aspects and their relationship to school counseling programs next.

Spirituality and Religion

Spirituality and religious beliefs are important aspects of a student's development and have implications for comprehensive school counseling programs (Sink, 2004, 2010). They provide pathways in life for individual students to attach meaning and purpose to their existence. Spiritual and religious beliefs become part of students' self-development

through involvement with family, participation in social and cultural activities, and individual experiences. School counselors want to be knowledgeable and sensitive to spiritual and religious foundations that guide students' behaviors. This is particularly important when working with diverse students who may have different views and beliefs than the counselor. By understanding the spiritual values and religious underpinnings that make up a student's belief system, counselors demonstrate recognition and acceptance of the whole person and all aspects that constitute a self-concept, the inner guidance system for making individual choices in life (Schmidt, 2006).

Some students have spiritual values without adherence to a formal religion. They and their families may not belong to, or attend regularly, a place of worship. Nevertheless, their beliefs are as important to their development as the beliefs of students who have a strong affiliation with a particular religion. When working with diverse student populations, counselors want to understand various spiritual and religious beliefs and traditions that contribute to students' self-views, worldviews, and perspectives about a meaningful life.

Sometimes, strong religious or spiritual views might appear to interfere with counseling services provided to students in schools. In such instances, successful counselors proceed with caution, being careful not to let their professional orientation, theoretical approach, or personal views bias the helping relationship. Most traditional models of counseling have self-empowerment, self-actualization, and self-improvement as goals. As admirable as these objectives may sound, they sometimes conflict with religious beliefs that ask people to surrender their needs and desires to a higher power (Helms & Cook, 1999). Many students derive emotional and psychological strength from their spiritual beliefs or a religious doctrine. Therefore, when working with diverse students, schools might find that such beliefs are therapeutic agents rather than negative energy (Schmidt, 2006). At times, the spiritual beliefs of students may be an essential component in the counseling relationship.

Sink (2004) argued that spiritual beliefs are often the foundation for problem-solving and decision-making processes, so "school counselors need to establish coherent and helpful ways of engaging these spiritual resources" (p. 315). Furthermore, he proposed that these efforts aim at "including the spiritual dimension within existing comprehensive school counseling programs" (p. 315).

Another reality of families and communities is that not all students have the same ability to function at the same academic or developmental level in the school program. Because of its attempt to educate all people for the larger public good, the United States opens its school doors to a more expanded student population than most other countries. Consequently, many students enter school without the same level of physical, intellectual, or emotional capability as their peers. They are exceptional students and they make up another element of diversity in our schools.

Exceptionality

As mentioned in Chapter 1, in 1975, the U.S. government passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, commonly referred to as Public Law 94-142, which changed the student population and culture of public schools across the country, and subsequent revisions of the law have continued this impact. Before then, few handicapped children

attended school; now, it is commonplace to observe students with a wide range of physical and learning disabilities in special classrooms that serve their particular needs, or mainstreamed in classrooms with other students and taught, in part, by resource teachers for their particular exceptionality.

Today, the 1975 law continues as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), reauthorized in 1997 (Lockhart, 2003) and later in 2004 (Rock & Leff, 2011). Two other important pieces of legislation—Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the more recently passed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990—are also important for schools in general, but the most significant for school counseling practice are the IDEA and Section 504. Although the role of school counselors in the 1970s was unclear when the first bill became law, it has become more certain that exceptional students deserve the same level of attention and service that other students receive. Consequently, the importance of planning, leading, and implementing comprehensive school counseling programs has become greater as a result of the expanded audience of students served by professional counselors.

The IDEA assigns schools the responsibility for providing services to address particular exceptionailities and disabilities for all identified students, meaning that the government provides funds to schools to assist with the evaluation of students and the delivery of educational services to address students' educational, intellectual, physical, or behavioral challenges. In contrast, Section 504, which receives no federal funding, focuses on school policies, processes, or programs that have the potential to discriminate against particular students because of learning difficulties they may be experiencing. The assumption of Section 504 is that the school has the authority and power to make adjustments in such policies, programs, or processes and alleviate or remove barriers to learning for certain students. As Rock and Leff (2011) explained, Section 504 "attempts to level the playing field for those students whose disabilities may not directly affect their academic abilities but who may require accommodation to access the educational program" (p. 317). Unlike IDEA, Section 504 does not necessarily provide specific services for students; rather, it gives responsibility to schools to remove barriers by adjusting programs and services to better meet the educational needs of students who happen to have a diagnosed disability.

Eligibility rules for students under the IDEA and Section 504 also differ. The IDEA guidelines require that identified students between the ages of 3 and 20 must have a disability with a significant impact on learning. Schools apply the rules of evaluating, identifying, and serving students under IDEA strictly, and design Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) that are agreeable to the parents or guardians of the children to be served. An IEP includes the student's current level of academic functioning, learning objectives and annual goals for student progress, and specific services that the school will provide in meeting these goals and objectives (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Rock & Leff, 2011).

Eligibility for Section 504 requires that students have a history of a physical or mental disability that significantly limits performance in a major life function, such as walking, hearing, speaking, breathing, or learning. Equally important, it requires that the disability, such as an impairment in vision, hearing, or speech; behavioral disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); or temporary disabilities such as an illness or broken limb (Dahir & Stone, 2012); has been assessed and confirmed by a qualified professional examiner. A major difference between Section 504 and the IDEA in applying the guidelines for disabled students is that eligibility under Section 504 means that the identified student is

capable of being successful in a learning activity if obstacles to accessing and participating fully in the activity are removed.

Because the laws do not spell out specific roles for counselors in schools with exceptional students or special education programs, successful counselors stay informed of changes in the law and procedures, as well as state and local guidelines that might affect the school counselor's involvement and responsibilities. In brief, counselors want to do the following:

- Attain a working knowledge of the exceptional children's program and Section 504; applicable federal, state, and local regulations; and the expected role of the counselor in applying these regulations
- Learn the characteristics of various disabling conditions and how they might fit eligibility requirements under the IDEA or Section 504
- Collaborate with classroom and special education teachers to choose and plan appropriate counseling strategies
- Learn about community agencies that serve students with disabilities and their families, and coordinate counseling and related services with professionals in the community
- Integrate guidance activities into the comprehensive school counseling program so that classroom teachers can use the curriculum to educate all students about exceptionalities and disabilities
- Provide information to students, parents, and teachers about the ways cultural differences might interact with certain exceptionalities, such as retardation and giftedness
- Include counseling and related services to assist students with disabilities in navigating the countless transitions that occur within the school, between schools, and from school to home or to the community
- Consult and collaborate with parents of exceptional students on a continuous basis, as advocates not only for the student, but for parents and guardians as well

Some literature and research suggests that a cultural implication of disability laws and exceptionality programs has been the overidentification, underidentification, or misplacement of diverse students (Boscardin, Brown-Chidsey, & González-Martínez, 2003). A confounding variable in the assessment and identification processes used for exceptional students' programs is socioeconomic status, another aspect of diversity that affects schools and student learning.

Socioeconomic Status

Another aspect of diversity that touches most—if not all—of the preceding descriptions is *socioeconomic status (SES)*. As with other variables, socioeconomic status is a socially constructed representation. Differences in financial wealth and the distribution of wealth within and across society do exist, but the meaning assigned to these differences comes from socially constructed definitions and interpretations. For students in schools, these differences create the phenomena of social classes, which are as important to identity development as are race, gender, ability, and other traits. Social class and socioeconomic status influence self-concept development (Schmidt, 2006). Therefore, school counselors want to understand their impact when working with diverse students, especially those affected by issues of classism, poverty, and affluence.

Socioeconomic status not only influences individual identity, but also has an impact on family structure and functioning (Gladding, 2011a; Robinson-Wood, 2009). This impact is affected by, and contributes to, the educational and career decisions that students make, which over a lifetime lead full circle to achieving some level of socioeconomic status. These decisions help students determine where they will stand on the social strata and subsequently assume a class identification of *lower class*, *middle class*, *upper class*, or some other designation created by society. These class groups are representations of various levels of socioeconomic status. In all cases of identifying with particular social classes, students face biases and prejudices common in most socially constructed systems.

For counselors in schools, learning about students' perceptions of self-determined traits and the likelihood of using them to achieve socially and economically is important in designing programs and providing counseling services to the total school population. In constructing their self-views, students include perceptions of social class, and in doing so, some students accept different interpretations about themselves than more commonly held beliefs about their class. School life and the activities and relationships that influence student development can have a tremendous impact on these perceptions. This explains, in part, why some members of a social class move to higher or lower levels in the course of their lifetime (Schmidt, 2006). Guidance lessons, counseling relationships, and related services of a comprehensive school counseling program have the potential to make a positive difference in the decisions made by all students. At the same time, schools must use caution to avoid perpetuating social class biases of the larger community.

Poverty is one feature of socioeconomic status that can have a devastating effect on a student's self-concept, as well as the family's access to social services and educational programs. Addressing the effects of poverty is an important first step for counselors and other helpers to take in ensuring that students can stand on a level playing field and have equal opportunity in school. Without addressing the critical issue of poverty, all the counseling and related services provided may go for naught in trying to enhance student development. Research indicates that the earlier we address this issue in a child's development, the more likely social and educational services will result in positive outcomes.

Although many impoverished children and their families overcome these debilitating conditions, studies show that early childhood development, the time when home life greatly influences brain growth, is significantly enhanced and sustained by socioeconomic status (Seith & Kalof, 2011). In addition, many other challenges correlate with poverty, including health issues, racial differences, gender, marital status, and location. Schools witness the results of poverty firsthand, and with students and their families, face seemingly insurmountable challenges in creating beneficial learning environments and services.

Socioeconomic realities, particularly the impact of impoverished conditions, require that school counselors take action beyond the typical services they offer students, parents, and teachers. To address such global issues, successful counselors become agents of social change, being active in community efforts to help needy students and families. In a sense, they become advocates for social justice (discussed later). These roles are best created and acted on through comprehensive programs of services through which counselors can orchestrate the cooperation and support of many people and professionals.

As noted, location sometimes has an impact on social class. It is also a variable that stands alone as an aspect of diversity. The next section considers urban and rural schools as aspects related to diversity.

Rural and Urban Schools

American schools exist across a wide range of communities. The 2010 Census found nearly 84 percent of people live in metropolitan areas, another 10 percent living in suburban or *micropolitan* areas, and the remaining 6 percent in rural communities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011b). Through the years, the counseling literature and research has indicated differences between rural and urban schools, the issues that students face, and the significance these differences may have for planning and delivering comprehensive programs of services (Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Lee, 2005; Morissette, 1997).

Morissette (1997) listed several themes about the practice of school counseling in rural settings that may apply to students and families in rural schools as well. First are the sense of isolation and the absence of support systems, which leads to challenges of adjusting to rural community life. A second theme involves appropriate supervision and consequential role conflicts for counselors. Most rural counselors have little or no supervision other than their principal, who most likely does not have a counseling background. At the same time, small schools usually lack personnel to perform all the expected tasks, so counselors pitch in, which potentially raises role conflicts.

Another theme in rural schools is the lack of resources in comparison to suburban and urban communities. The rural school counselor is not only a first-line helper, but in many cases the only mental-health practitioner available for miles. This reality challenges the rural counselors to design and deliver comprehensive programs. The next theme is community pressure—small communities expect school personnel to be actively involved. Although such commitment is admirable and encouraged (Schmidt, 2010), it adds pressure to the counselor's job expectations. Finally, there is a loss of privacy. Living in a small town, where “everyone knows everybody,” does, at times, detract from a person's privacy. This is true not only for school counselors, but also for the students and families they serve.

Green, Conley, and Barnett (2005) mentioned the sociological and ecological factors that influence urban life and student development. These include a high concentration of poverty, crime, and violence within a diverse and mobile population. The diversity of urban populations is characterized by a number of variables that include ethnicity, race, various lifestyles, and a high concentration of resources. These factors are sometimes complemented by and at other times in conflict with available technology for rapid communication and transportation found in cities. Some of the urban challenges that Holcomb-McCoy (1998) enumerated sound similar to trends in rural communities and include a lack of resources, poverty, family concerns, and high dropout rates. At the same time, other conditions listed, particularly diversity of students and violence, may not have the same level of impact in rural communities, although that trend may be changing in U.S. culture as a result of immigration and people moving out of urban areas.

Lee (2005) listed several characteristics that describe urban communities, among them population and structural density, high concentrations of people of color and immigrants, poverty, high crime rates, complex transportation systems, air and other environmental pollutants, large and complex school systems, inequitable access to services and treatment by the legal system, and lack of connectedness with the community (p. 185). He outlined several competencies urban counselors bring to their role, including the skills, knowledge, and awareness to respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. Lee also encouraged urban school counselors to use empowerment theory, adopt a

systemic perspective for their programmatic role, embrace a posture of advocacy for all students, collaborate with parents and teachers, reach out to other professionals and key community decision makers, and become leaders in initiating and developing appropriate changes in the school and larger community.

Examination and comparison of rural and urban schools and the unique challenges they present to professional counselors is another example of how issues of diversity influence the practice of school counseling. For all the factors mentioned in earlier, it is clear that future counselors in schools will require particular competencies to be successful. In the final two sections of this chapter, we examine some of the competencies that appear in the counseling literature and ways those competencies are demonstrated in comprehensive school counseling programs.



PERSPECTIVE 2-2

During your school years, were you ever belittled, excluded, or otherwise discriminated against because of your sex, complexion, social status, body type, or some other factor? Did a school counselor assist in any way? What reflections about this event will help you as a future counselor?

The School Counselor and Multicultural Competency

As discussed earlier, expanded diversity of student populations in schools across the United States require that counselors become prepared and continually examine their practice to achieve the highest level of competency. Several authors address the importance of multicultural knowledge and competency in professional counseling (Arredondo et al., 1996, 2008; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011; Smith, 2004). In this section, we relate these competencies to school counseling.

The Professional Standards Committee of the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD) first developed basic competencies and standards of practice for multicultural counseling (Schmidt, 2006). In 1996, Arredondo and her colleagues explained how competencies across three areas—awareness, knowledge, and skill—related to the practice of counseling with diverse clients. In particular, they showed how these three areas of competency interacted with personal attitudes and beliefs of counselors as well as therapeutic strategies selected by counselors. Locke (2003) expanded this information for professional counseling in schools by adding the dimension of institutional change and the role counselors have in ensuring that their schools include, encourage, and support diverse student populations, their families, and their cultures. He enumerated several outlooks necessary for institutional change:

1. A strong commitment by the school and school system for the education of culturally diverse students
2. An understanding by schools of their responsibility to teach the value of cultures

3. Support by schools for persons, such as school counselors, actively seeking ways to change institutional policies and programs to better serve diverse students and their families
4. A clear effort by the school and school system to communicate that they value diversity
5. Strategic planning and ongoing evaluation of school policies, programs, and processes related to the education of all students, including those of diverse cultures (pp. 171–172)

The challenge for professional counselors working in schools is twofold: First, they must reach a level of competency in their awareness, knowledge, and skill to make a difference in the lives of all students; and second, they must achieve leadership qualities and skills to help their schools assess, adjust, and evaluate programs, policies, and procedures to better serve all students. These are not easy tasks. To begin, counselors address their competencies as an ongoing process of professional development across the three areas mentioned. At the same time, they use and incorporate leadership skills to design and implement comprehensive programs to serve students, parents, and teachers while helping the school address internal issues of discrimination, prejudice, neglect, and other deterrents to creating respectful and inclusive environments for learning. The three areas of awareness, knowledge, and skill are also important criteria in helping schools achieve this goal.

Awareness

Awareness of one's culture and heritage is the starting point for building awareness of other cultures. Competent counselors achieve an awareness of the impact that their culture has had on their development—positive and negative—both personally and professionally. This awareness includes an understanding of how one translates cultural beliefs into everyday thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

School counselors who reach a level of personal awareness also understand how their cultural background may limit their ability to work with diverse students across various cultures. These limitations are not necessarily permanent, but to transcend them, counselors improve their knowledge and skill. Sometimes, counselors' cultural backgrounds and subsequent beliefs might limit their ability to help diverse students because of discomfort that hinders the establishment of genuine helping relationships. Confronting these beliefs to remove the potential for discomfort is another important first step.

Culturally aware school counselors understand how their reactions toward particular students and stereotypical views about particular cultures inhibit their ability to establish effective helping relationships. Awareness of biases and stereotypic thinking allows them to refer students to better sources of assistance. When counselors are capable of being less prejudiced about different groups of students, they are better able to serve all students equitably and effectively.

Being aware of one's cultural background and its influence on beliefs, attitudes, and behavior is an important step. That awareness is complemented by a sincere effort to learn about other cultures represented in school and an appreciation of the worldviews embraced by those cultures. All aspects of becoming aware of oneself and of others relate to the attainment of knowledge about self and others.

Knowledge

It is important to learn about one's culture and its influence on personal development. As a counselor, you also want to learn about the cultures of others to increase awareness about the beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors of culturally diverse students. Competent counselors add to this knowledge and understanding about racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and other forms of oppression, discrimination, and stereotypic behavior and the impact that these conditions have on human development.

The knowledge a counselor needs to become culturally informed is broad based and includes information about cultural heritage, values, mores, and traditions. It also includes knowledge about social and political events that have helped to shape particular cultures. As noted throughout this chapter, this knowledge incorporates an appreciation of the history of oppression, racism, poverty, and other social phenomena that contribute to students' self-views and ultimately their worldviews. Such knowledge helps counselors understand how countless identity factors interact with student development, including their educational decisions, career choices, and personal/social relationships.

School counselors who become more culturally aware and achieve a level of knowledge about various cultures also seek to expand their professional skills to handle issues of diversity competently. They realize that skill development is not a single event, but rather an ongoing process of learning and practice to better serve diverse students and their families. At the same time, leadership skills enhance a counselor's ability to become a change agent in the school and community.

Skill

Knowledge of culture is an initial step to developing skills required to be a competent multicultural counselor. This is an ongoing process that includes reading professional literature and research, attending workshops and conferences, and returning to graduate school. School counselors also willingly consult with colleagues and other professionals to verify their understanding of particular students and which interventions might work in diverse situations. At the same time, effective counselors know when to refer cases to ensure that students receive the best possible care. They stay up-to-date about culturally appropriate referral sources in the community.

As part of skill-building, competent school counselors consistently and genuinely seek to broaden their personal and social experiences by actively participating in school functions, forming acquaintances with new students, and joining community organizations. They also encourage bilingual practices in their school by publishing and distributing documents about counseling programs and services in languages spoken by diverse students whenever possible.

Many other skills help counselors become competent in working with diverse populations, including the selection and use of appropriate interventions, communication styles to assist all students, leadership behaviors to mitigate school policies that inhibit or discriminate against particular students or groups, and use of appropriate assessment skills. All these skills and others enable school counselors to assess situations appropriately, choose developmental strategies for all students, celebrate diversity, be active in situations that demand social justice, and lead the school counseling program. In the last section, we focus on some of these aspects of counseling in schools with diverse populations.

School Counseling and Diversity

All the discussed factors, characteristics, and issues regarding diverse student populations have importance for school counseling practice. As noted throughout this chapter, they have particular significance in planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating school counseling programs. School counseling research and literature indicates a link between comprehensive programs and multicultural education of students as well as the multicultural competency of professional counselors in schools (Dahir & Stone, 2012; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011; Locke, 2003). In this last section, we examine some aspects of program development and leadership, developmental counseling services, and other elements related to comprehensive programs and diversity, beginning with assessment of the school environment.

Assessment of School Environment

The school counseling literature emphasizes an important role for counselors as agents of change in schools and society. To help schools realize the impact of environmental factors on student learning, counselors consult with administrators, teachers, parents, and others to examine aspects of the school that enhance or detract from educational processes. This is essential if schools intend to create healthy environments for students across diverse groups and individual identities. Schools that intentionally create beneficial environments, and counselors who actively assess school processes, programs, and policies to assure healthy climates, combine to develop effective educational opportunities for all students.

One assessment model from the education literature is the 5 Ps presented by proponents of invitational theory and practice (Purkey & Novak, 2008; Purkey & Schmidt, 1996). The 5 Ps model includes people, places, policies, programs, and processes. Table 2.3 illustrates the 5 Ps and a sample of categories under each that may be addressed when assessing schools. As pieces of an assessment model, each of the 5 Ps can be evaluated in terms of how it contributes

TABLE 2.3 Five Ps for Healthy and Inviting Schools

A sample of categories to assess for each P

PEOPLE	PLACES	POLICIES	PROGRAMS	PROCESSES
Students	Classrooms	Regulations	Curriculum	Registration
Parents	Offices	School Board	Special Education	Lunch
Teachers	Cafeteria	Discipline	Counseling	Grading
Counselors	Media Center	Class Management	Field Trips	Bus Schedule
Administrators	Counseling Center	Promotion	Assemblies	Class Schedule
Secretaries	Labs	Posted Notices	Media Services	Tryouts
Custodians	Hallways	Visitors	Food Services	Assessment
Nurses	Playgrounds	Attendance	Parent Education	Collaboration
Psychologists	Parking Lots	Retention	School Safety	Consultation
Volunteers	Restrooms	Detention	Extracurricular	Communication

to healthy and inviting school environments. Individually and synchronically, these can have a powerful effect on how students perceive and relate to their school. The International Alliance for Invitational Education developed *The Invitational School Survey-Revised (ISS-R)*, an instrument for assessing the 5 Ps. You can download a sample of the index at www.invitationaleducation.net/Invitational%20School%20Survey-Revised/index2.shtml

In planning healthy school climates, counselors help administrators and teachers evaluate programs to enhance learning and determine whether these programs accomplish what is intended. Sometimes schools create programs intended to benefit all students, but in practice, they exclude rather than include students who need services. For example: A senior high school designs an extensive after-school program of extracurricular activities to benefit students, particularly disadvantaged students. Unfortunately, the school neglects to plan after-school bus transportation and, as a result, many students cannot attend because they have no way of getting home. Once the school corrects this oversight, more students are able to participate, and the program is successful in reaching its goal.

Counselors also ask administrators to assess physical aspects of schools, such as lighting, floor coverings, painted walls, and building cleanliness. These and other features influence students' morale and attitude about school and learning. In one example, an elementary school principal turned off all the hall lights because he had heard at a workshop that when schools dim the lights, children are quieter. Soon, the counselor and teachers noticed that the incidence of school phobia, enuresis, and acting out behavior was on the rise. The counselor convinced the principal that he needed to turn the lights up again. Instead of creating a calming influence, the dark hallways were raising anxieties of the children and stressing the teachers!

Similarly, school policies relate to a positive climate and a posture of inclusiveness. Successful counselors review school policies to determine if they are necessary and whether these rules contribute to healthy and inclusive environments. Sometimes policies exist for the convenience of a few staff members rather than for the benefit of students as a whole; when this happens, resentment toward the school is inevitable. Policies that potentially discriminate, ignore, or otherwise neglect particular students or groups are especially problematic for diverse students and their families.

School counselors have a responsibility to see that schools are designed, organized, and governed for the welfare of all students. Their ability to assess situations and make suggestions for altering programs, changing policies, renovating places, and adjusting processes affects the success of their school counseling program and services for students, parents, and teachers. Chapter 5 gives another example of a school climate assessment instrument.

In addition to the *ISS-R*, Schmidt (2007) proposed 6 Es—empowerment, encouragement, enlistment, enjoyment, equity, and expectation—for examining how schools and other institutions measure ways to handle diversity in accordance with invitational theory and practice. Similar to the 5 Ps, these elements can be assessed individually or as a group.

Developmental Counseling

Developmental counseling has been the philosophic basis for counseling and related services in schools for several decades (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012). Throughout this text, there are references to this aspect of comprehensive programs, so a brief introduction to developmental counseling as it pertains to diverse students as well as the greater student population at this point is in order.

Students at all ages face tasks that include physical, cognitive, emotional, and other developmental stages and issues. This phenomenon crosses all human groups and cultures. Likewise, multicultural learning and development considers the various stages that students navigate during their school years in creating learning activities, counseling interventions, and other strategies. Therefore, successful counselors account for developmental stages in addition to cultural differences and nuances when planning programs, selecting counseling approaches, and generally addressing the educational, career, and personal/social needs of all students.

Appreciating and Celebrating Diversity

One way that comprehensive programs assist students with their development is by helping them appreciate and celebrate all the cultures found within the school and in the larger community (Schmidt, 2010). Comprehensive school counseling programs provide the framework for such celebrations to occur. Successful counselors lead the design and delivery of programs and services such as classroom guidance (integrated by teachers into daily instruction) and special school-wide activities (such as a Native American exhibition) that highlight cultural differences and similarities while allowing students to share aspects of their culture and heritage. Schools that integrate cultural appreciation and occasional celebrations into the curriculum across all subject areas include activities that focus on cultural history, tradition, and rituals.

By working with classroom teachers, school counselors help design a guidance curriculum that encourages all students across diverse cultures to set academic goals, adjust to school procedures and expectations without forsaking valued cultural traditions, and attend school regularly. As noted earlier, diverse students face similar developmental concerns, as do all other students. When counselors address these issues, all the elements of healthy and inviting schools considered in this chapter receive attention. However, avoid identifying cultural differences at the expense of the richness that diversity contributes to the school community. Instead, appreciate and celebrate culture as an ongoing part of multicultural education for all students, parents, teachers, and other professionals.

Advocacy and Social Justice

In recent years, some authorities have promoted an expanded role for professional counselors as social activists who energetically advocate for clients (D'Andrea & Daniels, 2004; Singh, Urbano, Haston, & McMahon, 2010; Thompson, 2004). Student advocacy has been an identified role for school counselors for most of the profession's history, and today, it continues as a significant role in the ASCA National Model (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Dahir & Stone, 2012). For counselors in schools, student advocacy moves them beyond common helping relationships toward more active stances to address and confront institutional policies and programs that intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against students because of (among other variables) their gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or family structure. Advocacy for students takes many shapes and forms, including promoting systemic change; helping individuals and groups of students enhance their self-development and increase feelings of empowerment; and working outside the school as part of the larger community to bring about change in legal, political, financial, and other systems to promote social justice (Chen-Hayes, Miller, Bailey, Getch, & Erford, 2011; Dahir & Stone, 2012).

In today's schools and society, the advocacy role of counselors is as important as it has ever been. For example, the achievement gap that exists between student groups across schools, systems, and the country continues to be a critical issue. How counselors alert individual schools and school systems to inherent inequities that contribute to differences in student achievement is an indication of their advocacy. As Chen-Hayes et al. (2011) explained, when counselors plan comprehensive programs of services based on leadership and advocacy, "they empower teachers, parents, guardians, and students to speak out and change unjust institutional and systemic practices" (p. 110). At the same time, counselors who work with students individually and in groups help them decrease feelings of helplessness and increase feelings of empowerment by becoming more self-aware and knowledgeable about how they can use the environment and social system for self-improvement.

Advocacy, empowerment, and social justice are complex concepts and processes. They are easier to read about than to apply in real situations. This is especially true when advocating for diverse and disenfranchised students, which is all the more reason for school counselors who desire to take active roles to establish the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to become multiculturally competent. Such competency helps counselors design and implement comprehensive programs that enlist the support and services of many people, programs, and other resources. Advocacy and action for social justice link with a counselor's willingness and ability to lead a comprehensive program.

Program Leadership

Although counselors advocate and stand up for individual students and groups of students, it is unimaginable that they can do so by themselves to make a significant difference in their schools and communities. This is one reason that comprehensive school counseling programs have emerged and gained the support of so many authorities in the school counseling profession (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Erford, 2011a; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

To serve diverse students and their families adequately and appropriately, school counselors recognize that they cannot do it all. By designing, organizing, implementing, and evaluating comprehensive programs of services for all students, counselors place themselves in a leadership role, and they balance that role with the direct and responsive services they are professionally prepared to deliver. In Chapter 3, we examine more completely the role of the school counselor, and particularly the leadership stance and skills required to guide a comprehensive program successfully.

Additional Readings

- Lee, C. C. (2012). *Multicultural Issues in Counseling: New Approaches to Diversity*, 4th ed. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
An excellent resource to assist professional counselors in practicing ethically and competently across a range of diverse populations.

- Pedersen, P. B., & Carey, J. C. (2003). *Multicultural Counseling in Schools: A Practical Handbook* (Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon).

Although published nearly a decade ago, this text has valuable information about schools and diversity. It is a comprehensive volume covering a wide range of topics related to diversity and the practice of counseling in schools.

Websites

Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD)

www.amcdaca.org/amcd/default.cfm

International Alliance for Invitational Education (IAIE)

www.invitationaleducation.net

Southern Poverty Law Center: Teaching Tolerance

www.splcenter.org/

Exercises

1. Take time to reflect on the factors discussed in this chapter. By yourself or with a classmate, reflect on each of them and examine your beliefs about these variables. How will these beliefs affect your functioning as a successful counselor with diverse student populations?
2. Attend and participate in a diversity experience. Check your local paper, campus announcements, or ask a classmate who has a different ethnic background and heritage than you do. Find an ethnic celebration, religious ceremony, musical presentation, lecture, or other event that might offer you a diversity experience that you have not had before. After attending and participating in this event, examine some of the preconceived notions you had before the event and what you think about them after the event.
3. Visit a school or schools and ask the administrators how they appreciate and celebrate diversity. What ways, if any, did they report, and what did you learn through these visits and interviews?

CHAPTER 3

The School Counselor and Program Leadership

A wide range of services and activities make up the role of counselors at all levels of practice in elementary, middle, and high schools. In each of these settings, counselors provide responsive services in comprehensive programs designed to address the educational, career, personal, and social development of all students. In this chapter, we focus on the professional counselor, who has responsibility for designing and delivering services and providing leadership for a comprehensive program. In addition, this chapter examines the various roles, training, and credentials of counselors at all levels of school service. In Chapter 4, we define and describe the comprehensive school counseling program, and we continue the discussion in Chapter 5 by describing counseling and related services in more detail.

As noted in Chapter 1, school counseling is a relatively young profession that emerged from the vocational guidance movement of the early 1900s. Since that time, the counseling profession has searched for a clear identity and role for counselors in schools. In this search for identity, school counselors have sometimes been criticized for not fulfilling their obligations. Exactly what these obligations are is a basic question all school counselors ascertain in developing appropriate goals and objectives for their programs. Without clear goals and objectives, a counselor's obligations can easily be misinterpreted and misunderstood by other professionals and by the people who seek counseling services. To better understand the role of professional counselors in schools, a consistent language defines what counseling is, identifies who counselors are, and describes what counselors do.

Defining School Counseling

The challenge of offering a wide spectrum of services to several different audiences makes school counselors unique in their practice. Although similar skills and expertise are required of counselors in other settings, counselors in schools, as noted throughout this text, apply their knowledge beyond the limited scope of a single service because they do so in a comprehensive program of interrelated services and activities.

School counselors have training in many areas that contribute to their overall knowledge base and professional skills. Graduate courses in human development, sociology, psychology, career information and development, tests and measurement, social and cultural foundations, educational research, and helping relationship processes and skills give school counselors a broad knowledge base and a variety of skills to practice in elementary, middle, and high school settings. Courses in theory and practice provide counselors with a framework to formulate and

clarify their professional role. In sum, this preparation enables school counselors to create a description of the variety of services they offer to students, parents, and teachers.

To be consistent in developing program descriptions, counselors benefit from a language that is clear and understandable to students, parents, teachers, and others who need to know why professional counselors are in the school and what counselors do. In this textbook, the term *school counseling* describes both the profession and the program of services established by counselors in schools. The term *counseling*, as used here, is not limited to remedial relationships in which counselors help clients resolve problems, nor is it restricted to one-to-one relationships. As used here, *counseling* refers to a wide selection of services and activities that counselors choose to help people prevent disabling events, focus on their overall development, and remedy existing concerns. The common ground for these three service areas is that, in each, the school counselor provides direct services to students, parents, and teachers. As such, the term *school counseling* accurately describes a broad program of services provided by professionally prepared counselors who practice in elementary, middle, and senior high schools.

The term *school counseling* is a more contemporary and definitive term than either *personnel services* or *guidance services*, which are dated descriptions encompassing conflicting roles and functions for school counselors. For example, *personnel services* implies recordkeeping, class scheduling, attendance monitoring, and other functions that are administrative in nature and detract from direct counseling and consulting services with students, parents, and teachers. The term *guidance*, while noted for its historical significance, is not the sole responsibility of school counselors, nor is it the domain of any single professional group. Everything done in schools, whether by administrators, teachers, counselors, or others, can relate in some way to the concept of guiding students.

For as long as schools have existed, teachers have guided children and adolescents in classroom behaviors and in their personal relationships. Similarly, school administrators have guided students with respect to policies, curriculum, discipline, and other aspects of the educational program. Student guidance is important, and everyone who works in schools and cares about children and adolescents has a role in this process. By accepting a broader application for the term *guidance*, school administrators, teachers, and counselors recognize that “Everything in schools relates in some way to the notion of ‘guiding students.’ . . . Because guidance permeates every facet of the school, no one person or program has ownership” (Schmidt, 2010, p. 8). In this way, guidance remains an important concept, because it names an essential part of the school curriculum, a part that is integrated into the total curriculum and not isolated in a separate program.

The terms *school counselor* and *school counseling program* are compatible with the terminology used by the national professional associations, as seen in the name of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and its journal, *Professional School Counseling*. In addition, the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) has created a specialty certification area for school counselors.

Although the terms *school counseling program* and *school counselor* are the preferred descriptions used in this text, the term *guidance* and other designations have an important place in defining and describing the school counselor’s role and program of services. Following is an alphabetized list of some of the major terms with brief descriptions of each; no one term has more significance than any other. In later chapters, these terms are defined and described in detail.

Advisory Committee

An *advisory committee* is a volunteer group established to guide the planning and development of a comprehensive program. The scope and breadth of a comprehensive school counseling program requires input from administrators, teachers, parents, and students, and an advisory committee is one way that counselors enlist the assistance of these groups to determine the needs of school populations, advise the counselor about responsive services to meet these needs, and plan school-wide activities to enhance student learning, improve relationships, and create a beneficial school climate.

Consultation

A *consultation* service includes relationships in which school counselors, as student development specialists, confer with parents, teachers, and other professionals to identify student needs and select appropriate services. Occasionally, counselors determine that the best way to help students is to provide information to parents or teachers. In these instances, consultation takes the form of parent education groups, teacher in-service workshops, or individual conferences. Counselors also consult with students by providing brief individual and group sessions to disseminate information or offer instruction about particular topics; for example, counselors assist with the guidance curriculum by presenting or copresenting with teachers particular classroom guidance lessons and activities. Another example is high school students who are interested in a peer helper program consult with their counselor to find out what peer helpers do, and how they could join this special group of students.

Counseling

Counseling defines ongoing helping processes that are confidential in nature and assist people in focusing on concerns, planning strategies to address specific issues, and evaluating their success in carrying out these plans. Counseling services take the form of individual or small-group counseling and are primarily for students. Depending on circumstances, school counselors sometimes offer brief counseling services to parents and teachers. In these instances, their goal may be to help a parent or teacher use resources such as community agencies or services. By helping parents and teachers in short-term counseling, school counselors give indirect assistance to children and adolescents. Successful counseling relationships require a high level of knowledge about human development and behavior, as well as effective and facilitative communication skills.

Counseling Center

The *counseling center* includes the office and other facilities used by the school counselor, and consist of office space, furnishings, equipment, and materials that are important to implementing a comprehensive program. Depending on the level of the program and the size of the school and staff, the counseling center might include private offices for the counselors, a waiting or play area, a room for testing, and a conference room for group sessions.

Developmental Guidance and Counseling

Developmental guidance and counseling are activities and services designed to help students focus on the attainment of knowledge and skills for developing healthy life goals and acquiring behaviors to reach these goals. Sometimes these activities are delivered in large- or small-group guidance sessions appropriate for all students, and other times they are designed specifically for targeted audiences in small-group counseling sessions. In elementary, middle, and high schools, these developmental services aim at helping students focus on tasks and issues appropriate for their age and stage of life. For example, a middle-grade teacher might present the career implications of learning to speak fluently and write appropriately to help students see the connection between language arts in school and future vocational choices.

Guidance

Guidance describes a curriculum area related to affective or psychological education. The guidance curriculum generally consists of broad goals and objectives for each grade level and, ideally, is integrated into classroom instruction by teachers and counselors in a cooperative effort. Sometimes *guidance* designates a particular instructional or informational service, such as *classroom guidance* or *small-group guidance*; other times it labels or describes a particular school-wide activity and focus, such as *career guidance*.

Parent Education Programs

Parent education programs provide information about child development issues, discipline strategies at home, school progress, and other related topics. Some counselors use packaged, commercially produced programs to assist parents, such as *Systematic Training for Effective Parenting* (STEP; www.lifematters.com/step.asp) and *Active Parenting* (www.activeparenting.com); other counselors design their own programs and activities for their schools. Occasionally, these programs are a single session, such as a presentation to a meeting of the PTA, and other times they are ongoing sessions, such as a support group of single parents led by an elementary counselor.

Peer Helper and Mediation Programs

Peer helper and mediation programs are established to identify and train students who can assist classmates and other students (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Sink, 2005). Often, school counselors work in isolation, particularly in elementary and middle schools, where ratios of students to counselors are frequently high. Peer helpers can assist counselors and teachers in meeting the needs of a greater number of students. They can be trained as listeners to be first-line helpers in a school, as mediators to assist with conflict resolutions, as tutors to assist students who are experiencing learning problems, as guidance aides to help teachers present guidance activities in classes, and as office assistants to answer the counselor's phone, run errands, and do other helpful tasks. Training is essential for students who are selected as peer helpers so they can be successful in addressing the identified needs of fellow students and meeting the targeted goals of the program.

School-wide Guidance

School-wide guidance includes planned activities that help all students focus on a particular issue or topic, such as a Career Day for senior high school students, Develop-a-New-Friendship Week for middle-graders, and a Most Improved bulletin board for elementary children. School counselors, administrators, and teachers might plan such school-wide events jointly.

Student Services Team

A *student services team* is a group of professionals who specialize in counseling, consulting, assessment, and other related services to ensure the emotional, educational, social, and healthful development of all students. Typically, the team consists of the school counselor, a social worker, a psychologist, a nurse, and other related professionals.

Many other terms describe various aspects of comprehensive school counseling programs, and most of them are included in this and other chapters. A clear understanding of the language and terms that counselors use to describe who they are and what they do puts you in a stronger position to outline your role and professional identity. Identifying this role is essential to your success as a school counselor.



PERSPECTIVE 3-1

What's your "handle"? As you enter the school counseling profession, how do you identify yourself and your profession? What has led you to this choice of terms to identify who you are professionally?

Varying Roles of School Counselors

Although the school counseling profession began in the secondary schools, today's counselors are prepared and employed at all educational levels. The latter part of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries saw increases in the number of counselors employed at the middle and elementary school levels. In most instances, school counselors use the same basic helping processes—counseling, consulting, coordinating, and appraising—across all school years. Because children in elementary and middle schools have different developmental needs from students in high school, it follows that specific services vary according to the needs of students in a particular school. Therefore, both the specific level of practice and the needs of particular school populations served influence the role and functions of school counselors. School counselors design comprehensive programs first by assessing the needs of the students, parents, and teachers they serve. The variance of these needs from one school to another plays a significant role in helping counselors determine the program of services and activities most appropriate for their individual schools. This is an important point to remember as you read this chapter.

Descriptions and illustrations intended to differentiate elementary, middle, and high school counseling programs are useful as general guidelines, but to be valid, we must consider

them within the context of specific populations that schools serve. For example, a high school counselor who serves students from affluent families with high expectations and promise of educational success will design a program of services quite different from a counselor in a school with a high percentage of impoverished students who may be at risk of school failure. For this reason, the following descriptions of elementary, middle, and high school counselors are general illustrations rather than prototypes of the roles of counselors in various educational settings. Ideally, the functions chosen by particular counselors address the unique needs and characteristics of students and communities served by the school.

The Elementary School Counselor

Historically, the responsibility for student development and guidance in elementary schools rested with classroom teachers. A few guidance specialists were present in elementary schools in the early 1920s, but most of these worked in metropolitan areas. A national survey conducted in the early 1950s indicated that more than 700 elementary counselors were employed, and that more than 400 of them provided counseling and guidance services half of the time or more. This movement into elementary counseling began a shift from teachers having sole responsibility for student development to a collaborative effort shared by teachers and professional counselors.

The 1960s saw an emergence of counseling in elementary schools brought about by events such as the publication of the journal titled *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*; inclusion of elementary officers in the American School Counselor Association; enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA); and in 1965, the extension of the NDEA Act, which provided funds for training institutes in elementary guidance and counseling. By 1969, elementary counselors were employed in all 50 states; and by the early 1970s, the number of elementary counselors had grown to nearly 8,000 (Myrick & Moni, 1976).

The 1970s and 1980s saw increased attention to services for elementary children. To some extent, we can attribute this to the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 and the *A Nation at Risk* report of 1983. *A Nation at Risk*, produced by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, became the springboard for many educational initiatives across the country during the 1980s, and included recommendations for counselors to be placed in all elementary schools (Humes & Hohenshil, 1987). Understandably, this increased demand for elementary counseling brought with it the urgency to define and describe what an ideal elementary counseling program included.

Studies of the elementary counselor's role indicate that the expected major functions are consistent with the role of counselors at other educational levels. Elementary programs include counseling, consulting, coordinating, and assessment services for students, parents, and teachers in much the same way as their colleagues at upper levels. At the same time, some studies suggest that the ranking and importance of specific counselor activities may differ from the other levels of school counseling. For example, in 1988, Morse and Russell reported that three of the five highest-ranking activities used by elementary counselors related to consulting relationships with teachers and educational specialists. Counselors in this study emphasized the need to help teachers help students. Today, consultation remains an essential function of school counselors (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Erford, 2011b).

Interestingly, elementary counselors in the same 1988 study reported that their preference was to do more group work with students to help them learn appropriate social skills, enhance their self-concept, and develop problem-solving skills. This accent on group services exemplifies the importance that elementary counselors place on developmental services for children. Such emphasis continues today, and gives elementary counseling its unique focus, one that includes appropriate processes and approaches to counseling with children, adequate attention to developmental activities and services, and strong parent and teacher involvement in the helping process.

Counseling Children. Since the early years of elementary counseling, experts have debated whether children can be helped through counseling. In 1967, the American Personnel and Guidance Association (now the American Counseling Association) held the position that individual counseling offered children an opportunity to establish relationships to (a) see themselves as adequate persons, learn about themselves, and use this knowledge to set life goals; and (b) be heard by others (counselors) and express their thoughts and feelings about themselves, others, and the world in which they live.

In addition to group processes, elementary counselors use individual counseling with children. Typically, counselors establish these relationships through a series of brief counseling sessions lasting from 20 to 40 minutes in length, depending on the age and maturity of the child. These individual sessions usually are scheduled once or twice a week as the counselor guides the child through successive stages of a helping relationship. These stages of counseling can be summarized as: (1) an introductory phase of building rapport, (2) an exploration of concerns the child expresses by words and actions, (3) a plan of ways to cope with and remedy these concerns, and (4) closure for this particular helping relationship, while encouraging the child to move on to other areas of development.

Successful individual counseling with young children depends on an accurate assessment of the child's readiness for this type of relationship. Counselors assess a child's language development, behavior, cognitive functioning, and ability to understand the nature and purpose of a helping relationship. Because most individual counseling requires some degree of verbal interaction, children who do not have adequate language development benefit little from these "talking" relationships. In some cases in which children are essentially nonverbal, success in individual relationships can be achieved if the child understands the language of the counselor; this is true, for example, with shy children. Frequently, young children are shy and hesitate to speak up at the beginning of individual counseling sessions. Inasmuch as they have adequate language development and understanding, these children benefit from individual counseling when assisted by a competent therapist, such as an elementary school counselor.

Elementary counselors use play, puppetry, and other techniques to establish rapport with children whose language development is not fully ready for verbal helping relationships (Newsome & Harper, 2011). Play is an important aspect of counseling with all children. As Shallcross (2010) noted, play "is often perfect for kids because the techniques provide children with a developmentally appropriate means to communicate while also enabling them to work through tough times at least partially on their own" (p. 26). Counselors also evaluate children's behavioral development when considering individual counseling as a mode of intervention. Severe disturbance, distraction, or other behavioral dysfunction might detract from the potential outcome of individual counseling with children. The greater a child's

capacity for staying on task, centering on the subject at hand, and controlling impulsive behaviors, the more likely that “talking” counseling relationships will be successful. Behavioral techniques to help children develop these abilities are appropriate precursors to effective one-on-one counseling.

Children who cannot comprehend their role and responsibility in forming helpful relationships might not benefit from individual counseling that relies heavily on talking and listening modes. Without the necessary cognitive development, young children lack the readiness to understand the perceptions of others, select goals that benefit themselves as well as their social group, and alter their views to incorporate the opinions and values of others. These abilities and characteristics are essential if verbal counseling is to help children assess themselves, make appropriate plans for change, and take action toward desired goals.

Young children, whose perceptions are limited by egocentric views of the world and who do not grasp the concepts of social interest and cooperation, might not fully appreciate the benefits of individual helping relationships. For this reason, elementary school counselors rely on active techniques, such as play, psychodrama, creative arts, and bibliotherapy to stimulate ideas, explore values, and encourage children to form helping relationships.

Group work with children is an important vehicle that counselors use to facilitate children’s interaction with others and to explore their perceptions within a social context. Group work with young children is most often structured as group guidance or group counseling (Gladding, 2012). In Chapter 7, the discussion shows that group guidance is primarily instructional and informational, whereas group counseling encourages active change in cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of children’s lives. Group guidance occurs in either large- or small-group settings. In elementary schools, teachers and counselors use group guidance in classrooms to assist children in developing values, social skills, career awareness, and other areas of learning. Ideally, teachers integrate these lessons into the daily curriculum, so that guidance becomes an integral part of language arts, social studies, and other subject areas.

Group counseling, however, assists children in focusing on concerns that are crisis oriented, problem centered, or developmentally necessary (Newsome & Harper, 2011). Groups are small, with perhaps five to eight students in a group. An example of a *crisis-oriented* elementary group is one that helps abused children deal with the trauma of their experiences, recognize their own value and worth as human beings, learn about their rights, and make plans to cope in the future. *Problem-centered* groups help children to center on immediate, yet less critical concerns, such as getting along with peers, and they encourage children to form plans of action to resolve these conflicts. *Developmentally necessary* group counseling helps children learn about social and personal aspects of their development. These growth-oriented groups address topics similar to those learned in classroom guidance, but the nature of small-group counseling allows children the opportunity for more interaction and intimacy in a secure and protected relationship. In many respects, developmental counseling is a primary approach used by elementary school counselors.

Developmental Counseling and the Guidance Curriculum. Although many elementary school children today suffer from critical problems in their families and society and as a result need crisis-oriented and problem-solving assistance, a greater number benefit from

services with a developmental focus. The assumption made by elementary counselors is that children become successful when allowed to achieve sequential goals that lead them toward self-fulfillment. Developmental counseling considers the stages of child development, including important life tasks that all children must learn and accomplish in moving toward the next level of functioning.

A comprehensive developmental program emphasizes the importance of a positive self-concept and recognizes the essential role that schools play in helping children believe in their value and worth as human beings. Developmental counseling assumes that the perceptions and beliefs formed by children about themselves and the world around them are learned through countless positive and negative experiences at home, in school, and through other relationships. Children's feelings, attitudes, and behaviors are closely linked to the conclusions they draw about themselves, cultural influences, and how they are accepted or rejected by people they know. For this reason, a developmental counseling program includes everyone and every aspect of an elementary school because *everything counts* (Purkey & Schmidt, 1996); there is nothing in a school, or in its policies and programs, that is neutral. Everything planned and implemented, from the color of the paint on the walls to daily teacher-student relationships in the classroom, has an effect on someone, somehow, in the school (Purkey & Novak, 2008).

Counseling programs that adopt a developmental focus include everyone in the school community helping children attain educational, social, and career goals. Over the years, the school counseling literature has presented several models of comprehensive counseling and guidance programs, and several states have been leaders in developing programs that fit their needs. Many states have used the ASCA National Model as a template for developing their models. In 2009, Martin, Carey, and DeCoster found among the 50 states and the District of Columbia that 17 had established models, 24 states were in the process of implementation of a model, and 10 states were in the beginning stages of development. Table 3.1 lists a sample of states and websites that have comprehensive plans for school counseling programs. It is not an exhaustive list, but illustrates how eight states view comprehensive programs.

As noted earlier, the profession now has the ASCA National Model (2005, 2012). Each of these national and state models provides steps for school counselors to work with administrators, teachers, and parents to create appropriate services for students. First, these programs

TABLE 3.1 Sample of State Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

Arizona	www.ade.az.gov/cte/counselors/CounselorHandbook.pdf
Florida	wwwfldoe.org/workforce/programs/cd_guide.asp
Maine	www.schoolcounselor.org/files/maine.pdf
Missouri	www.novinger.k12.mo.us/Counseling/comprehensiveguidance.htm
New Hampshire	www.education.nh.gov/career/guidance/nh_comp_guid.htm
South Carolina	www.statelibrary.sc.gov/scdocs/Ed8332/000147.pdf
Texas	www.tea.state.tx.us/ModelProgramGuide.html
Wisconsin	dpi.wi.gov/sspw/scguidemodel.html

seek to establish a strong guidance curriculum. In this text, I encourage a curriculum planned by counselors and teachers and integrated into daily instruction. Counselors assist teachers in this effort by helping them plan the integration, locating appropriate resources, coleading special guidance units with teachers, and leading other guidance lessons as needed. Second, these programs include individual and group counseling services for students who require more intense assistance than that offered by classroom guidance. These counseling services aim to satisfy children's needs and help them make adequate progress in their academic, personal, and social development. This way, a secondary objective of a school's guidance curriculum is to help teachers and counselors identify students who need additional assistance in reaching their goals.

The goals of a guidance curriculum link with the therapeutic goals of counseling. For example, if a goal of guidance is to help all children learn about self-development and appreciate who they are, then individual and group counseling for students with low self-esteem has this as a primary goal as well. Although the activities and processes used in counseling relationships differ from those found in classroom guidance, the developmental goals are essentially the same. At the same time, individual and group counseling can provide children with an opportunity to develop skills, evaluate themselves, and achieve relationships that enable them to profit more readily from large group learning experiences. As a result, these children might benefit even more from guidance lessons incorporated into daily instruction.

Another aspect of developmental counseling programs is the strong involvement of parents. This is especially true in elementary education, where parents play a vital role in their children's development.

Parental Involvement. Elementary counselors rely heavily on parental involvement in helping children plan and achieve developmental goals. (*Note:* The terms *parent* and *parental involvement* refer to all forms of parental and guardian relationships.) Without parental support for the program and the services that counselors and teachers offer students, progress is an uphill climb. When parents support the infusion of guidance into the curriculum and the inclusion of their children in individual and group counseling experiences, a working partnership forms between the home and school. Schools that invite parental participation, keep homes informed about programs affecting their children, and encourage parents to become involved in their children's education are more likely to achieve success with their students.

Elementary counselors value parental involvement early in their counseling relationships with children. To win parents' cooperation, counselors inform them about the counseling program through brochures, websites and other Internet technology, presentations at parent meetings, and individual contacts. Confidentiality is as much a condition of counseling with children as it is with other clients, but at the same time, elementary counselors appreciate the important contribution parents make in helping children resolve problems, alter behaviors, and set future goals. For this reason, elementary counselors encourage young children to permit their parents to become involved in the helping process as soon as possible. In rare instances, such as suspected child abuse, this involvement may not be possible, but in most cases, elementary counselors encourage collaborative relationships with parents to help children focus on concerns and make appropriate choices.

Together, parents, teachers, and counselors become partners in the challenging task of helping children develop in a positive and healthy direction. Parental involvement has always been an essential component of elementary counseling. Meeks (1968) illustrated this years ago when she described the role of parents as (1) helping the school understand

the child, (2) acquiring greater understanding of their children, (3) learning and appreciating what the school is doing to help children achieve, and (4) using encouragement and positive approaches to bring about constructive behavioral change. These elements of a parent's role identify the *expert* contribution that parents make in helping schools meet the individual needs of children. This expert input, inherent in the parents' role, combines with the instructional expertise of the teacher and the developmental expertise of the counselor to form an effective collaborative relationship.

Elementary counselors encourage parental involvement in ways that include participating in parent–teacher conferences; enrolling in parent education programs on topics such as positive discipline, helping with homework, handling sibling rivalry, and communicating effectively with their children; and volunteering to help with school programs. Parental involvement has the twofold purpose of assisting children with their development and enhancing the school as a vital part of the community. Because both of these purposes are important, a comprehensive elementary school counseling program includes direct services for parents through counseling and consulting, as well as creative efforts to embrace parents in the life of the school. One example of including parents in the daily functions of an elementary school is through a tutoring program staffed by parents and coordinated by a counselor or lead teacher. Tutoring by parent volunteers also provides an avenue to involve teachers in a collaborative effort to deliver services to students. Of course, teacher involvement is another vital component of an elementary school counseling program.

Teacher Involvement. Elementary counselors are colleagues of classroom teachers and other educational specialists who serve the school. To establish effective programs of services in elementary schools, counselors develop strong working relationships with teachers and other school personnel. By doing so, they seek to become integral members of the school staff and the instructional program. They realize that the success of the counseling program is influenced by their personal and professional relationships with teachers and other colleagues in the school. These relationships highlight the common goals set by teachers and counselors to ensure that all children make adequate progress in their educational, social, and personal development. The teacher has a significant role in a comprehensive school counseling program and Table 3.2 highlights some of functions in which they are involved. The rest of this section elaborates on these functions.

TABLE 3.2 Elementary Teachers' Involvement in a Comprehensive School Counseling Program

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1. Contributing and giving input into the design and scope of the program
 2. Integrating guidance curriculum objectives into daily instruction
 3. Collaborating with the counselor on other ways to deliver the guidance curriculum
 4. Referring to the counselor any students who may need additional responsive services
 5. Nurturing productive parent–school relationships and communication
 6. Including the counselor in parent–teacher conferences when appropriate
 7. Using their expertise on learning and child development to present in-service to the staff
-

Teacher involvement begins with their comments and suggestions about the nature and design of the school counseling program. This contribution is in the form of teacher surveys, advisory committee reports, and annual program evaluations. In addition, elementary teachers become actively involved in the school counseling program through the guidance activities they integrate in daily instruction. They plan these guidance lessons in conjunction with school-wide curricular goals and objectives established for each grade level.

A rationale for giving teachers responsibility for integrating guidance into the curriculum is that in typical schools, where student-to-counselor ratios exceed 300 to 1, it seems unlikely that a single counselor will be able to provide all the guidance instruction and other vital services expected in a comprehensive program. School counselors have an important role to play in encouraging their schools and teachers to integrate guidance, and throughout this text, we reiterate that role. As noted earlier, counselors assist teachers in planning an appropriate integration of guidance, help them search for materials and resources, and present special guidance lessons with the teacher or by themselves when appropriate to do so.

Elementary teachers also have a vital role in referral processes for children who need counseling services. Because elementary teachers have contact with students all day long and teach children all the academic subjects, they are in an ideal position to observe student development and the obstacles that prevent progress in school. Accordingly, counselors rely on teachers' observational and diagnostic skills to refer children for services. Elementary teachers who establish close relationships with their students become the first-line helpers in the school and, as a result, are able to bring critical cases to a counselor's attention.

Another area of teacher involvement in elementary counseling is in fostering parent–school relationships. Because parents of young schoolchildren are concerned about their children's welfare, communication between teachers and parents is imperative. Teachers who value the services of school counseling programs keep counselors informed about the needs that parents have expressed, indications of family dysfunction and turmoil, and other factors affecting children in school. When possible, teachers include the elementary counselor in parent–teacher conferences for the purpose of contributing information, facilitating communication, and suggesting avenues to resolve concerns.

Finally, teachers who have expertise in areas of child development and instruction are vital resources for staff development. Some elementary teachers have special knowledge and skills that are valuable to their teaching colleagues. In such instances, counselors wisely ask these teachers to present in-service workshops, because they know their teaching colleagues will accept training more readily from someone who has experience in the classroom. This is particularly true when training teachers in instructional techniques and classroom management skills. For this reason, counselors seek out teachers who are excellent presenters and respected by their fellow teachers and invite them to become workshop facilitators and presenters.

The Middle School Counselor

Typically, the range of students in middle schools includes preadolescents between the ages of 9 and 13, usually in grades 5 through 8. The unique needs of this age group require special attention, particularly those related to their physical and social development. Early

theorists who promoted the middle-school curriculum advocated educational programs that appreciate and understand the energy, confusion, and uncertainty inherent in these transitional years (Alexander & George, 1981; Stamm & Nissman, 1979; Thornburg, 1979). In addition, middle-school counseling in this twenty-first century understands the multiculturalism of students and, as noted in Chapter 2, how comprehensive programs can best serve this diversity.

The complexity of preadolescent development includes the onset of physical changes coupled with an awareness of and curiosity about one's own sexuality as well as relationships with the opposite sex. In preadolescence, more sophisticated and higher-level thought processes illustrate intellectual development. Abstract thinking is more evident, and decision-making processes begin to acquire organization and rationale. Wit, humor, and satire now complement silliness, playfulness, and other childlike behaviors. Socially, the middle-grader searches for peer acceptance and approval, struggles for independence and autonomy, yet is hesitant to accept full responsibility for the consequences of his or her behavior.

Because these developmental tasks are so complex and the pace at which preadolescents move through them is so divergent, meeting the needs of these young people is a challenge for educators who work in middle schools. A first step for counselors who accept the challenge of a middle-school program is to define their counseling role with the preadolescent student. To do this, they consider information, knowledge, and skills they must have to establish effective helping relationships with these ever-changing young people.

Counseling Preadolescents. The unique needs and developmental stages of middle-grade students require counseling approaches that reflect this divergence. Any counselor who uses one approach or a single format with all students, regardless of the nature of the concern or developmental level of the student, may become frustrated. This is particularly true at the middle-school level. Counseling middle-graders requires expanded approaches that include individual helping relationships, group experiences, peer-support systems, and other processes. In addition, successful middle-school counselors acquire a high level of knowledge and understanding about developmental tasks expected of preadolescents and adolescents. Table 3.3 illustrates some developmental tasks mentioned in the literature.

TABLE 3.3 Developmental Tasks through Adolescence

Achieving a sense of accomplishment
Developing and testing values and beliefs, and ultimately establishing an ethical system that guides one's behaviors
Accepting inevitable dramatic changes in one's body and physical appearance
Establishing new and more mature relations with boys and girls in one's age group
Attaining a masculine or feminine social role
Becoming emotionally independent from parents and other adults
Becoming more aware and accountable about economic realities and responsibilities
Preparing for a career or careers in life
Achieving socially responsible behavior
Preparing for significant loving relationships and future family life

Finally, and perhaps most important, successful counselors understand the ways in which middle-graders perceive their world, and they comprehend the conclusions that students draw from these perceptions.

Individual counseling with middle-grade students has the potential to be successful when counselors form nonthreatening and respectful relationships. Of course, counselors and students form such relationships outside the individual helping relationship as well as within it. Middle school counselors who win the acceptance and respect of students are visible in their schools. They greet students in the halls, eat lunch in the cafeteria, and are readily available to students who seek assistance. It is through these kinds of interactions that middle-graders assess the credibility, dependability, and reliability of their counselors. On the basis of these evaluative processes, students determine whether to seek assistance. Counselors who are viewed as believable and reliable are likely to be sought out when students need help.

Group processes are of particular value in middle school counseling programs because of the desire of this age student to be a part of a group, to belong, and to be accepted. In middle schools, group counseling helps students focus on either developmental or problem-oriented concerns and assist one another in achieving tasks and solving problems. Counselors also use groups in structured programs, such as small-group and classroom guidance, to teach social skills or share other information. Middle school counselors rely heavily on processes that facilitate the sharing of new information and teaching of developmental skills in response to the transitory needs of typical preadolescents.

Group and individual relationships are also useful in establishing effective peer-helper programs. Peer helpers assist counselors by helping students who are new to the school; being first-line helpers to students in need of counseling, referring them to the school counselor; tutoring students who are having academic difficulty; and befriending students who have been excluded, ridiculed, or otherwise rejected by their peers. A strong peer-helper program enables counselors to network with students and observe their development and progress through the eyes and ears of others. These programs provide a vital referral source for the middle school counselor.

Transitional Services. School counselors help K–12 students and parents through many transitions during their school years (Turner, 2007). Middle school counselors, in particular, provide services that enable students to make smooth transitions from their childhood years to adolescence, including the following:

1. Counseling students who are fearful of new surroundings, such as when moving from elementary to middle school or from middle to high school
2. Helping students learn about the physical changes in their bodies through guidance activities and counseling services
3. Teaching communication skills to help students develop friendships and relate more effectively to their peers, parents, and teachers
4. Presenting decision-making models and skills for students to learn how to make choices and understand the consequences of their decisions.

There are many decision-making models available in the literature and through the Internet, and include rational decision making, intuitive decision making, and step

TABLE 3.4 An 8-Step General Decision-Making Model

This model presents an 8-step approach to making decisions of a general nature.

1. Identify the issue and decision involved. Exactly what is it that the student wants to decide?
2. Help the student increase self-awareness. What are his or her strengths, limitations, skills, values, and interests? How will these factors affect the decision?
3. Identify options and alternatives. Help the student list the choices made or attempted so far. What options are still possible?
4. Gather information and data about the options most likely to achieve the intended goal.
5. Evaluate options with the greatest probability of success. What are the pros and cons of each? Are there risks involved, and if so, what are they?
6. Ask the student to choose the best option. If there is hesitation at this point, the student may want to revisit earlier steps to gather more data/information.
7. When the student chooses an option, help him or her to develop a plan of action. What does the student need to do to put the plan into action?
8. Implement the plan and evaluate the outcome. A decision is only as good as the outcome it provides.

models. Some models specifically address career decisions, some relate more to business practices, and others are more general in their focus. Table 3.4 presents a general step approach to decision making that may be useful in helping students.

In many school systems, middle schools are separated physically from elementary and high schools; as a result, children change schools at least twice during their school years, usually after the fifth grade and then after the eighth grade. Added to these transitions are adjustments resulting from family divorce and relocation that initiate moves to new schools. For some students, these periods of transition are very difficult. Middle school counselors help make these periods less traumatic by providing services before students leave their elementary schools and before entering high school. Transitional services include the following:

- Coordinating visits of elementary students to the middle school
- Orienting students who are entering the middle grades
- Compiling packets of information to help middle-graders and their parents become familiar with the school
- Scheduling field trips for graduating middle-graders to the senior high school in the spring semester
- Planning career exploration activities with teachers to help students relate educational plans to their career interests

Teachers and counselors create limitless activities and services to help middle-graders cross this transitional bridge toward adolescence and adulthood.

Individual counseling, group counseling, and classroom guidance provide students with information about physical development, friendships, study skills, and a multitude of developmental tasks that students face. Middle school counselors rely on teachers'

observations, peer-helper networks, and parental involvement to make decisions about which students will benefit from the various services they offer. Not all students benefit equally from every service of a comprehensive counseling program. For example, some middle-graders are comfortable talking about sexual awareness and body changes in small or large groups, whereas others hesitate to discuss these matters even in individual private sessions. A successful middle school counselor takes time to listen to students, parents, and teachers and uses their suggestions in making appropriate decisions about services for individual students and the school as a whole. By doing this, counselors create optimal relationships with all parties and implement effective transitional services for students. As with elementary counseling, a key to establishing successful middle school services is the involvement of teachers.

Teacher Involvement. A comprehensive middle school counseling program reflects the ingredients and characteristics of effective middle schools. This means that counselors align their program with the mission of the school, help teachers create and deliver appropriate instruction for all students, encourage group processes such as instructional teams and advisory groups, and become part of the school's leadership team. Counselors who adopt this philosophy are receptive to teacher involvement in establishing comprehensive programs of services.

Many aspects of teacher involvement in a middle school counseling program are the same as for elementary counseling. Planning a guidance curriculum, referring students for counseling, collaborating with counselors about student placement, and including counselors in parent-teacher conferences are as appropriate for middle school counseling as they are at other levels. Counseling programs built around teacher involvement usually offer some type of advisor-advisee service, which is particularly helpful with middle school development. In the 1990s, Myrick (2003), a leading proponent of these services, referred to such services as the *teacher as advisor program (TAP)*. Although little evidence suggests that TAPs are widely adopted, the ASCA National Model encourages teacher involvement in advocating for students, particularly as it pertains to student academic success. The school counseling literature continues to report that successful advisory programs can result in lower dropout rates, increased graduation rates, and improved postsecondary performance for students (Schanfield, 2010).

Teacher involvement in middle schools responds to the need for broad-based developmental guidance. This response is similar to the emphasis placed on developmental services at the elementary school level and at the same time relates to the middle school's role in providing transitional services for students. In middle schools, where students no longer remain with the same teacher all day long as they did in elementary schools, formal and informal teacher involvement provides all students with consistent contacts and relationships with significant adults. Most successful middle school teachers are able to establish solid relationships with all their students while maintaining an appropriate authority position that students respect. At the same time, these teachers collaborate closely with the school counselor.

Beyond providing developmental guidance and supportive relationships for student advisees, strong teacher involvement creates a vital channel in the school counselor's referral network. Such involvement does not replace school counseling services, but is an ancillary component that allows teachers and counselors to work together on behalf of all

children. As such, the teacher as advocate is frequently the person who refers students to the counselor for more thorough assessment, initial counseling, placement in a group program, or referral to another school or community service (Erford, 2011b).

Teacher involvement also provides a foundation for developing positive parental involvement with the school. Teachers who take responsibility for advising and advocating on behalf of students are the persons most likely to be in touch with parents on a regular basis. These teachers also encourage their students to keep parents informed of school events.

Parental Involvement. Middle-graders are entering the phase of development when they begin to assert their autonomy and seek independence from parents and family. In this transition phase of adolescent development, middle school counselors and teachers understand the significance of parental involvement (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2010). They know that children require assistance in this passage from parents who understand when and how to let go and when and how to take control. This is as much a learning process for parents as it is an instructional and nurturing one for their children. To help, middle school counselors and teachers plan appropriate programs in which parents can learn about preadolescent development. At the same time, counselors and teachers seek parental involvement in creating school programs, developing school policies, and designing appropriate curricula.

Because parents of middle-graders struggle themselves with entry into this transitional period, programs that assist parents with feelings and skill development are appropriate. Counselors in middle schools assume a role in parent education by presenting programs about preadolescent and adolescent issues, teaching communication skills to enhance parent-teen relationships, and sharing information about expected developmental tasks and warning signals to look for in a teen's behavior and development. Sometimes, children move through their elementary years without significant trauma, but suddenly the sky appears to fall during the preadolescent stage. Parents who have enjoyed calmness in childhood become confused, angry, frustrated, and combative when faced with an unknown terror in their midst. Educational programs and support groups led by school counselors are helpful to these parents. One of the most important benefits of these programs is that parents who attend these groups learn they are not alone. It is comforting to know that other parents are facing similar confusion, consternation, and conflict with their children.

As in elementary schools, middle school counselors are sensitive to the feelings and rights of parents regarding counseling services for their children. Although permission for such services is not usually required, middle school counselors make every attempt to involve parents when appropriate to do so. Such parental involvement requires the trust of students who are receiving counseling and a willingness on the students' part to talk with parents about concerns they raise with counselors.

Middle-graders are capable of exploring more complex ideas and deeper feelings than they were as elementary students, and simultaneously they accept more responsibility for their decisions. Although these two emerging traits allow preadolescents to participate and benefit more fully in counseling relationships, their progress advances immeasurably with parental participation. As a result, middle school counselors search for ways to include parents in the helping process when students are comfortable accepting this kind of involvement.

The High School Counselor

High schools were the first to employ counselors, and many people who have attended high school since the 1960s can recall their counselor. For most, the role of the high school counselor consisted of course scheduling, college placement, and academic recordkeeping. Although the present-day high school counselor's role is changing, the typical secondary counselor continues to assist students by providing information about course selections, career opportunities, test results, colleges, and scholarships.

Generally, the helping processes described earlier for elementary and middle school counselors are used at the high school level as well. Again, these processes include counseling, consulting, coordinating, and appraising. The difference in how school counselors deliver these essential services is seen in the specific activities used at different levels of practice. As with elementary and middle school counselors, high school counselors select services and choose specific activities to address the unique needs of adolescents preparing to enter young adulthood.

In an early study of parents, counselors, administrators, and the business community (Ibrahim, Helms, & Thompson, 1983), all of these groups valued services, but in a variety of configurations among the functions of high school counselors. The study noted statistical differences between groups on a majority of the functions, indicating that perceptions regarding the importance of these services varied significantly. Yet, there was consensus about the value of all these activities for school counseling programs. The study listed 37 functions under the following major categories:

- 1. Program development**
- 2. Counseling**
- 3. Pupil appraisal**
- 4. Educational and occupational planning**
- 5. Referral**
- 6. Placement**
- 7. Parent help**
- 8. Staff consulting**
- 9. Research**
- 10. Public relations**

In another study, Gibson (1990) found that teachers viewed the most important functions of high school counselors as: (1) individual counseling, (2) providing career information, (3) administering and interpreting test results, (4) college advising, and (5) group counseling and guidance. In both studies, the identified functions are compatible with the responsive services of a comprehensive school counseling program suggested in this text.

As noted in the studies discussed previously, the counseling function continues to be an important service provided by high school counselors. This is particularly true when applied toward helping students with career planning, postsecondary education, and school-to-work transitions (Baker & Gerler, 2008). Counseling services, both individual and group, in combination with guidance and informational programs assist high school students with these decisions.

Counseling and Guiding Adolescents. The goals and processes for counseling adolescents in high school are similar to those used with elementary children and middle-graders. Although the goals and processes are alike, many concerns targeted in counseling relationships with adolescents are different from those of elementary children and middle-graders. Adolescents continue to need services that are developmental in nature, focusing on educational and career planning, academic achievement, social acceptance, self-awareness, sexual development, and other factors. Yet, many of their specific concerns are more problem-centered and crisis-oriented than simply developmental in nature. School dropout, teen suicide, pregnancy, drug use, sexual abuse, and myriad other troublesome concerns face adolescents in today's high schools.

Over the years, surveys and interviews of secondary school counselors, teachers, and others indicate that counseling services remain a priority for high school programs (Clark & Amatea, 2004; Reiner, Colbert, & Pérusse, 2009). There are, however, some differences in perceptions about the nature of counseling services. According to a 1986 study, counselors viewed individual personal counseling, academic counseling, group counseling, and career planning as the four most important functions (Hutchinson, Barrick, & Groves, 1986). In practice, however, these same counselors ranked only individual personal counseling and academic counseling in the top four functions they performed. Career planning and group counseling ranked 9th and 11th, respectively, of the 16 items listed in the survey. In actual functions they performed, these counselors ranked scheduling and testing higher than either group or career counseling. They ranked scheduling second, and testing was fourth highest of the functions they performed.

In contrast to counselors' perceptions, students in another 1986 study of 21 states and 152 high schools ranked career counseling, college information, personal counseling, and scheduling as the most needed services (Hutchinson & Bottorff, 1986). However, students who participated in this study were already in college. Non-college-bound students were excluded by nature of the sample. This may explain the high ranking of college information and scheduling activities among this sample of students. What is most noteworthy about the results of this study is that fewer than half of the students said they actually received career counseling, and slightly more than 20 percent received personal counseling. This finding parallels the conclusion that high school counselors often spend a large amount of time on administrative, clerical, and other noncounseling functions (Hutchinson et al., 1986). If such findings continue to be accurate indications of today's high school counseling services, it would seem that high school counselors provide services that are not direct benefit to students. As a result, counselors take time away from functions that should be part of counseling programs. Some examples of these nondirect services include recordkeeping, special education coordination, testing, and scheduling.

In a survey of nearly 350 high school teachers, Reiner, Colbert, and Pérusse (2009) found that the consensus was that teacher support is essential for success of a school counseling program, and this sample of teachers believed that counseling students is an important role for school counselors. This finding is consistent with recommendations of other researchers (Whiston, 2002), yet may be in contrast with ASCA's de-emphasis of therapeutic counseling in schools (Schmidt, 2010). Consequently, school counselors ascertain the role that counseling as an important function plays in their programs.

Historically, group procedures are notably infrequent in high school counseling programs for both group counseling and group guidance activities (Tennyson, Miller,

Skovholt, & Williams, 1989). In part, this lack of group work at the high school level is likely the result of the rigidity of daily schedules and the emphasis on earning high school credits toward graduation. Secondary teachers hesitate to release students from class to receive special services unless these services have direct impact on students' academic progress. Hence, high school counselors who work closely with their teachers to design acceptable schedules for counseling services are able to establish successful group programs. Because they are successful, teachers frequently permit these counselors to work with students, individually and in groups, even at the expense of instructional time.

Career Planning and Decision Making. Studies of the high school counselor's role indicate that career planning is a vital component of secondary programs. This function, covered in more detail in Chapter 10, includes guidance and counseling processes, both individually and in groups, to help students assess their strengths, weaknesses, and interests and choose educational and career plans that are compatible with these characteristics.

Some high school counselors use individual and group conferences at each grade level so students have the opportunity to check their progress, evaluate life goals, and set new objectives in their high school careers. These conferences serve as checkpoints for counselors and students to assess what information or other services students need in planning their future. They are preventive services planned to help students stay on track and in school. These services also encourage students to seek higher goals than they may have planned initially. Sometimes, when students enter high school at 14 or 15 years of age, the information they have about themselves, the world of work, future employment patterns, and educational opportunities is limited, outdated, or simply inaccurate. Annual conferences with counselors and teachers are one way to acquire current and accurate information.

Information Services. Beyond the major functions of counseling, consulting, and appraising performed by high school counselors, another vital service is coordinating information for students, parents, and teachers. Elementary and middle school counselors also provide information in their programs, but at the high school level, this service takes on critical importance as a response to the significant decisions facing senior high students. At the end of their high school careers, these students will have completed their formative years of development and will make major decisions about their life's plans. Vocational, educational, and marital choices occur at this juncture, and the access students have to accurate information about these and other decisions is a responsibility of high school counselors.

How counselors choose to disseminate information, the processes they use to ensure that all students have equal opportunity to receive accurate information, is fundamental to a comprehensive high school counseling program. In large schools where there are several counselors, these responsibilities often are divided among the staff. In smaller schools, counselors rely on student and parent volunteers, paraprofessionals, and teachers to help disseminate information. In all cases, teachers of required subject areas, such as English and social studies, could assist by presenting guidance activities that relate to career and educational opportunities or allow counselors class time to disseminate information. As such, teachers at this level could be integral to the school counseling program.

Parent-Teacher Involvement. High school years signify increased independence and responsibility for most students. As a result, we might expect less involvement of parents

and teachers with counselors and students of this age level. In U.S. society, however, the increasing importance of postsecondary education at technical schools, community colleges, professional schools, and four-year colleges has extended the value of parental involvement. Today in U.S. society, parents provide financial support, moral guidance, and developmental assistance throughout adolescence and into early adulthood to enhance the career and educational opportunities of their children. We can expect this role to continue in the future.

At the same time, today's high school teachers provide much more than the content of academic subjects. Frequently, teachers give first-line assistance for critical concerns facing students. To prepare for this role, teachers receive in-service training in basic helping skills and crisis information. For example, they attend workshops on substance abuse and teen suicide to learn observation and communication skills and receive training in crisis intervention to assist school counselors, psychologists, and other student services professionals.

What these trends tell us is that future high school counselors may need to encourage more parent and teacher involvement than has been expected in the past. If so, future comprehensive high school programs will include more parent education and support groups, increased use of guidance activities by teachers in daily instruction, and a significant role for teachers as advocates for high school students. By increasing parental and teacher involvement in high school counseling programs, counselors may find additional avenues to help students with their educational and career planning. Consequently, high school counseling will become a more collaborative program of student, parent, teacher, and counselor functions to provide services for all students.

The preceding sections outline various roles and emphases for counselors who practice at elementary, middle, and high school levels. As the profession moved to a more programmatic focus on using data, establishing goals, prioritizing objectives, and delivering responsive services, a counselor's leadership role has become an important topic of discussion.



PERSPECTIVE 3-2

Do you remember any elementary, middle, or high school counselors from your years as a K-12 student? What recollections, positive or negative, do you have of these counselors? How will those memories influence your practice as a counselor?

Program Leadership

A premise of comprehensive school counseling programs is that they consist of planned goals and objectives, organized strategies and interventions, and intentionally selected services and activities implemented by counselors, teachers, and others in a collaborative effort. Furthermore, evaluation procedures determine the outcomes of the overall program as well as effectiveness of individual services. All these aspects of comprehensive programs are coordinated and managed through leadership by a school counselor (Curry & DeVoss, 2009). This philosophy creates a new direction for the school counseling profession from earlier service-oriented models, which placed school counselors primarily in

the role of providing direct services to students, parents, and teachers. Today's professional counselors working in schools have all the knowledge and skill to provide direct services, but equally important are their leadership capabilities to orchestrate an array of strategies and interventions in meeting the educational, career, and personal/social needs of all students.

Contemporary texts on school counseling emphasize this leadership role (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Dahir & Stone, 2012; DeVoss & Andrews, 2006; Erford, 2011a). Martin and Robinson (2011) summed up the transformation of the twenty-first-century school counselor by a call for change:

[It] is critical for professional school counselors to move beyond their current role as "helper-responder" and become proactive leaders and advocates for the success of all students. To do this, [they] must move out of the traditional mode of operation and begin collaborating with other school professionals to influence system-wide changes and become an integral part of their schools and school reform. (p. 14)

Such a transformation of the school counselor's role will require several parallel changes to occur. These include, but are not limited to,

- how schools and school systems choose to use the counselors they employ
- preparation that counselors who work in schools receive during their graduate study and, specifically, the knowledge future counselors will have about leadership theory, practice, and research in order to fulfill their transformed roles
- the balance counselors are able to maintain in providing a leadership role while also delivering direct, responsive services within a comprehensive program

In the remaining sections of this chapter, we explore each of these issues as they relate to a leadership role for school counselors.

Employment by Schools

Throughout the history of the school counseling profession, there has been an attempt to investigate the multitude of ways that counselors, employed by schools, spend their time (Brown & Trusty, 2005; Myrick, 2003). In many instances, roles and responsibilities given to counselors by their respective schools hardly resemble the professional knowledge and skills for which they prepared. This phenomenon frequently has led counselors to assume many noncounseling functions that have unduly consumed their time and taken them away from either leadership or direct-service roles to help students (Baker & Gerler, 2008). For counselors of the twenty-first century to take a stronger leadership role in developing, implementing, and evaluating a program of services, schools must want to make it to happen.

If the call for change and emphasis on programmatic leadership in school counseling is serious, it may require more than simply a process of changing the philosophy and preparation of future counselors; it may require a fundamental change in perspective that school administrators, classroom teachers, students, parents, and others involved in school practice and reform have of professional counseling in schools. If the profession spends time and energy transforming itself without any change occurring in school perceptions

and practices, then we might wonder if significant change is possible at all. A combined effort by the American School Counselor Association, state organizations, and state departments of education, as well as counselor and teacher education programs, among other groups, is necessary to bring about such a grand perceptual change. ASCA's promotion of its National Model (2005, 2012) with other educational organizations has been a positive step, and should be followed by initiatives to influence the preparation of classroom teachers and school administrators through accrediting bodies that govern those educational programs.

Of course, the ultimate decision of what to do in a school and how to assert a leadership posture rests with the employed counselor. To optimize the transformation movement, and particularly the leadership role advocated by recent literature and research, counselors should embrace a posture that moves them beyond simply being a direct service provider toward a stance that enables them to collaborate with a wide audience to identify and eliminate barriers to student success. Development of such a professional stance begins in school counselor preparation programs at the graduate level.

School Counselor Preparation

Perhaps professional preparation is the most challenging area to examine when considering the transformation of a profession. Among the challenges is knowing what to change, add, and delete in designing a preparation program to effect desired change. Later in this chapter, we examine current preparation standards and professional credentials required of counselors who work in schools; for now, it is appropriate to explore some historical aspects about standards of preparation and credentials for school counselors.

Counselor education programs had not placed much emphasis on leadership roles and skills in their preparation programs until the transformation movement began (Baker & Gerler, 2008). However, over the past decades, graduate programs in counseling have increased requirements, adding more courses and more credits to complete. What impact would additional coursework or experiences about leadership roles have on preparation of school counselors? More important, should some coursework formerly believed to be important to the preparation of counselors be deleted or diminished?

Baker and Gerler (2008) proposed that competencies in leadership result from a combination of factors, including a person's individual makeup as well as his or her learned behaviors. They also noted that leadership is a complex quality, and not necessarily demonstrated by specific behaviors on all occasions. From the counseling literature, they generated a list of behaviors that school counselors might use in their leadership/collaborative roles. By way of summary, the leadership behaviors they included are

- Program leadership skills
- Skills to conduct productive meetings
- Mediation skills
- Competencies related to cultural awareness and sensitivity
- Collaboration with a wide audience of participants and stakeholders
- Consultation skills
- Knowledge and skill to gather and use necessary data
- Being proactive in defining a role rather than waiting to be told what to do

This summary does not do justice to their list, so you are encouraged to go directly to the source.

To incorporate all the competencies and skills that Baker and Gerler (2008), among others, encourage for counselor preparation, it may not be necessary to add or eliminate a significant amount of content. Perhaps it requires only a rethinking of how counselor educators teach current content. For example, when counselors in training learn about consultation theory and practice, how might they apply that knowledge in terms of a leadership role? By taking this view, we might ask the same question about all the knowledge and skills in a school counseling preparation program. What relevancy does this knowledge base or skill have for a counselor's leadership role in a school? This question is one for counselor educators to address in developing curricula.

In learning about how to lead a school counseling program, an important aspect is the self-awareness counselors have about their leadership capabilities, and most important is the ability to be in charge of themselves. One of the challenges in becoming a programmatic leader while also delivering responsive services within a program is the ability to maintain a balance between the two roles.

Maintaining Balance

Some authorities have speculated about the distribution of time by counselors across various functions and roles (Brown & Trusty, 2005), but these are arbitrary recommendations that do not necessarily take into account the real environment in which many school counselors work. As indicated in Chapter 2, differences between rural and urban schools may require different roles and functions for school counselors. By the same token, individual schools within the same school systems often vary widely in terms of student populations and their respective needs. In such situations, school counselors may find themselves faced with quite varied challenges and subsequently the need to design and deliver different programs of services within the same school system.

Baker and Gerler (2008) devoted some thought to this notion of balance across a comprehensive program of services. They included an entire chapter of their text on this subject. To summarize their position, they proposed that a balanced comprehensive program "is designed to provide both proactive prevention programming and reactive intervention/responsive/treatment services" (p. 56). They claimed that many school counseling programs do not reflect this type of balance and, consequently, too much emphasis is on intervention strategies. This conclusion and their call for balance between prevention and intervention are admirable—and ideal. The question unanswered, however, is will the resources be available in all schools and communities to allow counselors to achieve such a balance in their programs? Essentially, if school counselors assume a leadership role in designing and maintaining a balance of services, who will deliver the necessary responsive services when the counselor is devoting time to leadership and program management?

Throughout the remainder of this text, we explore the importance of comprehensive school counseling programs, the responsive services that have historically made up the school counseling profession, and the need to balance the time available to devote to program leadership while delivering direct services for students, parents, and teachers. The models for school counseling programs promoted by the profession (ASCA, 2005, 2012; Brown & Trusty, 2005; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012) provide

excellent frameworks to establish programs, but they do not have all the answers for all counselors in all schools and in all situations. Decisions made by counselors in schools day in and day out call on their leadership skills as well as their clinical judgment to be sure that every student has the opportunity to be successful in school.

As noted earlier, future trends in elementary, middle, and high school counseling will be reflected in revised preparation standards for the profession and changes in existing counselor education programs. The preparation of school counselors has changed dramatically in the profession's brief history, and new developments occur every year. Continuous revision of counselor preparation standards and programs depend on the expected growth of the profession in schools and other settings.

Preparation and Identity of School Counselors

Since the early 1980s, the counseling profession has promoted standards of preparation through the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) and the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). However, in a 1989 report, Paisley and Hubbard found that more than 90 percent of the states indicated that the standards for national certification (NBCC) made little or no difference in employability of school counselors, and more than 70 percent of the states indicated the same for CACREP standards. Eleven states, nevertheless, indicated some value and use of CACREP standards in employing school counselors or for setting certification guidelines.

Development and Review of National Standards

As the school counseling profession continues to address issues related to its growth and development, preparation standards for professional counselors are continuously under review. Development of national certification processes by NBCC and counselor education standards by CACREP have been positive steps. Reputable counselor education programs typically design programs of study to include coursework in counseling theory and skill training, human development theory, group procedures, assessment skills, career development theory and information, research, social and cultural foundations, and professional issues. Some of these areas of study parallel the responsive services of a comprehensive school counseling program.

In recent years, the school counseling specialty has begun to assert itself, in large part through efforts of ASCA, as a distinctive area of professional counseling. CACREP has responded with distinctive standards, and NBCC has developed a specialty examination for school counseling certification, presented in a later section of this chapter.

CACREP 2009 Standards

In 2009, CACREP released the latest standards of preparation for the counseling profession. Included are core standards for all counseling specialties to follow as well as separate additional standards for each specialty area of study. Table 3.5 summarizes briefly the core areas of study, which CACREP lists under Section II, Professional Identity. Table 3.6 lists the standards specific to the school counseling profession. In 2011, CACREP announced

TABLE 3.5 CACREP Standards—Section II: Professional Identity^a**Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice**

These standards of preparation pertain to the historical and philosophical origins of the counseling profession, various roles of counselors, professional associations, and ethical standards of practice. Students learn about counseling practices, skills, processes, and supervision models, as well as accreditation and other credentialing opportunities. These standards also emphasize strategies for practicing counselors to care for themselves, advocacy for the profession, and the importance of addressing social obstructions that block access and development for clients.

Social and Cultural Diversity

Graduate studies in counselor education provide curricula and experience to increase understanding of the cultural framework that influences helping relationships and important developments in multiculturalism. Such learning examines multicultural and pluralistic movements, and allows students opportunities to examine beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives of both themselves and culturally different clients. These standards also address multicultural competencies, theories of multicultural counseling, identity development, and aspects of social justice as well as a variety of individual and group approaches for helping and supporting diverse populations. The professional counselor's role in increasing awareness of cultural richness and contribution, advocating for social justice, and promoting social health and the overall development of human knowledge, courage, and physical ability are among the standards in this area. Particular emphasis is on the eradication of prejudices, unfairness, and other processes of bias and inequity.

Human Growth and Development

Studies provide understanding of what people need at all levels of human development and in diverse situations and include theories of individual and family development, changes throughout the lifespan, and knowledge of learning theories and personality development that includes content about neurobiological development. This area also addresses the effects of various crises, natural disasters, and other traumatic events on youth, adults, and older populations; theories and approaches to individual, cultural, couple, family, and community recovery; and a structure to help students understand exceptional abilities and develop plans for viable interventions across populations. Study of human behavior includes developmental crises, various human challenges, psychological disorders, and factors affecting both normal and abnormal behavior. Theories about the causes and origins of addiction and addictive behaviors and strategies to prevent and treat these conditions are also part of this area of study. This content includes theories for assisting with desirable development and overall health throughout a lifetime.

Career Development

In this area, studies offer an understanding of career development and issues that affect it across the lifespan, including theories of career development, counseling approaches, career assessment, and decision-making models. Labor market information, career and occupational sources, and information systems are part of the curricula. Program planning, organization, implementation, administration, and evaluation as applied to career development are also in the program. Studies include information about interaction among and between vocation, education, family, and other issues, including how multicultural factors interact with career development. Students learn about career and educational planning, placement, follow-up, and evaluation; and career exploration techniques and resources, including those that pertain to specific populations in a worldwide economy.

Helping Relationships

This area of study presents various counseling processes to use with divergent populations. It provides an orientation to healthful living and prevention as goals for counseling, and examines counselor traits and behaviors that influence professional helping relationships. The standards in this section address important communication, interviewing, and counseling skills, theories and approaches to understand issues and concerns that clients present and to help students select suitable counseling strategies. Accordingly, students learn about models of counseling that gain support from current research findings and professional practices and that encourage them to develop their own personal approach to counseling.

(Continued)

TABLE 3.5 (continued)

Content in this area also includes a systems approach to working with families and other theories and viable models of family interventions. It addresses crisis counseling, related approaches, and suicide prevention, including the use of mental health treatment strategies. A broad-spectrum structure for learning about and using consultation is included.

Group Work

This area provides students with academic preparation and field practice regarding a rationale for group work, how to develop group programs, and the dynamics, approaches, leadership behavior, skills, and other aspects of group work in a multicultural society. Included in this knowledge base are assumptions about how groups function, elements related to group process, stage theories of group development, roles and behaviors of group members, and attention to the therapeutic value of group work. Leadership styles, appropriate characteristics of group leaders, group counseling theories and supportive research, and methodology and evaluative practices are part of this area of study. Finally, students gain direct experience as group members for a minimum number of hours as they learn about group work.

Assessment

This area offers experiences related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals and groups in a multicultural society. Included are historical views regarding the development and understanding of assessment as part of the counseling profession, as well as the fundamentals of standardized and nonstandardized testing and other measurement practices such as norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessments, environmental and performance evaluation, individual and group instruments, psychological measurement, and behavioral observations. Statistical models and approaches are part of this area of study and include scales of measurement, types of central tendency, indications of variability, distribution theories, correlations, and measures of reliability and validity. Ethical use of assessment is an important area of study in this section.

Research and Program Evaluation

Research methods, statistical analysis, needs assessment, and program evaluation make up this area of study. Students learn about the value of research in advancing the counseling profession, research methodology, statistics, aspects of program evaluation, evidence-based practices, cultural relevancy, and ethical practice in using/reporting research and program evaluation results.

^aNote: This is a brief summary of the 2009 standards. For full understanding, consult the entire document published by CACREP. In 2011, CACREP announced plans for its 4-year revision of the standards for implementation in 2016 (Milsom et al., 2012).

TABLE 3.6 CACREP Standards—School Counseling Practice**Foundations**

Students learn about the history, philosophy, and important movements in the school counseling profession and educational structures in general. They acquire an understanding of ethical and legal issues related to professional school counseling. Knowledge of school counselor roles, functions, settings, and professional identity and relationships to other school personnel, as well as professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentials pertaining to school counseling are part of this content.

Students learn current models of comprehensive school counseling programs, such as the ASCA National Model, and their vital relationship to the total educational program. They learn about the effects of student growth and development, health and well-being, language, ability, diversity, and the ability to recover from distress on learning and development of children and adolescents.

TABLE 3.6 (continued)

The knowledge base of students in school counseling include understanding of crisis intervention, management plans and the roles, functions, and duties of the school counselor during crises, tragedies, and other distressing events.

In the school counseling specialty, students attain skills to deliver services related to the aforementioned knowledge areas and to express clearly, apply, and encourage an appropriate school counselor identity and comprehensive program.

Counseling, Prevention, and Intervention

This area includes knowledge and skills related to effective counseling theories and processes, and wellness programs to use with individual students and groups. Such knowledge and skills incorporate information about design, application, direction, and evaluation of programs that focus on the academic, career, and personal/social development of all K–12 students. Strategies to help students identify strengths and deal appropriately with personal and social situations as well as developmental issues are part of this study, as are ways to address student transitions from school-to-work, life decisions, and college admissions.

Knowledge about various forms of group work, including peer-helping groups, to help K–12 students overcome obstacles to learning are part of this study. In addition, school counseling students learn about the possible influence of crises, emergencies, and tragedies on K–12 students, educators, and schools, and acquire skills appropriate for various crisis interventions.

Skills to display self-awareness, empathy, and the ability to relate to a variety of individuals, groups, and classrooms are essential in this area. Included are individual and group counseling and classroom guidance practices to promote the educational, vocational, and overall development of students. Skills to design, apply, and evaluate prevention and intervention approaches related to aforementioned areas of student development, to assess and manage suicide risk, and to recognize one's limitations as a school counselor, and, when appropriate, seek supervision or refer students to other professionals are important aspects of study.

Diversity and Advocacy

This area includes knowledge and skills that demonstrate understanding of the cultural, ethical, economic, legal, and political issues involving and affecting diversity, equity, and excellence in terms of K–12 student learning. Such knowledge and skills enable the school counseling student to identify a multitude of opportunities that increase, or obstacles that impede, educational, vocational, and personal/social development. Included is an understanding of various ways that counselors can help develop, monitor, and alter school policies, programs, and practices to be more culturally aligned with the needs of K–12 students and their families. The school counseling student becomes informed about diversity issues, the impact of ability level placement, stereotypical thinking, family history, socioeconomic status, gender, and sexual identity, and their effects on academic success. They acquire skills to address the above knowledge base and deliver services to advocate for programs and policies that ensure equitable learning opportunities for all students. They acquire skills to connect with parents, guardians, and families to promote the academic, career, and personal/social development of K–12 students.

Assessment

School counseling students learn about the influence of many conditions such as substance abuse, violence, eating disorders, hyperactivity, childhood depression, and other factors, that may affect the personal, social, and academic functioning of K–12 students. They know the signs and symptoms of substance abuse in children and adolescents, as well as the indications and indicators of living in a family where substance abuse exists. They can identify and use appropriate needs' assessment instruments for educational, vocational, and personal/social development. School counseling students are able to analyze data to make valid inferences when evaluating the needs of individual students, assessing the effectiveness of educational programs, and identifying impediments to students' progress. They use accurate and suitable information to make appropriate referrals to school or community resources.

(Continued)

TABLE 3.6 (continued)**Research and Evaluation**

This area of study enables the student to evaluate research related to professional counseling in schools analytically. Types of program evaluation, methods for measuring counseling outcomes in school counseling programs, and appreciation of best practices from the school counseling research literature are part of this accountability knowledge base and skill set needed by professional school counselors.

Academic Development

Knowledge about the relationship between the school counseling program and the educational mission of the school is essential. School counseling students understand issues and practices related to the goal of closing the achievement gap, promoting academic success for all students, and preventing school dropouts. They learn about designing curricula lessons, managing student behavior in the classroom and choosing various instructional strategies for teaching aspects of student development and guidance-related content. School counseling students acquire skills to address this knowledge base and deliver services and activities to promote student academic and developmental success.

Collaboration and Consultation

Through this area of study, school counseling students learn about the value of family-school-community collaboration, acquire skills to promote teamwork within the school and greater community, and develop strategies for working with staff members, parents, guardians, families, and communities to build effective relationships that benefit all students. They learn about systems theories and consulting processes to use in schools, including peer program approaches and crisis intervention. School counseling students acquire consulting skills to work with parents, guardians, families, community resources, teachers, and other professionals. They learn about appropriate referral processes and strategies to find important services and resources for students and their families.

Leadership

This section of school counseling standards provides knowledge of assumptions, beliefs, behaviors, and forms of effective leadership. Students learn leadership strategies to help them influence the learning environment of schools. They also learn to plan, execute, direct, and evaluate comprehensive school counseling programs, and become an agent for beneficial change in the school. Skills acquired in this area help school counseling students lead the development and implementation of a school counseling program, and plan and lead educational programs for parents and teachers, such as parent education programs and advisor/advisee programs.

Resource: Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. (2009). *2009 Standards*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

its four-year review of the standards for implementation in 2016 (Milsom, Nassar-McMillan, Pope, Thompson, & Williams, 2012).

According to the CACREP standards, students preparing to work as professional school counselors will attain knowledge, skills, and practices necessary to promote the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students in grades kindergarten through senior high school. Therefore, the standards summarized in Table 3.6 are in addition to the common core areas illustrated in Table 3.5.

The areas of study put forth by CACREP are important components of a school counselor's knowledge base and skill development. Counselor education programs, including those that prepare professional counselors for schools, follow curricular and field

experiences that incorporate these areas into a complete program of study. As noted earlier, the ultimate goal of these preparation programs is to give counselors a leadership knowledge base and skills to complement their counseling knowledge in designing, implementing, and evaluating comprehensive programs. Preparation of professional counselors also relates to professional standards and credentials to practice, to which we now turn.

Credentials of School Counselors

Credentialing is an important process for the counseling profession. Although school counselor certification and licensure have existed in all states for many years, certification and licensure of counselors in other settings, such as mental-health centers, prisons, and family services facilities, are more recent developments.

In addition to certification and licensure, the counseling profession has worked to create accreditation processes for institutions that prepare counselors. National, regional, and state accrediting bodies review colleges and universities to determine if their programs of study meet established criteria. When institutions satisfy these criteria, they are granted program approval status, and their graduates benefit from having studied in an accredited program.

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is the most common accrediting body for teacher education and related preparation programs in departments, schools, and colleges of education at colleges and universities. As a result, NCATE is frequently an accrediting body for school counselor preparation programs, which often locate in schools or departments of education at universities and colleges. As noted previously, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP) is also a national accrediting body, and one that focuses solely on preparation standards in counselor education programs. CACREP reviews and approves graduate programs of study for counselors who are being preparing to work in a variety of settings, including schools. The CACREP 2009 *Standards* reflect the knowledge base and skills expected of professional school counselors.

State Certification

To practice as a school counselor, the first credential one must receive is state certification (some states call this *licensure*). Typically, states require certification, and most require a minimum of a master's degree for initial certification. In addition, some states include teaching experience as a prerequisite for school counselor certification. Of these states, a few allow alternate experiences, such as a counseling internship, to substitute for teaching experience. It is noteworthy that several states continue to require teaching experience as a prerequisite to counselor employment, despite the absence of research showing that such experience relates to effective school counseling (Baker & Gerler, 2008).

Several states allow school counselors to become certified or licensed before they complete all the necessary requirements. These states offer provisional school counselor certification, which usually means a school system can hire a person while he or she finishes the final requirements for full certification.

State certification/licensure for school counselors is a credential that usually must be renewed periodically. To renew certification, counselors obtain continuing education units

(CEUs) or additional coursework in counseling or related fields of study. Certification offices in state departments of education typically handle school counselor certification, and many states have reciprocal agreements so that candidates certified in one state are eligible for certification in another.

National Certification

In the 1980s, the American Counseling Association (ACA) became active in establishing a national certification process for professional counselors. The National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) was established, and it created an application review and examination process. The NBCC developed the National Counselor Examination (NCE), which tests eight core areas of professional training: human growth and development; social and cultural foundations; helping relationships; group work; career and lifestyle development; appraisal; research and program evaluation; and professional orientation. In addition, the NCE is based on five work behaviors: fundamentals of counseling; assessment and career counseling; group counseling; programmatic and clinical intervention; and professional practice issues.

As noted earlier, the NBCC has also established specialty exams and certifications in certain areas, including school counseling. All these certifications are renewable in five-year cycles on completion of required continuing education experiences. The National Certified School Counselor Examination (NCSCE) of NBCC developed from a national job analysis. According to NBCC, the analysis described typical job activities of professional school counselors in enough detail to provide a foundation for creating a job-related certification examination. The NCSCE consists of multiple choice items and simulated cases to assess knowledge, skills, and abilities of school counselors. (For more information about the NCSCE and NBCC, visit the website at www.nbcc.org/NCSCE.)

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has also established standards for national school counselor certification, and this has presented a conflict for the NBCC and many school counselors who hold the National Certified School Counselor (NCSC) certificate. Because some states began granting salary bonuses to teachers who held a NBPTS certification, the issue became an important economic one for school counselors. At the same time, some counselors across the country questioned a teacher certification board's right to set standards for a counseling specialty. With the recent economic recession in the United States and NBPTS's reliance on federal funding for its continuation, counselors must wait to see what the future holds for this certification process.

Certification and credentialing processes at state, regional, and national levels aim at improving the identification and performance of practicing counselors. They elevate the counseling profession in the eyes of the public and in the esteem of those who join the profession. Credentials are one way for a profession to monitor itself, ensure that highly prepared persons deliver services rendered, and offer a clear identity for its practitioners. In this way, state, regional, and national certification processes for school counselors help define and describe what it is that counselors do in a school setting and the training required to perform these functions.

In this chapter, we examined the role of school counselors in elementary through high school settings, the leadership role that counselors in schools assume in designing and

delivering comprehensive programs, and the preparation and appropriate credentials of practicing school counselors. Adequate preparation and minimum credentials attempt to ensure the delivery of effective counseling services in schools. School counselors work with a wide audience of clients and cooperate with other professionals to deliver appropriate services. The description of the school counselor's role advocated here integrates the responsive services of a comprehensive counseling program across all levels of school practice. In Chapter 4, we examine the concept of comprehensive school counseling programs, and follow that discussion with an overview of responsive and related services in Chapter 5.

Additional Readings

- Dollarhide, C. T., & Saginak, K. A. (2012). *Comprehensive School Counseling Programs: K–12 Delivery System in Action*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. Includes an excellent and comprehensive treatment of leadership for school counselors.
- Erford, B. T. (2011a). *Transforming the School Counseling Profession* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- An edited volume of chapters that highlight current thinking in the school counseling profession.
- Schmidt, J. J. (2010). *The Elementary/Middle School Counselor's Survival Guide* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- A practical guide for counselors in elementary and middle schools, using the structure of a comprehensive program.

Websites

- Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs
www.CACREP.org
- National Board for Certified Counselors
www.NBCC.org

- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
www.NBPTS.org
- Peterson's Home Page—Colleges and Career Information
www.petersons.com

Exercises

1. In a brief research project, investigate the historical development of another helping profession (e.g., nursing, medicine, psychology, social work) and compare your findings with the counseling profession. How did these other professions begin? What route did their credentialing processes take to reach the point where they are today?
2. In a small group, discuss the issue of integrating guidance in the school curriculum. Highlight some of the points made in this text and contrast them with other views. Have your group take a position and outline three to five reasons why you are taking this stand. Share your conclusions with the class.
3. A school principal interviews you for a high school counseling position. She is a former elementary principal and says that she would like the high school program to reflect the philosophy of elementary counseling. How would you respond?
4. You are a new counselor at a middle school that serves a community with diverse cultures. List some steps you would take to prepare yourself to be an effective counselor with students who come from diverse backgrounds.

CHAPTER 4

Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

A school counseling program is a planned component of the larger school purpose and mission. As noted in Chapter 3, it consists of particular services for which the counselor has received specialized preparation. The role of the school counselor is to design a comprehensive program of services with specific goals and objectives that complement the broader mission of the school.

By designing a purposeful program, school counselors distinguish themselves from counselors in other professional settings who offer either a limited range of services or narrowly focused services because of the specific populations they serve. For example, mental health counselors serve clients who are experiencing difficulty in their relationships, such as in the family or on the job, or who are searching for meaningful ways to enhance and improve their lives; with an emphasis on prevention, the mission of mental health counselors is to enable clients to address and enhance relationships and make healthy life choices. These counselors provide services to individuals and groups by incorporating assessment and therapeutic and informational strategies in their work with clients. If no progress occurs during these counseling relationships, and destructive or dysfunctional behaviors continue, mental health counselors refer their clients to other professionals who might offer deeper analysis and additional treatment services.

By contrast, school counselors serve three populations: students, parents, and teachers. The responsive services that school counselors provide for these three groups include individual and group counseling, consulting, testing and assessment, group instruction, and referrals. Most important, counselors deliver these services within the framework of an organized program, the design of which is guided by the overall mission of the school, the desires and needs of the local community, the profession's research and literature, and the expanded goals of the state.

Thus far, you have learned many terms that describe what counselors do in comprehensive school counselor programs. You have also learned that understanding the professional terms that school counselors use help you identify and clarify the purpose of a school counseling program. Identifying this purpose to an audience of students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the public at large is vital to your success as a school counselor.

The Purpose of School Counseling Programs

Every school has an educational mission, and within that mission lays a purpose for special programs, such as school counseling. To some extent, the struggle of the school counseling profession to develop a clear identity has contributed to the confusion about the purpose of

employing counselors in school settings. Sometimes, a counselor's inability to identify a clear purpose places that counselor in clerical, administrative, and instructional roles, diminishing the counselor's value in the school (Baker & Gerler, 2008). In contrast, by developing a clear understanding of their purpose, other school counselors establish a philosophical basis on which to build a credible program. To begin, successful school counselors first ask themselves, "Why am I here?"

Answering this question is not a simple response because of the expanded audiences school counselors serve. For example, school counselors assist students in becoming able learners, they support parents in their supervising and nurturing roles, and they help teachers to provide effective instruction and create healthy classroom climates for all students. This hypothesis for the role and purpose of school counselors is summarized here as a mission to provide a program of services that ensures an opportunity for all students to learn and develop to their fullest potential. Although this premise seems simple enough, the task of reaching this goal may appear overwhelming in light of today's challenges brought to school by children, adolescents, and their families. For this reason, it is imperative that school counselors view their role not as a series of unrelated crisis-oriented services, but rather as an orchestrated program of responsive services and activities that complement the instructional program of the school.

In the past, schools have viewed their counselors as support personnel. According to this view, people believed that school counselors provided ancillary services to the instruction offered by teachers and the administration required of principals. This emphasis on supporting teachers and administrators, while illustrating caring and helpful aspects of a counselor's role, tended to lessen the overall value of a school counseling program. At the same time, these apparent supportive services were more vulnerable to economic, political, and institutional changes occurring in society. Because school counselors have historically accepted a role that is supportive, they have occasionally let others define their role, assign their functions, dictate their mission, and design their programs.

A key element in describing a comprehensive program is the notion that the leadership and responsive services of a counselor are essential to the school. Therefore, the services of a school counseling program are necessary at all school levels, elementary through high school. Because children and adolescents in U.S. society face challenges that will continue to evolve in complexity and importance for generations to come, schools and other institutions need to address the total development of all children. We cannot separate educational goals from personal, social, physical, and other developmental processes. School counseling services are and will remain essential to the total education of our youth.

School counselors who assume a complementary and vital role in the overall school mission are able to convince administrators and teachers about how counseling, consulting, and other responsive services in a comprehensive school counseling program contribute to the effectiveness of the school. To do this, they design programs and services that address the development of students in three essential areas: educational development, career development, and personal and social development.

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2004) developed national standards for students to "identify and prioritize the specific attitudes, knowledge and skills that students should be able to demonstrate as a result of participating in a school counseling program" (p. 1). These standards and competencies for students address three areas of development: Academic Developmental, Career Development, and Personal/

Social Development (ASCA, 2004). Support and utilization of the national standards have been promising, with state departments of education and state school counselor associations using the ASCA National Model and the standards as templates for developing their comprehensive programs. At the same time, research has begun to assess perceptions of the ASCA National Model and its implementation. One of the challenges for researchers is that proportionately, so few practicing counselors are ASCA members, and often the researchers use ASCA membership for their participant pool (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). The results of research thus far demonstrate understanding and support for components of comprehensive school counseling programs, including the ASCA National Model, and tentative evidence that implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs can have positive effect on student academic performance (Barna & Brott, 2011; Sink, Akos, Turnbull, & Mvududu, 2008). Future research will be important in measuring the impact of comprehensive programs and published competencies on the educational, career, and social/personal development of students.

In this text, these three areas of student development, supported by the ASCA Standards for School Counseling Programs, provide structure for designing comprehensive programs of services. I have retained the heading “Educational Development” for the first area, as opposed to “Academic Development,” because I believe it has broader meaning. To me, *educational* refers to the pursuit of lifelong learning, whereas *academic* is more closely related to achievement in specific disciplines and coursework.

Educational Development

The challenge in U.S. society today and in the future is to create environments and curricula where students will learn and to see this become reality in all schools for all children. To do so, schools must create climates that give every student an equal opportunity to succeed academically. Counselors contribute to this goal by assessing students’ abilities, guiding administrators and teachers in placing students in the instructional program, providing services for parents to learn about their children’s development and progress in school, and counseling students about their goals and plans in life.

School counselors use many different strategies and interventions to focus on the educational development of students. For example, counselors and teachers use classroom guidance activities to encourage positive self-concept development and to alter behaviors for improving school success. These classroom activities are integrated with daily lessons or designed as specially planned presentations. Individual and small-group counseling with students who need additional or more intense attention are also part of a comprehensive program. In addition, school counselors consult with teachers, parents, and other professionals to ensure that they consider all available services in planning a student’s educational program.

Educational development is not the sole responsibility of classroom teachers. In today’s society, optimal educational achievement is realized when teachers receive assistance from school counselors who provide leadership and direct services to students, offer support to parents and guardians, and form collaborative relationships with teachers and other school personnel. Through this type of team effort, students’ progress is monitored and appropriate responsive services are designed and implemented. In this way, counselors identify and address students’ learning as a main goal and purpose of comprehensive school counseling programs.

One aspect of educational development that counselors include in their counseling programs is lifelong learning. In elementary through secondary schools, the educational focus for all students should be on learning throughout one's life rather than simply moving to the next grade level or merely completing 12 years of school. Unfortunately, the design of U.S. schools emphasizes movement through the grades and graduation from one level to the next, a structure that inhibits a broader, lifelong self-development focus. School counselors have a responsibility to see that their schools encourage lifelong learning as an ongoing objective for all students. This process of learning throughout one's life relates to the second purpose of school counseling programs, one that addresses career development.

Career Development

The school counseling profession, as noted in Chapter 1, has its roots in vocational guidance. Over its brief history, the profession has changed and expanded its role, but career development remains a vital part of comprehensive school counseling programs. Today and in the future, people will face challenging decisions regarding their career choices in an ever-changing world. For this reason, students at all levels of education benefit from activities that introduce them to the world of work, help them examine career interests, and make decisions about educational plans that align with these interests. Having the knowledge and ability to make informed choices about a career is imperative for one's self-development and fulfillment in life. School counselors have a responsibility to assist students in this endeavor.

An essential part of every person's development includes his or her success in planning, choosing, and following a satisfying career. The success people have in pursuing this goal influences many other aspects of their lives. Alfred Adler, noted theorist and therapist, wrote that three main tasks in life include contributions through work, successful sharing with others, and satisfying love relationships (Sweeney, 1998). Each of these three tasks relates to the other two, but of the three, the success people achieve in their careers most strongly influences their social achievements and loving relationships.

The social strata to which people belong, the personal relationships they establish, and the economic successes they achieve are among many factors related to the career choices made over a lifetime. For this reason, schools have the responsibility to help all students use their knowledge and skills to develop realistic and self-satisfying career goals. School counselors help with this process by (1) providing students with accurate information about the world of work and existing career opportunities, (2) assessing students' interests and abilities and sharing these findings to enable students to make appropriate career choices, (3) considering cultural influences in career development, and (4) encouraging students to broaden their options as a precaution to future changes in career opportunities and the job market.



PERSPECTIVE 4-1

How has your career development evolved? In high school, college, and after were any work experiences beneficial or influential in later career choices? What other factors and influences have played a prominent role in leading you to this point in your development? What might your experiences teach you about counseling children and adolescents in the future?

As a lifelong process, career development is an important component of all school counseling programs from elementary through secondary schools. To some people, career information and development seem out of context with the elementary curriculum. This is particularly so considering the attention U.S. schools give to learning basic skills and nurturing personal development. In elementary schools, career development may get only minimal attention. Although children at early ages might not be exposed to occupational information or formal presentations about career choices, family, community, media, and other factors that lead them toward career decisions nevertheless influence them. Counselors and teachers can help with this decision-making process by infusing career information, self-interest activities, and illustrations of the relationship between work and education into daily instruction. At the same time, the school curriculum should guard against gender stereotyping in materials, information, and activities that it presents to these young and impressionable minds.

At the secondary school level, counselors and teachers continue this integration of career guidance into the curriculum and provide services to help students narrow their career interests and choices. In middle and junior high schools, students are exposed to activities and services that enable them to explore current trends in different careers. This exploration helps preteens and young adolescents view career choices in realistic terms. In senior high schools, counselors use an array of strategies including career interest inventories, aptitude testing, and up-to-date occupational information to help students decide about their careers. During high school years, students' decisions about career choices connect to their future educational plans about entering the job market, enrolling in post-secondary schools for technical training, or attending college after graduation. In summary, responsive services of a comprehensive program, in elementary through high school, aim at helping students identify their strengths and link their educational development with career goals and lifelong aspirations (Gysbers & Lapan, 2009).

Personal and Social Development

A third purpose of comprehensive school counseling programs is to facilitate the personal and social development of all students. Achieving academically and choosing a successful career are incomplete goals unless students understand and accept themselves personally and use this understanding to relate with others successfully. Many students achieve academic success in school only to fail in their personal and social development. These failures often lead to dissatisfying lives of social isolation, broken relationships, violent retaliations, substance abuse, depression, and, most tragically, suicide. Comprehensive school counseling programs design activities to help students learn social skills and identify personal attributes that enable them to lead more satisfying lives.

In elementary schools, counselors and teachers develop programs and services that help students learn who they are, explore the similarities they share with others, and examine the differences that make them unique and special as individuals. Classroom guidance, individual counseling, and small-group activities are examples of responsive services used to reach these goals. The elementary child's world is egocentric, and as a result, the roles of the elementary teacher and counselor combine to help children emerge from their self-centered view of the world and move toward one that is accepting of others. Activities that encourage sharing, helping, and cooperation allow children to begin this transformation process.

In middle grades, students become more interested in social groups and members of the opposite sex. Developmentally, boys lag behind girls in many respects, and this gap is noticeable to teachers and counselors who plan activities and services for these students. Middle-grade services in comprehensive counseling programs continue the self-development processes begun in the elementary school and, in addition, place stronger emphasis on physical changes, sexual development, and the importance of social belonging. In many respects, the preadolescent's adjustment to physical changes—growth spurts, body hair, and sexual development—has a tremendous influence on all other aspects of student development. At the same time, a student's social acceptance and rejection have significant implications for future educational, career, and social choices.

Personal and social development in high school is frequently a continuation of patterns that emerge in the middle grades. Students who make smooth transitions from middle school to high school usually are successful in achieving a degree of social acceptance. However, students who are unable to resolve critical developmental issues in their middle school years usually need a counselor's assistance in high school.

Even students who have had few difficulties in elementary and middle school occasionally find challenges and obstacles in the high school years that prove overwhelming. For example, relationships between boys and girls become more serious during this stage, and the success or failure of these relationships can have a significant impact on future social encounters, educational plans, and career aspirations. Failed relationships can relate to dropping out of school, depression, and, tragically, suicide, all of which are concerns of high school counselors. In addition, sexual disease, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, violence, and other social ailments jeopardize a student's social and personal development. High school counselors and teachers plan classroom and school-wide events, individual and small-group counseling, parent education programs, and referral processes to assist students with normal and healthy development. In sum, high school services ideally prevent obstacles from interfering with this developmental process, and at the same time remedy existing concerns that block students' progress.

The broad goals and general activities described here for elementary through high school counseling programs offer a comprehensive interpretation of how counselors and teachers meet the needs of students. Such a general description comes, of course, with some caveats: All students are not exactly the same, with the same perspective of the world and their place in it. The United States is enriched by a multitude of cultural and ethnic perspectives, all of which are brought to school by children of diverse backgrounds. By definition, comprehensive school counseling programs are sensitive to multicultural perspectives and plan individual, group, and school-wide services accordingly.

The services and activities used by professional counselors at elementary, middle, and high school levels are similar. What distinguishes the practice of counselors at these three different levels are the developmental stages and needs indicated by the students in these schools. Because the educational, career-development, and personal and social needs of elementary children are different from those of high school students, specific activities and services provided by counselors for these two populations are also different. Nevertheless, school counselors use some common leadership processes and responsive services across all the educational levels. These processes and services help define and describe the nature and scope of a comprehensive school counseling program.

A Comprehensive Program

A comprehensive school counseling program consists of counseling, consulting, coordinating, and assessment services offered in response to the identified needs, goals, and objectives of the school and community. In a *comprehensive program*, goals and objectives are identified and given priority as the result of adequate assessment and analysis of students', parents', and teachers' needs. A school counselor's decision, therefore, to focus on particular issues and to select specific activities in the program is not made randomly or accidentally. Rather, it occurs as a series of processes that include planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating procedures. The first two of these, planning and organizing, go hand-in-hand to define and describe a school counseling program.

Planning consists of leadership procedures and decisions that help counselors evaluate school-wide goals; assess students', parents', and teachers' needs; and select goals and objectives for their counseling programs. Planning processes are most noticeable at the beginning of the school year, when an accurate assessment of school populations is likely to occur.

Typically, at the start of a school year, decisions about district lines, school reorganizations, and other major events have been made by local boards of education, and schools in these districts are certain about the students who will enroll and the communities that will be served for the year. Knowing this, school counselors assess the general needs of the school and community and make appropriate decisions about preventive, developmental, and remedial services. Although most planning occurs at the beginning of each school year, it remains a continuous process as counselors, teachers, and administrators evaluate ongoing services.

Organizing is a continuation of the planning process and includes the selection of major goals and objectives, and a determination of which services can best address and meet these goals. Program organization also entails assignments and timelines for carrying out specific activities. These assignments and schedules help the school identify who is responsible for what services and when they will be implemented. Leadership skills of the counselor are important to this process. With adequate leadership and organizational skill of a counselor, school counseling programs identify annual goals and objectives clearly; make specific assignments for counselors, teachers, administrators, and other personnel; and develop a schedule of major functions and events for the year. In this way, program organization includes all professionals and establishes each of their roles in a school counseling program.

Implementing is the action phase of a comprehensive school counseling program, when the counselors, teachers, and others deliver the services that constitute the program. Included in these services are individual and small-group counseling, teacher and parent consultation, classroom and small-group guidance, testing, crisis intervention, and referrals. In school counseling programs where counselors fail to plan and organize adequately, implementation may be the only phase readily observable. These counselors are busy performing activities, but they fail to orchestrate and align services to address the major needs of students, parents, and teachers in the school. In such cases, counselors are busy getting the job done, but the job they have identified is not one that is necessarily essential to help students reach their educational goals.

Implementing a program that is devoid of clear goals and objectives is like piloting a plane without a flight plan. The plane is airborne, all instruments are working, but the pilot

has no idea where the plane is heading or why it is going in a given direction. School counselors who take off without clear direction tend to implement services that haphazardly hit and miss the real issues and needs of students, parents, and teachers. Without adequate planning and organizing, the “hits” of these counselors are mostly fortuitous and not likely repeated. Conversely, repetition of successful services is more likely to occur when counselors complement their plans and activities with accurate evaluations and use of existing data to support programmatic decisions.

Evaluating consists of procedures that enable counselors to determine the success of a program’s services, identify apparent weaknesses, and recommend changes for the future. This phase of a comprehensive school counseling program is important to establishing a counselor’s identity and credibility.

Excellent school counseling programs consist of planned involvement of all school personnel, adequate organization, appropriate assignment of responsibilities, competent delivery of services, and accurate measurement of outcomes. A truly effective school counseling program is one that makes a difference in the lives of students, parents, and teachers. By making a difference, school counselors create a clear identity and enhance their value in elementary, middle, and high school settings.

Adequate and accurate program evaluation also enables counselors to return to the initial goals and objectives of the program and assess what changes, if any, to make. In this way, a comprehensive school counseling program is cyclical in nature. Figure 4.1 illustrates this cycle of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating a counseling program. We examine each of these phases of a comprehensive program and their specific elements more fully in Chapter 6. At this point, we examine four approaches or delivery models for comprehensive school counseling programs. What follows are brief descriptions that cannot do justice to these models. I encourage you to research and review works of the original authors and other references to become more familiar with the details of these delivery models.

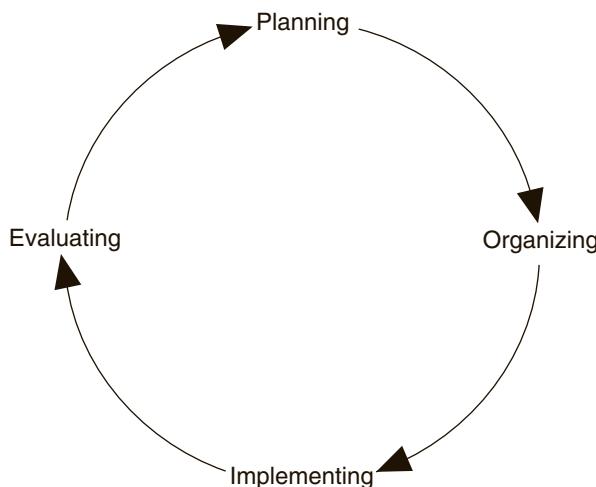


FIGURE 4.1 *Phases of a Comprehensive Program*

The Comprehensive Guidance Program Model

Proposed and researched by Gysbers and Henderson (2001, 2012), the Comprehensive Guidance Program Model was the first clear structure to promote a programmatic approach in contrast to the traditional service-oriented approach to school counseling. This model offers three structural components: definition, rationale, and assumptions. Together, these components do the following: (1) outline the mission of the program, (2) identify the professionals who deliver the program, (3) present the competencies that students will achieve through the program, (4) identify the clients of the program, (5) discuss how the program will be organized, (6) offer a rationale and give direction for the program, and (7) convey the guiding principles and ethical standards upon which the comprehensive program is founded.

The Comprehensive Guidance Program Model consists of four program components, consisting of (1) a guidance curriculum, (2) individual planning, (3) responsive services, and (4) system support. Each of these components is essential to the program. The *guidance curriculum* provides the core for the developmental emphasis of the program. Grade level goals and competencies, K–12, focus on developmental tasks for all students, and are the basis for lessons delivered through small-group or classroom guidance.

Individual planning involves strategies and activities to help students create and implement personal plans for educational, career, personal, and social development. *Responsive services*, as defined in this model, offer preventive or remedial assistance to students handling difficulties, facing barriers, or who have other problems that impede their healthy development in one or more of the focus areas. Sometimes responsive services, such as small-group counseling, might be helpful to students who are struggling with a particular developmental task. Other times, services such as individual counseling or referrals to other agencies are warranted because students are failing to resolve issues or accomplish developmental tasks.

System support has two aspects in this model. The first consists of management behaviors and activities that support the guidance curriculum, individual planning, and responsive services. The second part includes efforts that support the school and the overall educational system, such as teacher consultation, parent education programs, or system-wide initiatives to improve educational opportunities for all students.

The Comprehensive Guidance Program Model (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012) encourages an assessment of current program aspects as the starting point toward developing a viable program. A next step in designing the new program is to establish priorities for delivering services, and include the competencies of the counselors and other staff, parents as partners or as clients, identification of student clients, student competencies, and delineation of the program components (i.e., guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, and system support). This delineation identifies specific activities and strategies to address the priorities for student development.

Developmental Guidance and Counseling Approach

Myrick (2003) is the primary developer of the Developmental Guidance and Counseling Approach. His model uses developmental theories as its foundation, including Erikson's (1963) stages of human development, Purkey's (1970) and Purkey and Schmidt's (1996) review of self-concept theory, and Ivey's (1986) developmental therapy, among other

developmental theories. According to Dollarhide and Saginak (2012), Myrick's work continues as the foundation for Florida's school counseling guidelines.

Similar to the Comprehensive Guidance Program Model (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012), Myrick's model advocates for an organized curriculum to focus on eight developmental goals: (1) understanding the school environment, (2) understanding self and others, (3) understanding attitudes and behavior, (4) decision making and problem solving, (5) interpersonal and communication skills, (6) school success skills, (7) career awareness and planning, and (8) community pride and involvement. In addition, it offers seven guiding principles for a developmental program. These principles expect that developmental guidance (1) exists for all students, (2) consists of an organized, planned curriculum, (3) is sequential and flexible, (4) is an integral part of the overall educational program, (5) involves all school personnel, (6) helps students learn efficiently and effectively, and (7) includes professional counselors who provide counseling services and interventions.

This model suggests six school counselor functions that include the following: (1) individual counseling, (2) small-group counseling, (3) classroom or large-group guidance, (4) consultation, (5) coordination, and (6) peer facilitation (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012). Individual counseling is a primary function in this model, complemented by group counseling and classroom guidance. Each of these functions has a preventive focus, which is an important component of the model. As time allows, counselors would use consulting, coordinating, and peer-facilitating services to complete the program.

The Developmental Guidance and Counseling Approach includes similar types of services and activities as other models, but does not include a specific planning process for designing, organizing, implementing, and evaluating a program. Myrick (2003) suggested, however, that coordination of counseling and guidance services is a significant role for the school counselor, and that managing program priorities across students' developmental needs, school crises, counselor's interventions, and the time available during the school day, week, month, and year is imperative for a successful program.

ASCA National Model

As noted in Chapter 1, the American School Counselor Association has advocated for comprehensive programs for several years, and in 1997 and 1998 published its national standards for school counseling programs and suggestions for implementing these standards (Dahir, 2001; Dahir, Sheldon, & Valiga, 1998). From these publications, ASCA moved toward creating a National Model for school counseling, and published a revised ASCA National Model in 2005, and a third edition in 2012. This model uses many of the concepts promoted by Gysbers, Henderson, Myrick, and other proponents of comprehensive and developmental programs of services. In addition, the ASCA National Model includes a focus on program accountability with an emphasis on student outcomes.

Four overarching themes surround the National Model: leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change. According to the model, these four themes—or skill areas—are essential for school counselors to use in helping all students be successful in their academic, career, and personal/social development.

Leadership is a key skill area for the ASCA National Model, and school counselors serve as leaders to bring about system-wide changes that benefit all students and result in student success. In assuming a leadership position, school counselors find countless roles

in their schools and the broader school system to help groups develop or alter policies, create new programs, and enhance the educational environment for all students.

Advocacy, as mentioned earlier in this text, is a critical component of school counselor functions and comprehensive programs. As such, counselors advocate in multiple ways on various levels for students, parents, teachers, and their schools. Essentially, they advocate removing obstacles, altering policies, and changing processes that obstruct student progress.

Collaboration in the ASCA National Model relates closely to team building. As a function, it is also associated with consultation and efforts to bring people together in working toward common goals that ensure equitable access to avenues that promise academic, career, and personal/social success.

Systemic change results as a culmination of leadership efforts, advocacy, and collaboration orchestrated by school counselors. An important aspect of systemic change highlighted in the ASCA National Model is the conscientious use of data to examine existing programs, policies, and processes, and based on these data, persuade appropriate audiences that changes are warranted.

The *foundation* of a comprehensive program, according to the ASCA National Model, describes the program focus and connects it to the school's mission, student competencies, and professional competencies and ethics. The *management* component offers an organizational structure with management assessments, tools, and strategies that counselors use to plan and deliver a comprehensive program. The *delivery* part of the model outlines implementation processes and the various parts and services of the program, including a guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and indirect student services, similar to those in Gysbers and Henderson's (2012) model. The *accountability* component of this model continuously asks the question, "Did the program make a difference in student development, behavior, or achievement?" An equally important question is, "How was this difference measured?" The term *data-driven* has been associated with the ASCA National Model because of its emphasis on accountability and the need for counselors to know how to use existing data in schools to design programs of services, as well as how to generate data to demonstrate program effectiveness. We consider counselor accountability in Chapter 11 when we explore program evaluation in more detail.

Similar to Myrick's approach, the ASCA National Model does not outline specific stages or phases of a comprehensive school counseling program. However, as Dahir and Stone (2012) noted, the model implicitly encourages implementation through the establishment of a broad-based advisory committee, setting priorities, developing student competencies, assessing current services and program activities, connecting existing services/activities to national standards and competencies, locating weak areas of the program and making appropriate adjustments, seeking commitment from administrators, teachers, and counselors to be involved in delivering the program, and using the four major components of the ASCA National Model (2005, 2012).

Domains/Activities/Partners Model

Dollarhide and Saginak (2012) presented the Domains/Activities/Partners (DAP) model as a systematic way for counselors to organize their programs and comprehend their role and function in the school. The DAP model uses collaborative partnerships to focus on student experiences and activities that result in achievement and other developmental success.

These partnerships include relationships with students, counselors, parents, teachers and other school colleagues, and community professionals.

The DAP model interrelates the three domains of academic development, career development, and personal/social development with four activity groups of counseling, educating, consulting/collaborating, and leadership/coordination/advocacy and with four partner groups—students, parents and caregivers, colleagues in schools, and colleagues in the community. As such, each activity could have some relevancy for any or all of the partnerships. For example, a school counselor might use group counseling with students to focus on academic progress, and could also use short-term counseling with a parent who has suffered a loss that is affecting their role as nurturer for their child or adolescent.

An important component of the DAP model is an effective advisory board. According to Dollarhide and Saginak (2012), counselors want to give priority to creating an advisory board to guide their efforts in designing a comprehensive program, advocating for appropriate changes in the school, and promoting school counseling in the community. This belief is consistent with the ASCA National Model and with recommendations in this text.

The four delivery models presented here have many similar components and philosophies for comprehensive school counseling programs. They complement the generic structure for comprehensive school counseling discussed in this chapter. What is important for new school counselors to remember is that some type of structure and process is necessary to design, organize, implement, and evaluate these types of programs. Such structured programs are preferred over not having any structure or process to decide who needs services, what services to deliver, and how to evaluate whether the interventions and strategies chosen were effective.



PERSPECTIVE 4-2

In this chapter, you have read general information about comprehensive school counseling programs and have learned about four models of service delivery. In this information, what aspects seem most understandable and reasonable at this point to implement if you were a school counselor? What are some aspects that seem more challenging to implement, and why?

In addition to having a structure and process to establish a comprehensive program, school counselors also benefit from having an appropriate setting in which to practice. In the remaining sections of this chapter, we examine counseling facilities, resources, materials, equipment, and personnel.

Facilities

As with other institutions, schools consist of more than philosophies, programs, and services; they also are buildings, materials, equipment, finances, personnel, and other items that enable them to perform an educational function. In doing so, school counselors have needs of their own, such as having sufficient physical space to provide individual and small-group counseling. This space is the counseling center.

The Counseling Center

To provide confidential counseling and consulting services for students, parents, and teachers, counselors need appropriate space within the school. A counseling center usually reflects the level and nature of the school counseling program. Centers in elementary, middle, and high schools vary according to the developmental needs of students, the size of the schools, and the types of major activities in those schools. All these factors influence the design of a counseling center.

Design. Some elementary counselors serve more than one school, and in these situations, they share space with other itinerant personnel, such as speech therapists, school nurses, and special education teachers. These are not the best arrangements in which to develop comprehensive programs, but many counselors are able to create exceptional programs and provide effective services even in the most difficult circumstances.

Ideally, an elementary school counseling center includes a private office for confidential sessions with students, parents, teachers, and others and an adjoining, larger room for group sessions, play activities, and other services. This larger room might include tables and chairs; shelves for storing games, books, and other materials; a sink for cleaning up after playing with paint, clay, or similar media; and a computer center for self-awareness inventories, problem-solving activities, and interactive learning.

In middle schools, counseling centers consist of one or more offices and a larger outer space for students to use books, computers, games, and other materials for self-instruction. In some instances, middle schools assign a secretary to the counseling program and have a reception area. In addition, counselors have access to a conference room to hold small group sessions with students, parents, and teachers. Because space in schools is usually at a premium, conference rooms are generally shared with administrators and teachers, and a staff member schedules and coordinates their use.

Senior high counseling centers are similar to middle school designs, except that in large high schools there are more offices for counselors, and designated space may be available for career materials and equipment. Senior high counseling centers usually store and display career and college materials in an area where students can have ready access to this information. In many centers, computer terminals are available to students who want to search for career and college information. Senior high counselors also have access to one or more conference rooms used for small groups, testing, departmental meetings, and other activities.

Student records should be accessible to all teachers and counselors in a school. In past years, cumulative records were frequently filed in the counseling center. Although this seems a logical procedure, it also has negative aspects. First, teachers may not have easy access to student records when folders are locked in a counselor's office and the counselor is in conference with someone. Furthermore, having student records in the counseling center perpetuates the image of the counselor as keeper of the vault and manager of records. In elementary and middle schools, student records are best filed in administrative offices, where appropriate school personnel can have adequate access. In high schools, where counselors may need more frequent access to student folders, a separate file room near the counseling center is suitable so that teachers can obtain student information without interrupting the services of the counseling program. As society moves rapidly toward electronic storage of records, this might not continue to be an issue in the future.

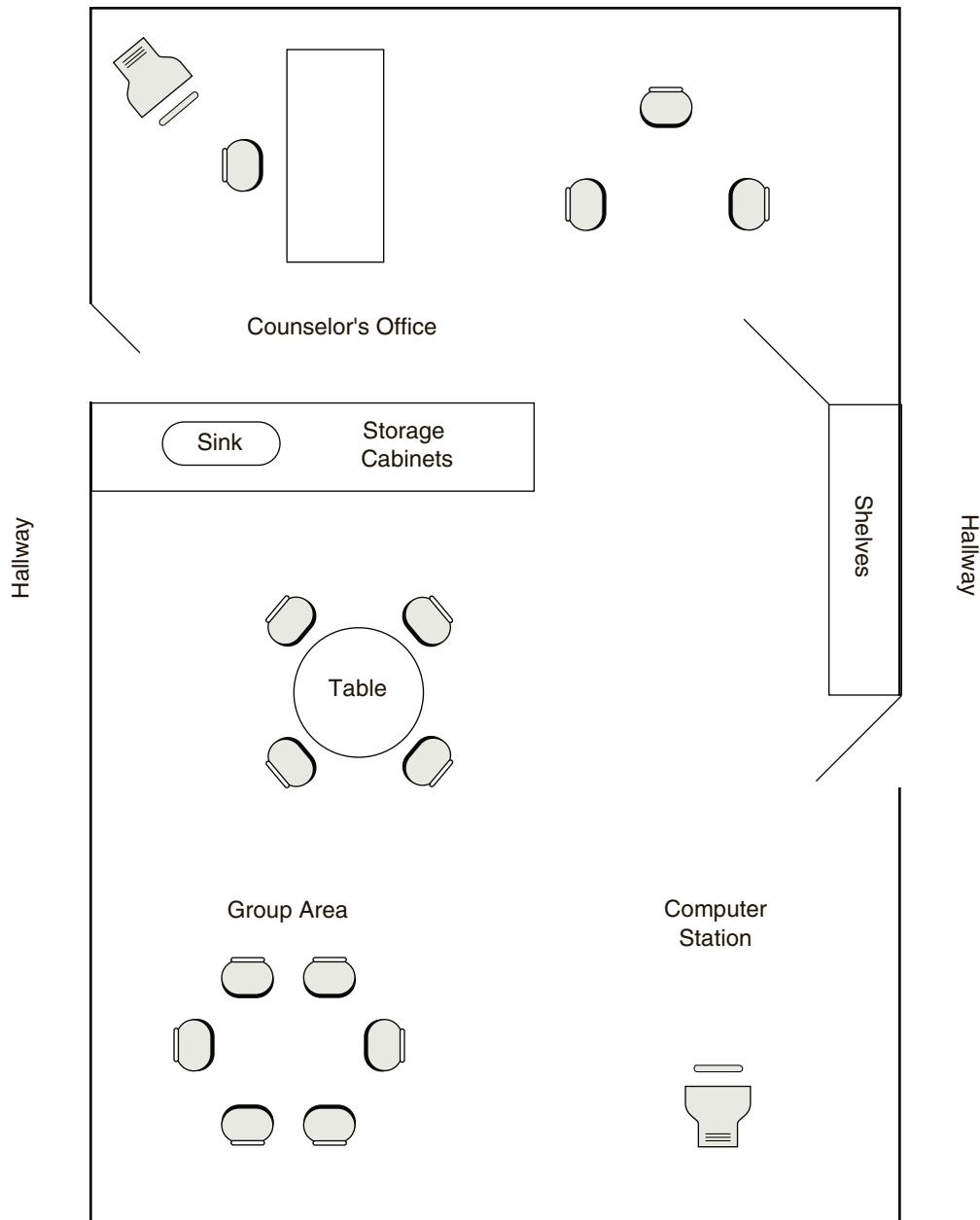


FIGURE 4.2 Elementary School Counseling Center

Figures 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 illustrate counseling centers at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, respectively. These illustrations are samples of what school counseling centers might look like, and are by no means intended as ideal designs.

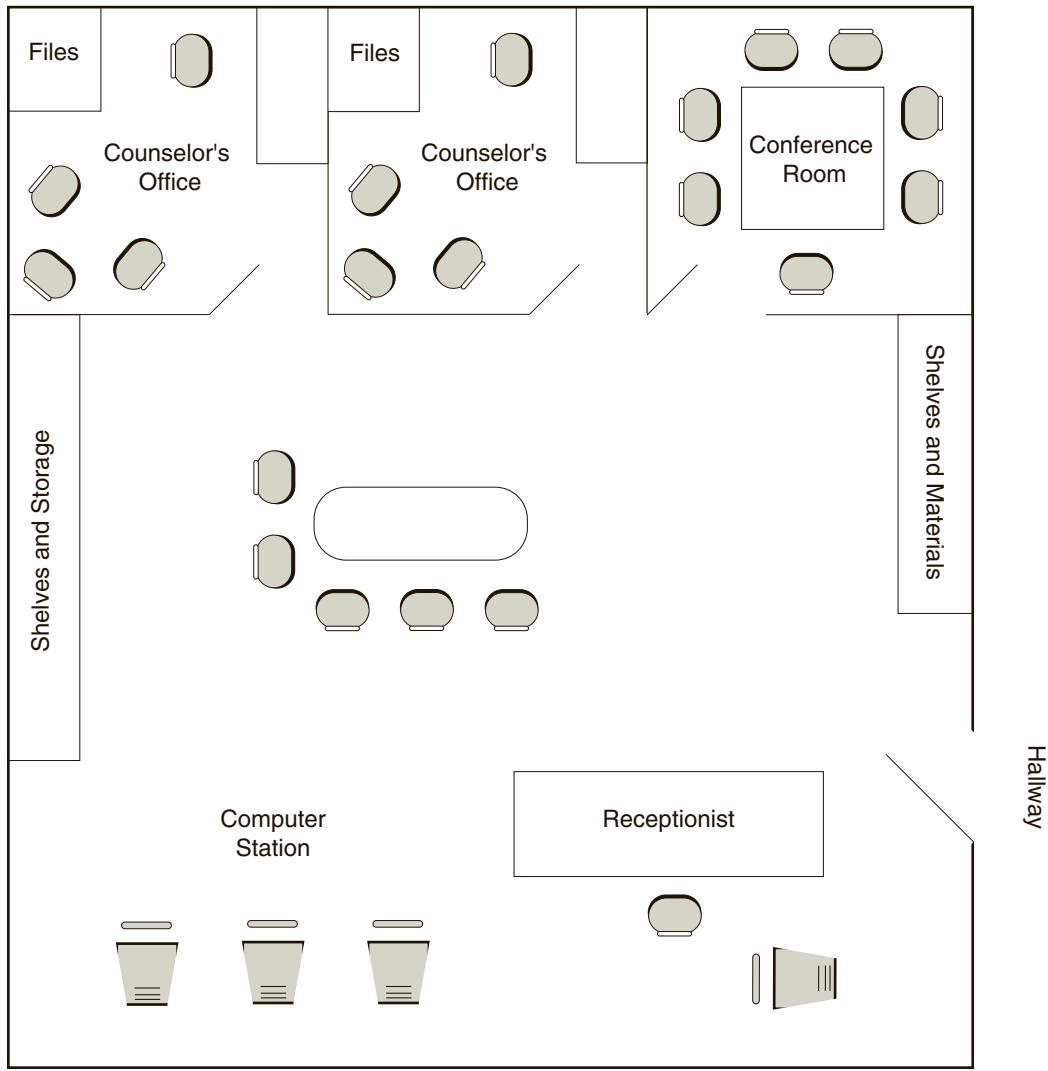


FIGURE 4.3 Middle School Counseling Center

Location. Equally important to the design of a school counseling center is its location. In elementary schools, for example, if the center is located at one end of a sprawling complex away from very young children, the counselor will not be readily available to these students. Counseling centers are best located so that everyone in the school has equal access. Generally, this means placing the counseling office in a central location. Historically, the counseling office was located near the school's administration suite. Although this was advantageous in terms of communication between counselors and administrators, it sometimes was a handicap, because students and teachers tended to associate counselors with

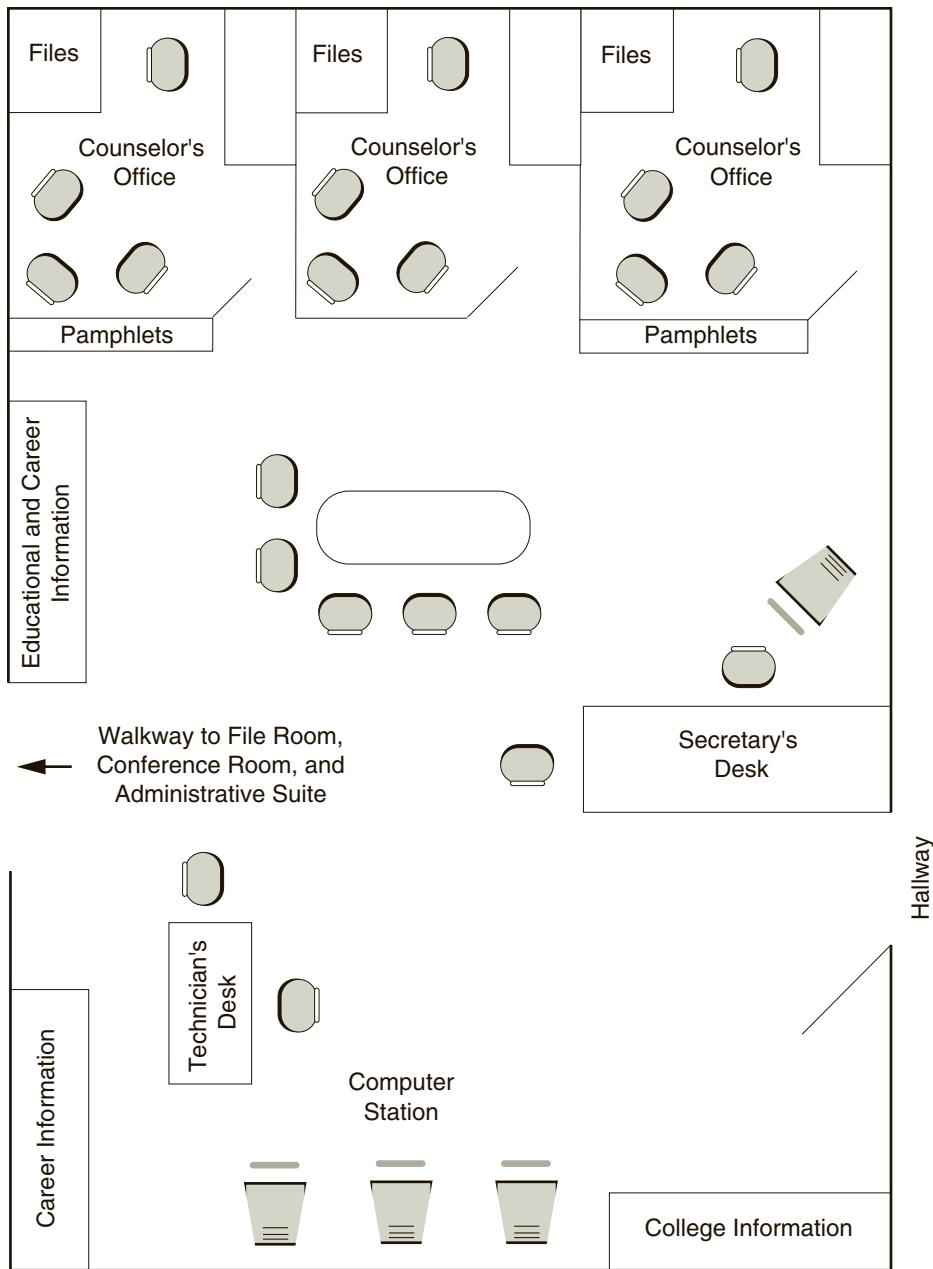


FIGURE 4.4 *High School Counseling Center*

the school administration. This association did not always enhance the image of counselors as advocates for all students.

The location of a counseling center should enhance its visibility, facilitate communication between all groups in the school, and invite people to enter and use its facilities. A location that accomplishes these goals places the school counselor in an optimal position to create and deliver beneficial services to a wide audience. In this way, everyone in the school is included in the counseling program.

Materials and Equipment

A well-designed and optimally located counseling center is complete when it includes appropriate and adequate materials and equipment to deliver intended services. In elementary centers, these materials include games and toys to use in play therapy and to establish rapport with children. Counselors use art media, computer programs, games, developmental learning kits, videos, puppets, and a variety of other items to help children express themselves, experience success, and learn social skills in a safe and nonthreatening setting.

Middle school centers have similar materials but more appropriate for preadolescents. In addition, career exploration materials, self-development resources, and high school information are included. For example, books in a middle school counseling center are available to help students address developmental needs, such as adjusting to their physical changes, handling peer pressure, and preventing substance abuse.

High school centers typically have a stronger focus on career-choice materials, college catalogs, test-taking skill packages, assessment inventories, and substance abuse, pregnancy, and similar materials that address critical health and social issues. As with materials found in elementary and middle school centers, information in high school programs is up to date and developmentally appropriate for students.

In addition to counseling and guidance materials, a school counseling center is furnished with appropriate-size tables and chairs and equipment to use with videos, computer programs, and other media. All this equipment might not be stored in the counseling center, but school counselors and teachers have access to these supplies and apparatus through the media centers of their schools. Elementary counseling centers should have tables and chairs for both young children and adults, because these are the populations served. All counselors should have a telephone with a private line for consultations and referrals, and computers with Internet access for research and communication. Table 4.1 lists equipment and other features typically found in a school counseling center.

Personnel

Facilities, materials, and equipment provide the physical structure and resources for a school counseling program, but it is the people in the program who determine its true value and potential. A comprehensive counseling program includes roles for administrators, teachers, other student services specialists, student helpers, volunteers, and, of course, counselors. In addition, the program uses support staff, especially secretaries and other clerical assistants. Some high schools employ technical assistants who specialize in information

TABLE 4.1 Equipment and Features of a School Counseling Center

Appropriate and sufficient furnishings for students and adults
Audio and visual privacy for counselors' offices
Tables for group activities and conferences
Telephone and computer for each counselor
Internet access
Storage area for materials and equipment
Computers for students' self-instruction and guidance-related programs
Access to a conference room
Waiting area or activity area outside the counselor's office(s)
Secure room where student records can be stored away from the counseling center so appropriate personnel can have access

management, computer scheduling, and similar services, allowing counselors and teachers more time to perform the professional functions for which they were educated and employed. These personnel contribute to the comprehensive nature of a counseling program, beginning with school counselors.

Counselors

The number of counselors hired in a school counseling program makes a difference in the quantity and quality of services offered. Usually, schools employ sufficient counselors to meet the counselor-to-student ratios recommended by professional associations and accrediting organizations. Although these groups do not always have consistent guidelines for schools to follow, recommended ratios generally suggest 1 counselor for every 300 to 500 students enrolled, depending on the grade level of the school. Professional associations, such as ASCA, tend to recommend lower ratios than do regional and state accreditation bodies. For example, the ASCA National Model (2005, 2012) recommends a ratio of 1:250 (Whiston & Quinby, 2011), which few school systems could mandate given the economic realities of this twenty-first century.

It is helpful to have a sufficient number of licensed or certified counselors, but an adequate number does not supplant the need for a well-planned program of comprehensive services. Regardless of the number of counselors employed or the ratio of students to counselors, the success of a school counseling program depends on the overall design of the program, the goals and objectives selected, the leadership counselors provide, and how counselors spend their time serving students, parents, and teachers. Some schools have an ample number of qualified counselors, yet they fail to meet the needs of students because the counselors make little effort to perform an adequate assessment, seek suggestions from teachers, schedule appropriate services, and evaluate results. At the same time, some counselors design comprehensive programs with limited resources and few personnel. Counselors in these poorly funded programs plan, implement, and evaluate to the best of their ability, and usually are successful in meeting the needs of many students.

Clerical Assistants

Schools receive and generate a large amount of paperwork. Sending communications to homes and other agencies; updating student records; filing report cards; preparing local, state, and federal reports; and doing a host of other paper processes contribute to a school's clerical demands. Counselors are not exempt from this burden. Schools need sufficient clerical staff to help counselors and teachers perform their respective duties in a timely fashion. Excellent secretaries and technical assistants are indispensable in today's schools, and this is true for school counseling centers as well. In elementary and middle schools, counselors do not typically have the amount of paperwork found in secondary schools. Nevertheless, any clerical task that removes elementary and middle school counselors from the function of providing responsive services to students, parents, and teachers should be eliminated or reassigned. To assign counselors these types of activities is not cost-effective and is a misuse of school personnel.

In high schools, counselors usually work more closely with student records, transcripts, and similar items. A secretary for the counseling center is essential, and in large schools, a technical assistant responsible for data input and analysis is equally important. These professionals are an integral part of a secondary school's counseling center and advise counselors on efficient ways to handle data, handle the flow of communication, schedule appointments, order materials, enter schedule changes, and manage the budget. In some instances, paraprofessionals or volunteers who assist in the counseling program might handle these services.

Paraprofessionals and Volunteers

Paraprofessionals are persons who have some training in human services and can assist counselors with academic advising, career information, and other initial relationships. They can also perform clerical tasks as the need arises, as can volunteers in the school.

Volunteers offer valuable time to assist with many school services including those of a counseling program. Parents, grandparents, guardians, retired citizens, and others constitute a large pool of available volunteers. Some ways that school counselors use volunteers are as tutors to help students receive additional individual help, guidance assistants to assist with information in the counseling center, and clerical assistants to help secretaries keep up with communications, filing, and other responsibilities.

In all cases where schools and school counselors elect to use paraprofessionals and volunteers, adequate training and orientation to the counseling program are necessary. School counselors who accept the services of these people take time to orient them to both the school and the program. In addition, counselors ensure that these paraprofessionals and volunteers have basic communication and helping skills that complement the services of the counseling program, accept the limits of their role, and understand the roles of counselors and other staff members in the school.

A comprehensive school counseling program, as defined and described in this chapter, includes a broad focus on student development goals and objectives that counselors select through a process of needs assessments and suggestions from administrators, teachers, and other school personnel. In addition, a comprehensive program is complemented by physical facilities, materials, equipment, and personnel to carry out its overall purpose.

Within a comprehensive program are responsive services that define and describe the role and functions of a professional school counselor. Because counselors now function in all school organizations—elementary, middle, and high school—it is important to understand the similarities and differences in how they function at these three levels. Chapter 5 describes the various services provided by school counselors in elementary, middle, and high schools as part of their comprehensive programs.

Additional Readings

Blum, D. J., & Davis, T. E. (2010). *The School Counselor's Book of Lists* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

An updated resource of activities that align with the ASCA National Model, this book is user-friendly for the practicing school counselor, K–12.

Gysbers, N., & Henderson, P. (2012). *Developing and Managing Your School Guidance and Counseling Program* (5th ed.) Alexandria, VA: ACA.

A practical guide for planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating a comprehensive school

counseling program, this book offers a K–12 framework and examples of forms, letters, activities, and evaluation questionnaires.

Whiston, S. C., & Quinby, R. F. (2011). Outcomes research on school counseling interventions and programs. In B. T. Erford (Ed.), *Transforming the School Counseling Profession* (3rd ed., pp. 58–69). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

This excellent chapter summarizes research about responsive services and effectiveness of comprehensive school counseling programs.

Websites

ASCA's National Model
www.ASCANationalModel.org
CollegeNet
www.CollegeNET.com

U.S. Department of Education
www.ed.gov

Exercises

1. Identify a school counselor in your community and make an appointment to visit and discuss the school counseling profession. During your visit, ask the counselor, “How do you plan services?” Ask the counselor if a written plan exists about the program. In class, share your observations about this counseling program. (*Note:* In sharing information about this interview, you should keep the counselor’s name and the school’s name confidential.)
2. Remember when you were in elementary, middle, or high school? Do you remember a counseling center? What do you recall about this place? Share your recollections in a small group and compare similarities and differences.
3. In a small group, take the four stages of a comprehensive program—planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating—and list specific behaviors of the counselor that you would associate with each phase. Share these lists in class, and compile a single master list.
4. Interview a classroom teacher about his or her perspectives on counseling services in schools. What degree of input should teachers have in designing a counseling program? What role does the teacher have in a comprehensive program?

CHAPTER 5

Services of a Comprehensive Program

Earlier in this text, you learned that a comprehensive school counseling program consists of a wide range of services to address the needs of students, parents, and teachers, and that contemporary school counseling services are vital to a school's educational mission. In this chapter, you will see that these services, individually and combined, create the structure of a comprehensive school counseling program. In doing so, they illustrate how today's school counselors have moved from an emphasis on one-to-one services toward programs that advocate group processes in conjunction with individual counseling, and an array of other systemic services that enables school counselors to serve a wider audience of students. Furthermore, the comprehensive services of a school counseling program include activities and processes that extend beyond traditional counseling services.

Chapter 4 noted that a school counseling program consists of four major areas of service: counseling, consulting, coordinating, and appraising. Here, we expand the focus of coordinating activities to include collaborative services for systemic change. This expanded view aligns with the ASCA National Model as well as other models found in current school counseling literature (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012). In this chapter, we explore each of these services and their unique contributions to school counseling programs in a broad summary of how counselors integrate these services into a comprehensive program. In Chapters 7 through 9, we describe these services in greater detail.

Counseling

In helping students, parents, and teachers collect information, explore options, and make appropriate decisions, school counselors use a process commonly referred to as *counseling*. Many texts, articles, and other sources have described and defined *counseling* as a helping process. Over the years, authorities have written countless definitions of *counseling*, with as many differences as there are similarities among them. In addition, counselors have tried to distinguish counseling processes from other therapeutic relationships, such as psychotherapy, but these distinctions are not consistently clear (Gladding, 2009; Granello & Young, 2012). Some theorists and practitioners believe that these efforts are fruitless because the two processes are the same, whereas others insist that psychotherapy is much more intense, in-depth, and long-term than counseling.

The purpose here is not to continue this debate; instead, it is to focus on what counseling is as a helping process and how elementary, middle, and senior high school counselors

use this process in schools with students, parents, and teachers. Chapter 7 explains individual and group counseling more thoroughly. For now, we begin with a brief description of individual counseling and how school counselors deliver this service.

Individual Counseling

School counselors frequently work with individual students to help them focus on particular concerns and make decisions about their goals, relationships, and self-development. In many instances, these helping relationships are defined as *counseling* because they are confidential and ongoing processes that consist of specific phases. Usually, they follow particular theoretical models of counseling and require a high level of helping skills. However, not all individual contacts made between counselors and students illustrate counseling relationships. Some are informational meetings where counselors share data, materials, and other information to help students make educational, career, and other types of decisions. These relationships, as we discuss later, are more accurately defined as *consultations*.

Individual counseling can have a developmental focus by looking toward plans and goals, but it more commonly has a remedial purpose. The *counselee* (also called *client*) raises a concern that is bothersome or problematic. The counselee seeks assistance to clarify a particular concern, explore options to resolve this issue, choose a plan or strategy, and be successful in remedying the situation. Individual counseling usually relies on verbal interactions between counselors and counselees. Because these relationships rely largely on the verbal skills of both the counselee and the counselor, they are not an appropriate service for everyone in every situation. For example, young elementary school children with limited verbal skills probably do not benefit solely from talking relationships in individual counseling. In cases where children have limited verbal ability, counselors might use individual relationships, but the goals of these sessions are primarily to build rapport with the child and gather information through observation and play. Such information helps counselors make decisions about appropriate services to assist children, parents, and teachers with identified concerns.

Sometimes elementary school counselors can be successful with individual counseling that relies on nonverbal interactions, play therapy, and modeling techniques with young children. In these instances, counselors find that their time is well spent, because these encounters help develop trust between the child and the counselor, and the information obtained in these relationships helps the counselor choose an appropriate intervention. More often, however, a child who lacks the verbal skills to interact successfully in individual counseling also lacks other developmental abilities necessary for a successful counseling relationship.

Behavioral maturity and cognitive development are two more areas that complement a student's verbal skills to make individual counseling successful (Henderson & Thompson, 2011). Students who are unable to be attentive for a reasonable length of time or cannot focus on one issue at a time usually need to acquire these behavioral skills before individual counseling can be successful. At the same time, if students do not understand the relationship between their behaviors and successful development or cannot comprehend concepts such as responsibility, self-determination, and acceptance, it is unlikely they will benefit from individual counseling as defined here. Nevertheless, school counselors frequently work with young children individually, as noted earlier, to develop helpful

relationships, observe behaviors in one-on-one settings, and proactively help children learn new behaviors and coping skills.

In schools where counselors are responsible for a large number of students, the decision of whether to use individual counseling relates to the time available. Typically, individual counseling sessions last from 20 minutes to an hour, depending on the age and developmental level of students. If a large percentage of students in the school receive individual services, this is a substantial investment of time and reduces the time available to provide other responsive services for students, parents, and teachers. For this reason, school counselors supplement individual counseling services by forming groups to meet the needs of more students.

Group Counseling

The origins of group counseling are uncertain. Most likely the earliest form of group work in schools was in *group guidance*, described here as instructional and informational services to assist with student development. Allen (1931) is credited with the earliest use of the term *group counseling*, but his description of the process was closer to what we know today as group guidance (Gazda, 1989). In the late 1950s and early 1960s, descriptions of group counseling appeared more frequently in the counseling literature. During this time, group guidance seemed to lose status, particularly in the schools. In the late 1960s, the popularity of group counseling continued to grow with the publication of several major textbooks devoted to this process. Today, as seen in Chapter 7, group procedures that counselors use in schools include both counseling and guidance, and each form has a particular focus and purpose in comprehensive school counseling programs (Geroski & Kraus, 2010).

Group counseling typically consists of a few students who meet on a regular basis in confidential sessions to handle specific concerns or support each other with particular developmental goals. In these sessions, the counselor is the leader who facilitates discussions, supports all the group members, and gives direction to the helping process. Group counseling can take different forms and requires careful planning so it complements other services in a comprehensive program.

Counselors use groups to address a wide array of preventive, developmental, and remedial issues. There are also many ways that counselors form groups, choose group members, and structure group processes. Sometimes counselors form groups because certain students have similar needs, and counselors believe that by asking students to share these mutual concerns, they will benefit more from groups than through individual sessions. For instance, a middle school counselor might have several students referred by their parents because of family divorce. After interviewing each of the students, the counselor invites them to form a group to work through their feelings and support each other during this crisis in their lives. By establishing groups in this way, counselors use common concerns as a basis for counseling, solicit the support and assistance of each group member, ask members to focus on their major concerns, and thereby use time more efficiently to reach a greater number of students.

Although group counseling remains prominent in counseling literature, many counselors resist using this service in their schools. In part, this resistance is due to the difficulty of scheduling group sessions, especially in secondary schools with tight class schedules.

Teachers are protective of their instructional time with students, and counselors struggle to create workable group schedules that cause minimal interference with class time. In comprehensive school counseling programs, group counseling is an important responsive service, and to include it, counselors seek suggestions from teachers and administrators for designing reasonable schedules without undue disruption to the instructional program. Chapter 7 reviews some practical scheduling strategies used by school counselors.



PERSPECTIVE 5-1

Have you ever participated in a group for guidance or counseling? Or, have you experienced other types of helping or informational groups? What recollections do you have of your group experiences, the group leader, and other group members?

Student Counseling

Of the three populations served in a school counseling program, students are the primary target group. Because critical issues affecting their personal, social, educational, and career development challenge students, it is essential that counselors schedule time for individual and group counseling relationships. With the ever-changing structure of the U.S. family and the desire and need for some parents to be out of the home to increase family income, many children and adolescents can be helped by someone with whom they can share concerns and receive accurate information to make appropriate decisions. To be most effective, these critical helping relationships should be private and individual in nature. At times, students may be comfortable sharing concerns with a few other students, but they will still want these discussions to remain private, and this is why group counseling is appropriate in school settings.

Because comprehensive school counseling programs have a broad focus and attempt to serve a wide range of students' needs, counselors try to keep their counseling relationships brief. For this reason, school counselors rely on other mental-health professionals, public service agencies, and private practitioners who serve as referral resources for students and families in need. The decision of when to refer a student is guided by such questions as:

1. Is sufficient progress being made with the student in the current helping relationship?
2. Does the school counselor have adequate preparation and knowledge in the area of concern to assist this student?
3. Is there a more appropriate professional to whom this student could be referred?
4. Are other aspects of the counseling program being neglected due to time being devoted to this relationship?

These questions guide all counselors, whether in educational or clinical settings, in making decisions about whom to counsel and for how long. Similar questions also guide counselors when parents and teachers request counseling.

Parent and Teacher Counseling

Sometimes school counselors are approached by parents and teachers who begin by sharing concerns about students and end up disclosing personal problems of their own. At these times, counselors face the difficult decision of how to handle these requests. The first question school counselors ask themselves in situations such as this is: Should I be providing this service in the counseling program? Does providing short-term counseling to these adults compromise the boundaries you would expect to keep between yourself, as counselor, and parents or teachers? As noted earlier, students are the primary clients of a school counseling program, so counselors must determine what place, if any, parent or teacher counseling has in the school.

There is no clear consensus among professional school counselors regarding this question. Each situation and each request is unique; therefore, no single guideline is applicable. As a result, school counselors take each situation as it develops and use their best ethical and professional judgment to seek appropriate services for whoever is in need. Again, a series of questions helps counselors in schools make the best decisions:

1. Am I qualified to offer the assistance requested by this person?
2. Do any ethical standards guide me in making this decision?
3. Is there another professional to whom I should refer this person?
4. Will students benefit if I assist this person?
5. How much time will I invest if I counsel this person?

At some time, every school counselor is approached by a parent or teacher with a request for services. Generally, counselors listen fully to the request, decide what short-term assistance they can provide, and list available community services from which the person can choose to address his or her concerns. In offering service options, counselors usually list more than one choice so that the person seeking assistance retains responsibility for selecting one that is most appealing and comfortable. To some extent, this type of helping relationship is a combination of counseling and another major function of school counselors—consulting.

Consulting

School counselors frequently receive requests for services that do not require direct counseling. At times, counselors are asked to provide information, present instruction, give suggestions for handling situations, and facilitate planning processes. When counselors receive such requests, the helping relationship they establish is usually a consultation. Consulting, as a major function for school counselors, has received considerable attention in recent years (Brown, Pryzwansky, & Schulte, 2011; Kampwirth & Powers, 2012; Parsons & Kahn, 2005). Kampwirth and Powers (2012) combined consultation with collaboration into a process where the school counselor (and other school-based professionals) is “working in an egalitarian, nonhierarchical relationship with a consultee, assists that person in her efforts to make decisions and carry out plans that will be in the best educational interests of her students” (p. 2). As Brown et al. (2011) noted, not all authorities

agree with the combination of these two terms to define the same process. In this section, we focus on consultation as a particular function of school counselors and save collaboration for a later section when we discuss the counselor's leadership role in bringing about systemic change. Although separated here, Chapter 8 reunites these two terms in recognition of their similarities and overlapping skills. This is consistent with the ASCA School Counselor Competencies (ASCA, 2008) and CACREP (2009) standards, which refer to both processes on separate occasions.

Faust (1968b) was one of the first authors to emphasize a consulting role for school counselors. He recommended several types of consultations that counselors could use in individual and group settings. According to Faust, consulting can take place with students, parents, teachers, student services specialists, administrators, and community agency professionals, a view that continues to outline the consulting role for today's school counselors.

Most commonly, *consulting* is a relationship in which two or more people identify a purpose, establish a goal, plan strategies to meet that goal, and assign responsibilities to carry out these strategies. In *consulting relationships*, one person is the *consultant* who leads the process, and the other person(s) is the *consultee(s)*. In school counseling, the counselor is the consultant, and students, teachers, and parents are usually the consulees. The focus of consultation is a specific need or situation for which information, instruction, or facilitation is requested by a student, parent, or teacher. For example, a mother may ask a school counselor about her child's progress in school. In the subsequent consulting relationship, the counselor becomes the consultant, the parent is the consulee, the child's progress in school is the situation, and the purpose of the relationship is to receive information. In this case, the consulting relationship is an *informational* conference or consultation.

In many respects, the communication skills used in consulting relationships are similar to those found in counseling. Effective listening, facilitating, and decision-making skills are required by both counselors and consultants to help people identify purposes, make plans, and implement strategies. What makes consulting different from counseling are two criteria: (1) Consulting establishes a triangular relationship including the consultant, consulee, and an external situation usually involving a third individual or a group of people; and (2) consulting services often use indirect helping processes to address an identified situation. In contrast to this second criterion, counseling is a direct service to assist people in achieving self-awareness, focusing on self-development, or learning new coping behaviors. Chapter 8 describes a more detailed description of consultation skills and the consulting process.

Another way of understanding how school counselors use consulting functions is to observe the different types of consultations they establish with students, parents, teachers, and other professionals. By using a variety of consulting services, counselors are able to disseminate information, instruct groups, lead teacher-parent conferences, and plan other services to help a large number of students in schools.

As you see, leadership knowledge and skills are essential in successful consulting relationships. One of the most frequent types of consulting used by school counselors is information services.

Information Services

School counselors often act as resources for information needed by students, parents, and teachers. They locate and dispense information to help students make choices about educational,

career, and personal goals. As examples, high school students seek information from counselors to help them select appropriate courses of study to satisfy their educational goals; middle-graders ask for information to help them with peer relationships and friendships; and elementary students need to know about the school, its facilities, and its programs. Parents and teachers consult with school counselors about available special services to help students learn, summer enrichment programs for learning and development, scholarships and other financial aid for college, and many other reasons. Informational consultations usually address the needs that students and parents have for community and school resources, career and educational materials, and financial assistance.

Community and School Resources. Although schools are primarily responsible for educating children, this process does not take place in isolation. Many factors influence a student's ability to take advantage of a school's instructional program. Physical and medical problems, family concerns, and learning disabilities are among the many issues that influence a child's progress throughout his or her school life.

As a resource in the school, the counselor is available to help parents and teachers locate information in the school system and community to assist with children's total development. For this reason, counselors find out about special programs and services in the school systems where they work, and they make every effort to learn about community resources and programs that can benefit students. Special education programs, tutoring services, child nutrition information, and other school services can be resources to help students move smoothly through their school years. Likewise, mental-health services, recreational programs, religious-sponsored support groups, social services, and youth clubs are among countless resources organized and funded by local communities to assist with human development.

Career Opportunities. School counselors are prepared in career theory and development, and are concerned with linking career decisions to educational progress. At the senior high school level, counselors consult with students to help them find information to make appropriate career selections. Information about career opportunities is in local news resources, employment offices, and federal guides such as the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (www.occupationalinfo.org/dot_search.html) and the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (www.bls.gov/oco). In addition, school counselors and students use computer-based systems and the Internet to gather information about careers of interest to them.

In elementary and middle schools, counselors provide information to students and teachers about the world of work and career opportunities to help with early career exploration. Usually, counselors and teachers use this information to design career guidance experiences that they integrate with classroom instruction. For example, a middle school teacher who plans to introduce chemicals into a classroom science lesson might search for information about chemical production careers that exist in the local community and surrounding area. In this way, the teacher links career goals and objectives with science education objectives in the curriculum. The school counselor assists the teacher in planning this integration of science and career guidance. Counselors also cooperate with the school's media coordinator to suggest materials for review and purchase. At all school levels, elementary through high school, the media center is a vital resource center for a wide range of materials including career information. By cooperating with their media coordinators,

school counselors ensure that career information is current, accurate, and available to students and teachers.

Educational Opportunities. Another type of informational consultation is locating educational services, programs, and opportunities that complement and support students' overall development. Facts and details about talent searches for gifted students; summer camps for enrichment activities; college and university programs for elementary, middle grade, and high school ages; and business-supported ventures in the community are a few examples of information that counselors disseminate to enhance learning opportunities for all students.

At the senior high school level, educational consultation with students becomes more visible as a responsive service of the school counseling program. High school students are narrowing their choices of career and postsecondary educational opportunities, and senior high school counselors are a primary source of information about jobs, technical schools, and colleges. Ideally, this information is also part of the teachers' role in academic advising. When this is so, information about educational opportunities is widely disseminated through the counseling program, homeroom classes, and advisor–advisee activities.

Consulting with parents and students about educational opportunities raises another issue for which counselors can be a resource. Extracurricular programs and educational endeavors beyond high school cost money, and counselors frequently consult with students and parents about financial resources. The cost of sending a child to summer camp or the tuition for college is an awesome barrier for many families. Helping them find information to address these and other financial concerns is another way that school counselors act as consultants. Elementary and middle school counselors work with social service agencies, health departments, religious organizations, and other community services to find assistance for family needs. High school counselors do likewise and cooperate with colleges and universities to locate grants, loans, and scholarships for students' tuition.

Financial Assistance. Parents want the best for their children, but often the best seems out of reach economically. In public schools, children and adolescents come from a wide spectrum of economic deprivation and affluence to study and learn side by side. Frequently, this diversity separates groups of students rather than unites them. Schools attempt to provide equitable programs, services, and opportunities to disparate groups, but the wider this difference is the greater the challenge of providing equal education for all students. Sometimes simple activities, such as eating lunch together in the cafeteria, become striking illustrations of the differences that exist among students in the same school. One child whose family does not qualify for federal assistance opens a meager lunch and sits between another student with a full plate of free lunch and a third student whose affluence is apparent not only by the luxurious fare but also by the space-age container in which it is carried to school.

School counselors are frequent providers of information regarding financial resources for families and their children. In schools that are fortunate enough to have social workers, counselors share this responsibility. For some students in elementary and middle schools, financial assistance can make the difference in meeting basic clothing and nourishment needs so that students can adequately learn in school. Consulting with parents and guardians about where to seek financial assistance is essential for optimal student learning to take place.

In high schools, counselors help adolescents with resources to meet their basic needs and, as mentioned earlier, also help families find the funds to send students to appropriate postsecondary educational institutions. Technical schools, colleges, and universities are expensive ventures, and most of today's families need assistance in helping their children reach this goal. School counselors alone do not own this responsibility, but because of their role in academic advising, many senior high counselors assume financial assistance as one of their primary responsibilities. Secondary counselors assumed this role during the early years of school guidance and counseling. For many high school counselors it has continued, and for some it is a major function. Other secondary counselors use volunteers, such as parents, to assist students with college information and financial aid forms. In this way, counselors provide accurate financial information without allowing this single function to consume an inordinate amount of time and replace other responsive services or leadership roles in the counseling program. Volunteers receive training in current financial aid information and schedule time in the counseling center to answer questions for students and parents. They also help counselors with classroom presentations to distribute materials to students at appropriate times during the year.

As discussed, informational consultation takes many forms. School counselors use individual consultations, large group sessions, computer-based self-assessment, interest inventories, and printed media to disseminate accurate and current information. When presenting information in large group sessions, counselors often adopt another type of consulting mode; they instruct students, parents, and teachers.

Instructional Services

Contemporary school counselors include large-group instruction as part of their consulting services for students, parents, and teachers. These instructional relationships are similar to classroom instruction in that they impart information or teach new skills, but they are also different because they are free of evaluation. Therefore, students who receive instruction from a counselor are typically not evaluated for their participation in these activities; students do not receive a grade. Without this element of evaluation, these instructional sessions are less inhibitive and more facilitative in encouraging students to ask questions and share opinions about important issues. These kinds of instructional consultations are usually structured as classroom guidance with students, educational programs for parents, and in-service workshops for teachers.

Classroom Guidance. As noted in Chapter 1, the school counseling profession began in the early 1900s with a focus on classroom guidance and eventually moved toward one-on-one counseling in the 1960s. Contemporary school counseling programs include large group services as well as individual counseling to meet the unique needs of all students. In these programs, guidance is an integral area of the curriculum, and teachers and counselors collaborate to plan effective educational goals and objectives and create guidance activities for daily instruction. I hold the view that classroom guidance, when delivered by counselors in schools, is a form of instructional consultation.

Counselors sometimes present guidance lessons as part of their consulting role in school. These presentations usually are the result of requests from teachers who want students to receive specific information or skills to deal with particular concerns. At times,

teachers may be uncomfortable about sensitive issues, such as sexual development in adolescence, and want counselors to assist in planning and presenting guidance lessons to address these concerns. Other times, teachers believe that a more objective presenter is effective in achieving desired results, such as having the counselor lead classroom guidance discussions to focus on student behaviors in class.

In comprehensive programs, counselors also use guidance instruction in small-group sessions that are either one-time meetings or ongoing sessions to share information or teach coping skills to students who have a particular need. In these groups, counselors use some type of media or instructional material to help students understand and achieve the identified goals. Sometimes, the difference between ongoing small-group guidance and group counseling becomes blurred. This is particularly true when working with young children, for whom group counseling can be quite structured because of their maturational levels. The major difference between guidance and counseling in these instances may simply be the aspects of confidentiality and privacy, which are essential in all counseling relationships. Instructional relationships, such as small-group guidance, do not necessarily include the element of privacy or the limit of confidentiality.

Parent Education. A parent education program is another type of instructional consultation used by school counselors. As with classroom guidance, parent education can take place in a single session, such as a counselor's presentation to a parent–teacher association meeting, or can occur in a series of meetings that focus on parental and family needs. In all these presentations, school counselors assume different roles depending on the nature of the programs they have designed. For example, in presenting information about child development to a group of elementary school parents, a counselor may take the role of an expert consultant, sharing research and other factual data. In contrast, another counselor may lead a parent discussion group about child discipline and take a facilitator role to keep the discussion on target and give all participants an opportunity to share their opinions. In this second case, the counselor facilitates learning by having parents share their own expertise as family leaders.



PERSPECTIVE 5-2

What preparation have you had that would enable you to be an effective instructional leader? Do the skills and knowledge you have translate to leading a wide audience of participants, including children, adolescents, and adults? If not, how will you obtain such preparation for your expanded role as a school counselor?

By using consulting skills and instructing parents in various aspects of child development, adolescent behavior, and communication, school counselors provide indirect responsive services to a larger number of students. As parents become more knowledgeable and skilled, they create beneficial relationships with their children and optimal home environments for learning. For this reason, these types of functions for school counselors are an important part of comprehensive programs. When counselors are unable to provide these services directly to parents, they rely on community resources, such as private counselors, mental-health practitioners, and social workers, willing and able to organize and lead parent education groups.

FORM 5.1 *Teacher In-Service Survey*

Teachers: Please check below the topics of interest about which you would like in-service presentations this year. If you want to hear about topics not listed, please indicate so on the bottom of the form. Also, if you have expertise in a particular area and are willing to present a workshop or a session at a faculty meeting, please indicate so at the bottom of this form.

Topics for in-service this year:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Suicide prevention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom management | <input type="checkbox"/> Conferring with parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional techniques | <input type="checkbox"/> CPR training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special education regulations | <input type="checkbox"/> Communication skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internet and instruction | <input type="checkbox"/> Handling crises |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New instructional material | <input type="checkbox"/> Using the media center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> Peer-helper programs |

Other topics: _____

I am willing to present on: _____

Name: _____

Teacher In-Service. Teacher in-service workshops are a third type of instructional format used by school counselors. Because teachers are the first-line helpers in schools, they need information and instruction to provide initial services for students who request assistance or have a need. School counselors assist teachers by planning and presenting workshops on particular topics or skill development. As with parent education groups, when counselors are unable or unqualified to lead such training, they seek appropriate instructors or consultants to present these seminars. In many cases, teachers in schools are well qualified to present in-service assistance for their colleagues. Perceptive school counselors survey teachers at the beginning of each year to assess their needs and establish a list of potential presenters. Form 5.1 is a sample of this kind of survey.

By planning and organizing various instructional services, school counselors illustrate how they contribute to the overall school mission and strengthen their relationships with parents, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel, enabling counselors to establish ties that enhance their role in problem solving and mediating situations, which are other types of consultations.

Problem-Solving Services

As with any large organization consisting of diverse groups, schools are sometimes challenged by threats and hazards posed by students, parents, and teachers—students sometimes believe school rules are unfair, parents are dissatisfied with instructional procedures, and teachers want support from home and family in educating children. These and other conflicts can disable schools if not addressed openly and with genuine regard for all parties.

Counselors use consulting skills and processes to assist people in resolving these conflicts, accepting the views of others, and selecting agreeable goals to move forward. In these consulting relationships, counselors use effective communication skills, support all sides involved in the conflict, and attempt to negotiate reasonable solutions (Purkey, Schmidt, & Novak, 2010).

Parent–Teacher Conferences. One way that school counselors assume a consulting role to resolve problems is by facilitating parent–teacher conferences. These meetings are scheduled either at regular times during the year to report student progress, test results, and other educational information to parents, or when either teachers or parents become concerned about student development and behavior. The role of the school counselor in these conferences varies depending on the issues at hand and who has initiated the conference. When a teacher calls the conference and invites the counselor to attend, that teacher defines the purpose of the conference and role of the counselor. Sometimes counselors and teachers need to negotiate this role, particularly if the counselor believes the role defined by the teacher conflicts with professional or ethical guidelines. Occasionally, counselors arrange parent–teacher conferences and assume leadership roles.

When parent–teacher conferences occur for informational purposes, a counselor’s involvement may simply be to share and interpret data, such as a child’s test results. When conferences are to resolve differences between parents and teachers or to solicit parental support about a child’s behaviors, a teacher may ask the counselor to lead the conference, mediate differences, and facilitate decision making to assist parents and teachers in reaching an agreeable solution. On such occasions, the teacher calls on the counselor’s leadership abilities.

Parent–teacher conferences, particularly those that rely on the counselor’s ability to mediate and facilitate solutions, can test a counselor’s leadership skills as well as his or her professional relationships with parents and teachers. Counselors want to establish helpful relationships with both parents and teachers, but sometimes the support they give to one party causes them to lose favor with the other. Ideally, counselors remain neutral in these consulting roles and draw on the expertise of parents as leaders of the family and the knowledge of teachers as instructional experts in the school. The goal in these conferences is to have all these respective experts share their views, select common goals for the good of the child, and agree on reasonable strategies to reach these goals. These types of consultations test a school counselor’s preparation in communication and helping skills. It is often difficult to satisfy all parties, particularly when they do not agree on clear alternatives.

Administrative Conferences. Principals and other administrators sometimes seek information about problems they are having with particular students or difficulties they observe in the school as a whole and call on school counselors’ consulting skills. School principals manage all aspects of the educational and extracurricular programs. This is an awesome responsibility, and most principals rely on specialists, such as school counselors, to provide accurate information and use specialized training to assist with problems.

Effective counselors meet with their principals on a regular basis to report the progress of their counseling program and inform principals about significant events that affect schools. In these conferences, counselors keep administrators up to date about responsive services and critical issues they are handling in the program. Although confidentiality

remains unbroken in these conferences with principals, counselors can share general information about their concerns regarding situations in the school. For example, a senior high counselor who has seen a sudden rise in referrals for substance abuse may not be able to give the names of students receiving counseling, but could alert the principal about the increased use of drugs and alcohol by students in general. In this way, administrators, teachers, and counselors can place themselves in a position to plan preventive services in the school, solicit community support, and involve parents as necessary in assisting students in need.

Communication between administrators and counselors is essential to provide appropriate and comprehensive services in schools. Such cooperation allows for respect and acceptance of professional roles and builds a level of trust with which the judgment of counselors and the leadership of principals balance to meet the needs of students. When school counselors fail to achieve this level of cooperation and trust, they become limited in the services they offer to students, parents, and teachers.

Student Services Team Conferences. Many authors of articles and books on counseling advocate a team approach for coordinating student services in schools (Dahir & Stone, 2012; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Schmidt, 2010). Team approaches use various titles, including *student services team*, *pupil personnel team*, and *child study team*. Although these names may differ, their purposes and goals are similar. Generally, these teams include the school counselor, a psychologist, a social worker, a nurse, an administrator, and teachers. Special education teachers are usually present as well. Occasionally, these teams include professionals from agencies outside the school, such as mental-health counselors, caseworkers from social services, and pediatricians from medical centers. Involvement of these professionals widens the range of expertise on the team, and opens more options and alternatives to help with student development.

The main purpose of student services teams is to follow cases of children and adolescents who are experiencing particular learning and behavioral difficulties. The teams coordinate services and see that each student receives adequate attention to meet his or her needs. Sometimes, teams include agency representatives to coordinate services between the school and community. In the most difficult cases, coordination is essential if students are to receive beneficial and comprehensive services.

Because school counselors usually serve individual schools, they are a logical choice to lead student services teams. They apply consulting skills to coordinate the services of these professional groups, resolve differences of opinion, and ensure that the school and community are meeting students' needs. Making sure that services are provided in a timely fashion and smoothing differences among professionals whose areas of expertise often overlap is indeed a challenge. For this reason, mediation, negotiation, and facilitation are among the consulting skills required by school counselors in these leadership roles.

Other School Services

In addition to establishing consulting relationships to disseminate information, give instruction, and facilitate conferences, school counselors assist schools in planning school-wide activities for the benefit of students, parents, and teachers. The following sections illustrate ways that school counselors assume a leadership role in advocating on behalf of

all students. Such advocacy seeks to improve the curriculum, provide appropriate services for students, ensure a safe and inclusive school environment, and create services to meet the needs of all students. These activities help schools focus on the development of all students and foster awareness of the factors that influence students' welfare. The ability to maintain a wide-angle focus on students' development is the hallmark of an effective school counseling program and, correspondingly, a successful school.

Many factors contribute to successful schools. As Purkey and Schmidt (1996) noted, everything counts—every program planned, every policy drafted, every process implemented makes some difference, positive or negative—to someone in the school. To ensure that school programs, policies, and processes contribute in positive ways to the development of people, counselors help plan appropriate services and activities. This begins with the guidance curriculum.

Guidance Curriculum. Guidance is the responsibility of everyone in the school, and is best implemented when integrated as part of the curriculum. Guidance does not occur at a single moment or as a solitary event when a teacher says, "Students, put your books away; it's time for guidance!" Rather, it is best infused with all subjects and in all daily instruction. For this infusion to happen successfully, teachers and counselors plan appropriate activities for classroom instruction.

In elementary and middle schools, where teachers join in teams by grade levels or subject areas to plan instructional programs, counselors consult with these groups to share guidance objectives and offer suggestions of activities to use in classroom instruction. In high schools, counselors meet with departments to achieve a similar purpose. This process of planning together allows teachers to use counselors as resources while maintaining their leadership role in the instructional program. These consultations also allow counselors and teachers to share information about particular students who are struggling and in need of additional services beyond classroom guidance.

Individual Student Planning. Adequate responsive services for students do not occur by accident. They require conscious and careful planning. Likewise, students do not achieve educational career goals without finding a direction and choosing methods to reach their objectives. School counselors help meet individual student needs and assist all students in selecting goals and strategies that satisfy their aspirations.

As noted, a guidance curriculum provides developmental and preventive activities for all students in the school, and is the primary reason why counselors and teachers integrate guidance into classroom lessons. However, some students struggle with serious concerns that demand attention beyond participation in affective education programs. These students need more intense preventive and remedial services. To select and schedule these types of services for students, counselors consult with teachers and parents so that they make appropriate plans.

In exceptional children's programs, schools develop individual education plans (IEPs) for all identified students. Planning by counselors, teachers, and parents who develop these IEPs is essential in providing appropriate services. The same type of preparation is appropriate for students who do not qualify for special education services but who nonetheless are failing in school. These students also need special attention and individual plans.

Students who do not have exceptional needs and do not require intensive interventions also consult with counselors to review their educational and career goals. Contacts made by students with their counselors, particularly in middle and high schools, are for the purpose of gathering information and making plans for the future. Sometimes these consultations between counselors and students are brief, single sessions; other times, they may last for several meetings. These sessions are consulting rather than counseling relationships because their emphasis is on sharing information and making plans for the future. In addition, they usually do not reveal any underlying emotional or personal problems that need attention by the student and counselor.

Special Events and Projects. Many events in elementary, middle, and high schools supplement instructional programs during the year. Counselors become involved in planning some of these events so that they are available to all students and the programs incorporate objectives that parallel broader school goals. Counselors who plan events such as “Substance Abuse Awareness Week,” “Good Citizen of the Month Award,” and “Special Olympics” illustrate their commitment to the entire school and all student development.

Special events and projects that require planning and consulting on the part of school counselors in a comprehensive school counseling program include teacher-advisor programs, testing services, and peer-helper programs. These programs and services require a high degree of coordination for counselors to be successful in schools. Coordinating is another important service of a comprehensive school counseling program.

Coordinating

By now, it is probably clear that a comprehensive school counseling program consists of a variety of services and activities, some of which counselors provide directly to students, parents, and teachers, and others that affect the welfare of students indirectly. Counselors deliver many of these services and have responsibility for coordinating a number of other activities that benefit students and schools. In this section, we examine some coordinating activities used by most professional counselors in schools. These activities are not the only ones that counselors use, but they offer a sample of responsibilities assumed and directed by counselors to help schools use appropriate and accurate data, follow through on responsive services, plan a school-wide focus for student development, and take a leadership role in advocating for systemic change in school and school system programs, policies, and processes.

Data Collection and Sharing

Education begins with the process of determining what students already know so that schools can design appropriate curricula and instruction to enhance and build on existing knowledge. In addition, the design of appropriate curricula and instruction depends on many students’ characteristics, including their abilities and learning styles. Throughout students’ educational careers, schools gather information to help teachers make accurate decisions about programs and processes related to learning. School counselors are knowledgeable of testing and measurement, different types of data, accurate ways of interpreting

data, and they are available to assist teachers in collecting data to make these important decisions. ASCA published a useful guide and workbook for school counselors to help them understand data, ways to collect various forms of data, how to make sense of data, and avenues for sharing data with school populations and stakeholders (Young & Kaffenberger, 2009).

One major area of data collection in which schools have become involved in recent years is testing. Most schools, elementary through high school, use standardized tests to assess students' abilities and evaluate students' achievement at the end of the school year. School counselors traditionally have had responsibility for organizing, scheduling, and monitoring the administration of these types of group tests. These responsibilities constitute, in part, the function known as *student assessment* (also known as *appraisal* or *evaluation*), which we examine at the end of this chapter and in more detail in Chapter 9. For now, we consider how the uses of tests, inventories, and other measurement procedures are coordinated in comprehensive school counseling programs.

Test Administration. There are several types of tests and assessments used with students. Tests are generally used to determine students' aptitude and achievement in school. Schools administer aptitude tests at different times during the year, depending on how they plan to use the results. For example, if test data will help teachers place children into appropriate instructional programs for the coming school year, the school administers tests during the spring semester so that scores will be available at the start of the next school year. Typically, schools administer achievement tests toward the end of the year, so that teachers can evaluate the progress of students and share these results with students and parents.

U.S. public schools under the federal dictate of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; U.S. Department of Education, 2002) stress testing results as a measure of a school's performance. This emphasis on high-stakes testing places significant pressure on teachers and administrators to increase student achievement. Although this is an admirable goal, NCLB has had its share of critics and its impact on classroom instruction and student achievement nationwide is yet to be determined. Sadly, this pressure has also led some schools to break rules and compromise standardized practices in order to present higher (albeit fraudulent) outcomes to the public. For counselors in schools, the challenge has been to help students and parents deal with the realities of testing while supporting their teaching colleagues and administrators in meeting the demands of government and society.

Counselors also administer individual tests and other assessment instruments if there is a need for such information. For example, a student new to a school may need to take an achievement test if recent data are not received from the transferring school. Such assessment helps teachers place the student in an appropriate course of study so that valuable instructional time is not wasted.

School counselors often have responsibility for ensuring the proper administration of tests in accordance with standardized instructions. With individual tests, it is the counselor's responsibility to choose appropriate instruments for which he or she is adequately prepared, and to administer these assessments according to proper procedures. With group-testing programs, counselors often assist their schools in coordinating materials, training teachers and test monitors, and scheduling administration of the examinations. In large schools that test students frequently, such coordination is a tremendous responsibility, and

sometimes it interferes with other functions of the counseling program. When this happens, counselors rely on teachers' assistance, clerical aides, and parent volunteers to help coordinate materials, monitor test administrations, and schedule makeup examinations. In schools where coordination of the testing program is a major administrative and clerical task, teachers, administrators, and counselors might form a testing committee to assign different responsibilities for various tasks. Alternatively, the school might employ a testing coordinator for the primary purpose of providing administrative services for the testing program. By using alternative methods, coordination of testing takes place without interfering with other important services of the program.

Test results are useful only if obtained under the proper circumstances. Therefore, test materials are secure before-and-after test administration, students are properly prepared and ready for the selected test, teachers are familiar with instructions for administering the test, and an ethical environment gives students an opportunity to achieve optimal results. When these conditions are satisfied and valid tests are used, schools can be comfortable with the reliability of students' results.

Test Results. After tests have been administered and scored, the data need to be used for the purposes intended. Appropriate distribution and utilization of test data require adequate coordination. Again, counselors prepared in testing and measurement have the background to help students, parents, and teachers understand test data, and, consequently, to use these results in making educational and career decisions. In addition, counselors assist administrators in understanding the school-wide results and accurately reporting these outcomes to the school system and local media.

Tests can be useful in diagnosing and assessing student progress, or they can become diabolical tools of the misinformed. School counselors who coordinate the use of test results have an obligation to help schools convey an accurate picture of their instructional program's strengths and weaknesses. At the same time, they protect individuals from interpretations that lump all students into a single category based on norm-referenced data. For example, when test summaries indicate that the average student's score is below the mean, public reports should also show the range of scores, including the percentage of students above and below the mean. By reporting results in this manner, schools present a clear picture of how the total student population performed on the test. Reporting mean scores alone shows only a single dimension.

The most important role counselors have in coordinating test reports is the use of these data with students, parents, and teachers. Students in elementary, middle, and high schools can gain understanding of themselves by learning about their performance on tests and interest inventories. Of course, the explanations they receive should be developmentally appropriate for them to comprehend, and counselors at all school levels should convey these explanations accurately. Parents also need to know how their children perform on educational tests. With accurate knowledge, they can help children learn about areas of strength and weakness, and they can better guide children in educational and career choices.

Teachers are equally important in the processes of using and interpreting standardized tests and inventories. Tests and other measurement techniques play a vital role in helping teachers plan effective instruction and choose appropriate materials for students. The school reform movement in the United States has placed additional emphasis on student assessment

and the relationship between teaching effectiveness and student performance. School counselors have the knowledge to assist teachers in selecting appropriate evaluative processes and instruments and in using the data collected to improve instruction and student learning.

Chapter 9 presents specific examples of how school counselors help teachers select tests and use results to improve instructional programs. The major point to be made here is that counselors are knowledgeable of testing and measurement techniques, and they use this expertise not only to administer tests and inventories, but also to coordinate the appropriate use of data from these assessment instruments, including planning ways to disseminate accurate information and following up to ensure that the information is used appropriately. As examples, school counselors discuss test results with individual teachers in conferences about specific students and entire classes, and they also present in-service workshops to help teachers use test data to identify instructional strengths and weaknesses and in planning adjustments to the curriculum.

Data collected about students are usually in cumulative folders stored in a central file room in the school to which appropriate personnel have access. Decisions about the use of students' records relate to another area of program coordination for which counselors often have responsibility.



PERSPECTIVE 5-3

What does the term data mean to you? Think about the emotional response, if any, you have when reading or hearing about the use of data. In daily life, how do you gather and use data in making life decisions? Could this use of data translate to your work as a counselor?

Students' Records. In most school systems, students' records begin when children enter school for the first time and follow each child through his or her school career. Local policies, state regulations, and federal laws guide decisions about what information should be placed in students' cumulative folders. A major guide for schools is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) passed by Congress in 1974 and modified by the Grassley Amendment (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012). This bill, commonly called the *Buckley Amendment*, gives parents of minor students the right to review all school records about their children.

Since passage of this act and subsequent amendments, schools have become more sensitive about the types of information placed in students' folders or computer files. They have also implemented procedures for use when students, parents, school personnel, and officials outside the school request and use information about students, including policies about who has legal access to students' folders, waivers regarding letters of recommendations written on behalf of students, and permissions required of officials outside the school to access students' records.

Because of their involvement with testing and confidential information, school counselors historically have had a role in coordinating and managing students' records. FERPA focused attention on the need to have clear guidelines for and careful coordination of recordkeeping procedures. As a result, although not all school counselors may have primary responsibility for managing and recording data in students' folders, they help the

school staff, especially secretaries and clerical assistants, know about appropriate procedures and legal guidelines. Counselors also advise administrators and teachers about the proper use of students' records. In this way, school counselors act as gatekeepers, coordinating the data that go in and out of students' files, and thereby ensuring the rights and privacy of students and parents. To assist counselors in this task, it is preferable that schools assign secretarial staff to the counseling program. Having responsible staff to handle school records ensures their proper use.

Information gathered by schools is also helpful to other agencies that provide services to students and families. Sometimes school counselors and teachers share information about students with community agencies or physicians, psychologists, and counselors in private practice. This process of sharing information brings us to other areas of coordination: collaboration to bring about systemic change and referrals and follow-up of students who benefit from additional services beyond the school counseling program.

Collaboration and Systemic Change

The ASCA National Model and other approaches to comprehensive school counseling programs call on professional school counselors to move beyond direct responsive services toward a broader tactic for affecting change in the school environment, school system policies, or general processes that guarantee equitable access to a complete curriculum and other beneficial programs for all students. In doing so, school counselors rely on their leadership, advocacy, and collaborative skills to team with others—students, parents, and colleagues—in helping the school and school system make appropriate changes.

The following sections, while not an exhaustive list, give examples of ways that school counselors lead, collaborate, and advocate for all students, and are typical of functions that counselor use to move beyond direct responsive services to students.

Referrals and Follow-Up. Occasionally, a social, psychological, financial, or other factor hinders a student's progress in school, and the school cannot address these obstacles adequately without assistance from others. In such cases, counselors and teachers search for appropriate services in the community to assist students and their families. School counselors are the logical choice among school staff members to coordinate these referrals and follow up in cases of students and families served by outside agencies. Counselors are familiar with the breadth of community services; they design assessment techniques to gather initial data for referrals; and, as members of a helping profession, they establish effective communication with service providers outside the school.

By having counselors coordinate referrals and follow-up activities, schools avoid duplication of effort, which results in more efficient referral processes and subsequently more cooperative relationships with agency personnel in the community. For example, mental-health counselors, social workers, clinical psychologists, pediatricians, and other professionals appreciate communication with one referral source rather than with a large number of teachers from the same school. Counselors who coordinate referrals for their schools can establish consistent procedures that conform to the needs and requirements of particular agencies. At the same time, feedback from these resources can channel through the school counselor, who in turn gives accurate reports to teachers and other appropriate personnel.

In coordinating referrals, school counselors typically deal with two primary resources—community agencies and private practitioners. The following sections offer brief descriptions of common referrals made to public agencies, private institutions, and practitioners.

Community Agencies. In most communities in the United States, several public and private agencies offer services to children, adolescents, and families. School counselors, as coordinators of referrals, attempt to gather current information about these resources so that students, parents, and teachers can make the best decisions about services outside the school. Usually, the number and level of services in a community relate to the size of the population, the tax base to support these services, and the demand of the citizenry to have these services. In poor communities, the desire and need for these services, sadly, are outweighed by a lack of financial resources. Other times, mental-health workers are so overwhelmed by caseloads that they cannot respond adequately to a counselor's referral. In these cases, the school counselor could be one of few mental-health practitioners available to students, parents, and teachers. As Herr and Erford (2011) observed, "like it or not, professional school counselors will encounter many students for whom they are the last and only hope" (p. 37).

Typically, schools look for community-health services, social services, mental-health and substance-abuse services, residential treatment centers for severe emotional or behavioral problems, recreational programs, and centers that offer educational opportunities to students and parents. In most instances, health programs, social services, and mental-health clinics are part of county and state departments established and financed with public funds. Because of their public affiliation, these agencies have interagency relationships that, when coordinated properly, facilitate the location and delivery of services to people in the community. School counselors frequently refer students and families to these agencies for evaluation purposes and for more intense counseling and treatment than they are able to provide.

Recreational programs, such as boys and girls clubs, scouts, and camps, are also sought by schools to provide additional creative and social outlets for students. School counselors coordinate referrals to these types of organizations by having current literature and applications available to students and parents. Students benefit from involvement in a wide range of recreational and civic activities, and school counselors are one source of information concerning these opportunities.

Churches, mosques, and synagogues, along with colleges, universities, and similar institutions offer other resources for referrals. Students and parents sometimes seek additional educational opportunities to support and enrich the learning process. School counselors invite these institutions to send materials for distribution to students and parents. Usually, the school offers this kind of information to students and parents without an endorsement. Nevertheless, counselors and other school personnel who distribute this information to students and parents for consideration should be familiar with the programs and services offered in the community. This is especially true when counselors give information about private organizations and professionals.

Private Practitioners. In addition to public agencies and programs, most communities have private practitioners and institutions that offer educational, psychological, recreational,

and other services for children and families. Counselors in schools coordinate referrals to private resources in the same way that they work with public agencies. Examples of these resources include private residential treatment centers and hospitals; psychiatrists, licensed professional counselors, clinical social workers, and psychologists in private practice; and educational centers that assist students who have learning problems, want to improve test-taking skills, or desire enrichment activities.

The counselor's role in coordinating referrals and following up with public and private agencies and practitioners in the community assists the school and the family in locating resources and providing services to enhance student learning and development. Comprehensive school counseling programs offer a wide range of services to meet this goal. By coordinating referrals for additional services beyond their school program, counselors increase the probability that all students reach their educational goals. At the same time, counselors within the school strive to include all students and encourage development for everyone.

School-Wide Events and Initiatives. Coordinating the activities of a school counseling program includes planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating school-wide events and initiatives that focus on developmental issues and provide leadership for particular interventions. These activities are either part of ongoing programs in the school or special events that address particular developmental needs of students. School counselors take an active role in coordinating these events and collaborating with teachers and other school personnel who share responsibilities for planning and implementing these school-wide activities and initiatives. The advisory committee of a school counseling program is often the group that initiates plans for these special events.

There are countless examples of school-wide events and programs in today's schools. In some instances, teachers plan and create these events, such as a field day; other times, they are sponsored by organizations, such as a beautification project planned by the parent-teacher association (PTA). Following are a few school-wide events and programs for which counselors might assume some leadership role and responsibility, and are examples of how counselors coordinate activities that target developmental goals for all students.

Student Recognition Activities. Schools consist of diverse student populations in which every child and adolescent chooses his or her individual educational, social, and career goals. They are also active places, with many students achieving and moving toward higher levels of performance. With all this activity, it is sometimes possible to forget particular students who may not excel and therefore do not receive recognition for their accomplishments. Because school counselors and teachers are sensitive to the needs of all students, they create an atmosphere where everyone can succeed and receive recognition for their achievements.

Activities that recognize students include a variety of school-wide events, from award ceremonies to bulletin boards, giving students multiple opportunities to let their peers know who they are and how they have been successful. Counselors assist with these recognition processes by helping teachers design events and activities for a broad range of objectives related to students' development. In this way, a wide spectrum of students in academic, athletic, drama, art, music, and other ventures receive appropriate recognition for their accomplishments and contributions to the school and community. Through these

activities, individual pupils are invited to be an integral part of the school and the student body. By coordinating these kinds of events and programs, counselors and teachers encourage students to participate in the school and create a healthy environment for optimal learning.

Career Awareness Programs. Career development is an essential goal of education and begins formally when students enter school for the first time. Excellent instruction includes a philosophy about how learning connects with career development and vocational choices throughout the lifespan. In elementary through senior high school, counselors assist with this goal through the counseling and consulting services they provide to students and parents and by coordinating school-wide events.

Students achieve career awareness as a result of learning activities that are planned cooperatively by teachers and counselors—for example, classroom guidance lessons integrated with daily instruction to highlight special types of careers. To illustrate this, imagine that a middle school wants its science classes to focus on health occupations and how the study of science relates to these career choices. Counselors in this middle school could help teachers plan and implement this guidance approach by locating appropriate resources, scheduling health professionals as guest lecturers, and presenting lessons with teachers in the science classes.

In secondary schools, counselors coordinate job fairs, college days, and similar events to help students survey the range of occupational opportunities available and review the educational requirements of various tracks. The time required to plan these types of events is usually substantial, so counselors seek assistance from student organizations, teacher committees, parent volunteers, and the advisory committee of the school counseling program. The success of these types of programs has a positive effect on student development as well as on school–community relationships. Therefore, planning and coordination are essential. Businesses, colleges, and universities that participate in well-planned, school-wide events form positive perceptions about both the school and the counseling program, and they carry these perceptions into the community. This evaluation process is invaluable in helping the school create an accurate image and enabling the school counseling program to gain broad support.

Peer-Helper and Peer-Mediation Programs. School counselors also organize and coordinate peer-helper and peer-mediation programs to reach a wider audience of students (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Erford, Lee, Newsome, & Rock, 2011). Although Whiston and Quinby (2011) were unable to find strong research outcomes regarding peer-mediation programs, school counseling literature continues to advocate their use in comprehensive programs, and the Internet reveals numerous websites for information (Schmidt, 2010). The National Association of Peer Program Professionals (NAPPP; www.peerprogramprofessionals.org) is a nonprofit organization that provides information and training for establishing programs.

In peer programs, selected students prepare to perform various helping functions, such as assisting with classroom guidance activities, tutoring students who need assistance, showing new students around the school, listening to peers who have concerns, and mediating conflicts between students. By offering these activities through peer helpers, counselors expand their programs, bringing services directly to students and thereby reaching a wider

audience. In addition, peer helpers, like teacher–advisors, form a communications network to help counselors receive referrals of students who have serious concerns or have difficulty overcoming barriers to learning.

Coordinating peer-helper programs takes time. It is necessary to train participating students in communication skills and referral procedures, as well as a clear description and understanding of the role each peer helper will play in the program. Some counselors schedule regular sessions with the peer helpers for supervision and skill building. In high schools, counselors sometimes integrate peer-helper selection and training into the curriculum

TABLE 5.1 Positive Behavior Support (PBS)

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) initially came from the field of special education and has now been adapted as a school-wide approach to behavior management and discipline. In schools, the approach has become widely accepted under the expanded title *Positive Behavior Intervention Supports* (PBIS). In addition, it is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, which provides information through a website at www.pbis.org. As a systemic approach, PBIS teaches and reinforces desirable behaviors while identifying and dealing with undesirable and counterproductive behaviors.

Description

PBIS identifies student behaviors in one of three risk levels: primary, secondary, or tertiary. Schools design and implement interventions for each of the three levels, and counselors can play an important leadership and coordinating role. At the *primary* level, school-wide interventions expose all students to specific strategies that include effective teaching techniques, proven curricula, environmental systems, precorrection and preventive methods, positive behavior reinforcements, and classroom guidance to teach positive expectations.

Secondary prevention strategies focus on students who have not responded noticeably to primary, school-wide interventions. Such students may be at risk of school failure or of exhibiting problem behaviors, but they do not yet need individual attention. Examples of secondary strategies include small-group guidance and counseling approaches. Schools might use these for academic support groups, social-skills training groups, friendship clubs, and self-management groups, or similar interventions.

For a smaller number of students, *tertiary* interventions may be required. *Tertiary* prevention strategies are appropriate with students who exhibit regular problem behaviors in the school. These are intense and individualized interventions that could include additional assessment, individualized instruction, inclusion of family members and peers in a specific strategy, and development of Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).

Resources

Association for Positive Behavior Support (www.apbs.org)

Tincani, M. (2007). Moving forward: Positive behavior support and applied behavior analysis. *The Behavior Analyst Today*, 8, 492–499.

Tobin, T. J., & Sugai, G. (2005). Preventing problem behaviors: Primary, secondary, and tertiary level prevention interventions for young children. *Journal of Early & Intensive Behavior Intervention*, 2, 125–144.

U.S. Department of Education. Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Support (www.pbis.org)

through a psychology or other human services course. In these instances, school counselors team-teach peer-helper courses with classroom teachers, and students receive high school credit for their training and participation in these programs. In other high schools, peer helpers present college-preparatory seminars or work with dropout prevention programs.

School-wide Interventions. Other examples of leadership that counselors provide are collaborative efforts to initiate and coordinate interventions throughout the school that focus on student behaviors. Two such programs are positive behavior support (PBS; Association for Positive Behavior Support, www.apbs.org; Table 5.1) and response to intervention (RTI; National Center on Response to Intervention, www.rti4success.org; Table 5.2). Each is a systematic approach to identifying and handling challenging student behaviors. The brevity of Tables 5.1 and 5.2 does not do justice to either program, so you should follow up with the resources available.

Another school-wide intervention program relates to crisis preparation and management (Schmidt, 2010). As organizations within communities, schools face the challenges and suffer the results of critical situations. In Chapter 6, we discuss aspects of crisis counseling, but here we consider broader interventions when crises affect schools.

TABLE 5.2 Response to Intervention (RTI)

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-level, systemic approach that integrates assessments and interventions within a preventive philosophy. Its goal is to reduce behavior problems while maximizing students' academic achievement. With this approach, schools use available data to identify students who may be at risk of failure, follow student progress, find research-based interventions, apply appropriate interventions and monitor results, and identify students with learning or other disabilities. Similar to PBIS (see Table 5.1), RTI uses a three-tiered, prevention model of primary, secondary, and tertiary levels.

Description

The essential components of RTI include

- a school-wide, multilevel curriculum program and behavioral management system that focus on preventing school failure
- a two-stage screening process; the first stage is a brief assessment for all students, and the second stage is for students identified as being at risk of failure during the first stage of the screening process
- ongoing monitoring of students' progress
- instructional decisions based on relevant data, movement of students within the multilevel system, and identification of students with disabilities

RTI can be used in combination with PBIS.

Resources

National Center on Response to Intervention. 1000 Thomas Jefferson St., NW, Washington, DC 20007. www.rti4success.org

American School Counselor Association. (2008). *Position statement: Response to intervention*. http://www.schoolcounselor.org/files/PS_Intervention.pdf.

TABLE 5.3 General Guidelines for Crisis Intervention Plans

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1. Define the nature and extent of crisis immediately.
 2. Provide a timely response.
 3. Contact your immediate supervisor.
 4. Notify other school staff as appropriate and inform them of actions to take.
 5. Contact the person or people most affected by the event.
 6. Set up a communications center.
 7. If appropriate, contact media.
 8. Set up a recordkeeping system for all incoming inquiries and outgoing messages.
 9. Create a schedule to relieve people and provide refreshments if needed.
 10. When the crisis ends, express appreciation to all who assisted.

Resources

Schmidt, J. J. (2010). *The elementary/middle school counselor's survival guide*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

American School Counselor Association. (2000). *Position statement: Critical incident response in schools*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

A multitude of environmental, economic, and natural disasters and other events present crises for schools to handle on a daily basis. To be ready for such circumstances, schools often design crisis-intervention plans that may include teams or committees with definitive roles, assessment procedures, and strategies, depending on the situation, that provide guidelines for school staff members to follow (Table 5.3).

The preceding examples illustrate activities that help counselors and teachers reach a higher percentage of students. Through special events, such as *Career Night* and other student awareness programs, schools can distribute information widely. By the same token, peer-mediation and peer-helper programs allow school-counseling services to extend beyond the counseling center, using teachers and students as additional resources to assist a greater number of students in the school. School-wide approaches such as PBS and RTI give structure and consistency to behavior management, discipline, and decision making about instructional and other programs to benefit all students and overall school environment. Crisis response and intervention plans help schools prepare and handle various crises in an appropriate and effective manner.

As noted, screening and assessment strategies are integral to school-wide interventions such as PBS and RTI. To determine which students need what services, counselors also evaluate the needs, characteristics, and factors affecting students' development. Assessment of these elements includes evaluation processes that encompass another service of comprehensive school counseling programs—appraising.

Appraising

Since the beginning of the school counseling profession, counselors have used appraisal instruments and assessment processes to measure students' needs, interests, intellectual functions, and academic performance. Today's school counselors continue to coordinate the assessment of students' characteristics and school progress in a variety of ways. In addition,

counselors and other student services professionals are concerned with the influence of environmental factors on students' development. Chapter 9 explores specific methods and instruments used in student assessment. By way of introduction, the following sections briefly describe student and environmental evaluation processes used by counselors in schools.

Student Evaluation

School counselors use many assessment processes to help students, parents, and teachers gather accurate data and make sound decisions about educational programs, instructional placements, career directions, and a host of other issues. These evaluations include the use of standardized tests, interest inventories, behavior rating scales, and nonstandardized procedures such as observations and interviews. Tests are among the most common instruments used by school counselors.

Tests. Evaluation through standardized testing is and will continue to be an important service of school counseling programs. In part, this is due to the mobility of U.S. society and the transfer of students from one school to another during their educational careers. Sometimes new students arrive at schools with little information and few records about their educational progress. At such times, counselors can help teachers determine appropriate instructional placement by administering individual achievement and aptitude tests. A current measurement of students' abilities and academic achievement assists teachers in placing students at the proper instructional levels and in designing beneficial learning experiences. Without this assessment, teachers can only estimate students' levels, and as a result might misplace them in an instructional program. One caveat is necessary here: The selection of appropriate assessment instruments to avoid cultural biases and other factors leading to inaccurate results is imperative.

Expanded services for students who have special educational needs, aided by Public Law 94-142 (see Chapter 2), have increased the demand for individual assessment of students to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning styles and intellectual functions. Sometimes, school counselors begin this assessment process by assisting special education teachers with screening procedures, including the use of behavior rating scales, short-form ability tests, and achievement batteries. Results of these screening procedures help teachers decide if a complete educational and psychological profile is required to determine appropriate services and placement. If so, the school initiates a referral to the school psychologist or another evaluator.

Inventories. School counselors use a variety of questionnaires and inventories to assist students with their educational and career decisions. In addition, some inventories help students learn about personal and social characteristics that enhance or inhibit their relationships with others. Interest inventories have the potential for many applications, including helping students learn about interests they did not know they had and contrasting their expressed interests with their assessed abilities.

Selection of inventories depends on the purpose of the assessment and the training of the counselor for using and interpreting these instruments. Because some of these inventories are founded on particular psychological theories, a counselor's theoretical training is an additional factor to consider when selecting these types of inventories.

Assessment of students does not always require standardized tests or inventories. School counselors and teachers often gather valuable information through observations, interviews, and other nonstandardized procedures that are an important part of the overall assessment process.

Observations and Interviews. School counselors frequently receive referrals from teachers and parents about particular behaviors exhibited by students at home or in school. The first step the counselor takes after receiving a referral is to gather data to decide who needs what. To determine what services best address the identified concern, counselors use direct observations and interviews to gather relevant data. For example, when a teacher refers a student because of inattentive classroom behaviors, a first step the counselor takes is to observe the student during class while instruction is taking place. Occasionally, counselors recommend behavioral rating scales for teachers or parents to complete. The counselor might develop the scales or select them from published sources. In either instance, the findings from the scales supplement the observations made by counselors, teachers, and parents. By using these processes, counselors are better able to recommend appropriate services, which could include direct counseling with the student, classroom management techniques for the teacher, or home strategies for parents to encourage appropriate behavior at school.

In addition to rating scales and observations, counselors interview teachers, parents, and students as part of the evaluation process. Structured interviews ask specific questions and focus on particular information. Through these interviews, counselors are able to compare the perceptions of teachers, parents, and students regarding problems. As mentioned earlier, students' records can provide a source of information about past events and academic progress that assist in the evaluation and decision-making processes. These records also contain information collected in group-assessment procedures that enable counselors and teachers to learn more about individual students and how they compare with other students in the school.

Group Assessment. Schools use group standardized tests to measure the academic ability and progress of students. The two major types of group tests used in measuring student achievement are criterion-referenced and norm-referenced instruments. *Criterion-referenced tests* measure students' performance in relation to identified criteria or dimensions, such as spelling proficiency. By contrast, *norm-referenced exams* generate scores that compare students and rank them against one another by using scores derived from sample reference groups, also known as *normed populations*. In schools, the norms are usually established by grade levels or age levels. In other words, students assessed by norm-referenced tests are compared with other students in the same grade level or age range. Standardized tests are described in more detail in Chapter 9.

Both criterion-referenced and norm-referenced instruments are valuable in helping counselors and teachers make decisions on behalf of students. Sometimes, decisions need to be made based on performance of a particular skill, whereas at other times schools need to know how students compare with others in their age or grade level. Knowing what kind of information will help guides the counselor in deciding which type of assessment to use.

Environmental Evaluation

Environmental factors also influence students' development and learning, and include the school atmosphere, classroom environment, peer groups, and home environment. Gathering data to help students, parents, and teachers make appropriate plans and decisions is incomplete without an evaluation of the environments and social groups that affect student development. An examination of school climate is a logical place to begin this area of assessment.

Assessment of School Climate. As noted Chapter 2, schools might avoid many problems if they assess places, policies, programs, and processes adequately and use this information to create beneficial conditions for optimal learning. In determining which services to provide for students, parents, and teachers, counselors save precious time if they first look at the physical environment of the school, the policies that govern the school, procedures and processes for administering school regulations, and programs established for student learning and development (Purkey & Novak, 2008). Part of a counselor's role in the appraisal process is to help the school assess itself.

By creating appraisal processes to help teachers and administrators assess school environments, counselors gather data with which to plan efficient and effective services. Form 5.2 is a sample questionnaire used with middle-graders to help evaluate school climate. Results of surveys such as this give teachers a way of assessing students' perceptions

FORM 5.2 *School Climate Assessment*

Students: Please circle your responses to the following statements and return this form to the counselor's mailbox in the school office. Your answers will help us in evaluating our school. Thank you.

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----------|
| 1. Is the school building neat and clean? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 2. Does the cafeteria provide healthy choices? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 3. Do you enjoy being in your classroom? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 4. Are the restrooms clean and supplied with soap, paper towels, and tissues? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 5. Is the playground safe and well equipped? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 6. Does the air smell fresh inside and outside? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 7. Are windows and doors in good working order? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 8. Are people friendly in your school? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 9. Do your teachers listen to you? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 10. Are the school rules fair to everyone? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 11. Do the teachers have enough supplies for all students in your class? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 12. Is the equipment working in your school? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 13. Do volunteers help in your school? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 14. Is the counselor a good person to ask for help? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 15. Are you learning in your classroom? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 16. Are boys and girls treated the same? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 17. Is a computer lab available to students? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 18. Is the media center in your school a good place to find things? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 19. Does the school have a program to prevent bullying? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 20. Do students usually follow the rules in school? | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |

about the school and its programs. Altering negative aspects of a school and its programs is the first step in creating healthy environments and encouraging students to learn.

Assessment of Families. The best school environment may not help students who struggle because of deprivation, neglect, or abuse at home. By assessing home environments and family functioning, counselors determine the level of support a child or adolescent is receiving from his or her family structure and use this information to seek appropriate community services.

The processes used to assess home environments and family functioning include interviews, observations, and students' records. For example, interviews with parents and students allow counselors and teachers to gather information about the physical and social surroundings in which students live, discipline approaches used by parents, and safety issues faced by the family. Golden's (1988) "Quick Assessment of Family Functioning" uses a structured interview approach to assess five criteria: parental resources, chronic occurrence of the problem, family communication, parental authority, and rapport with professional helpers. Assessment of these criteria permits counselors to distinguish between functional and dysfunctional families, and thereby make appropriate decisions about school services and referrals to outside agencies.

Peer-Group Assessment. A final aspect of environmental evaluation that contributes to the overall appraisal of students is the assessment of social peer groups. Many of the methods already discussed are useful for assessing peer relationships; in particular, structured interviews and observations are viable assessment techniques.

Having students take stock of their friendships and peer associations adds to their overall self-awareness and contributes to their total profile. When students assess the behaviors, goals, and attitudes of their peers, they also examine and question their own traits, objectives, and beliefs. Part of the helping process is to confront the discrepancy that appears between how a person is and how the person wants to be. Students who want to be successful in their school performance and social relationships can benefit by examining those of their peers who are most important to them, and by determining the contradictions between the way they want to be and the way their peer groups are. A first step in making changes in one's life is to give up traditions and associations that keep a person locked into, or engaged in, nonproductive and destructive behavior patterns.

Assessment procedures create a diagnostic process by which counselors choose appropriate services for students, parents, and teachers. In this way, these procedures interact with the other services of a comprehensive school counseling program. By using appropriate and accurate assessment instruments and procedures, counselors can determine which responsive services are most likely to generate successful outcomes.

In this chapter, we examined the four responsive services of a school counseling program: counseling, consulting, coordinating, and appraising. These four services form distinct categories that together identify a broad role for professional counselors in schools. Chapter 6 uses the structure about comprehensive programs presented in Chapter 4 to show how school counselors design their individual programs around these comprehensive services.

Additional Readings

Henderson, D., & Thompson, C. L. (2011). *Counseling Children* (8th ed.). Florence, KY: Cengage.

An excellent guide for counseling children, the book offers a wealth of ideas and practices beyond direct counseling for school counselors. Specific problems and issues are presented and counseling approaches or other interventions are suggested.

Jackson-Cherry, L. R., & Erford, B. T. (Eds.). (2010). *Crisis Intervention and Prevention*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

A practical guide, this book is a thorough presentation of crisis situations, skills needed by coun-

selors, and ethical considerations. It also covers specific crises including suicide, homicide, sexual assault and abuse, substance abuse, and others.

Vernon, A. (Ed.) (2010). *Counseling Children and Adolescents* (4th ed.). Denver, CO: Love.

This book presents a developmental perspective on the range of counseling and practical strategies available to school counselors. Chapter topics also include designing a developmental curriculum, working with parents, and working with families, for example.

Websites

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org

Dictionary of Occupational Titles

www.occupationalinfo.org/dot_search.html

Federal Student Aid Online

www.fafsa.ed.gov

National Parent Information Network (NPIN)

www.npin.org

National Association of Peer Program Professionals

www.peerprogramprofessionals.org

National School Safety Center

www.schoolsafety.us

Occupational Outlook Handbook

www.bls.gov/oco

Exercises

1. By yourself, brainstorm about factors that influence how much time school counselors choose to spend in a particular service area. List these factors and share them in class. In the class discussion, come to consensus about the three most influential factors. Which, if any, of these factors can be controlled by the counselor? Discuss what your findings mean to the role of a school counselor.
2. A curriculum supervisor in the school system reports to your principal that counselors should not see students in individual counseling for more than four sessions because to do so would be considered “therapy” and counselors are not therapists. Discuss in a small group how you would respond to this situation. Highlight the main points of your discussion with the class.
3. As a school counselor, you might spend considerable time coordinating services for students—for example, spending time on the telephone or computer with agencies, meeting with parents, completing appropriate referral forms, and other functions that go unnoticed by your fellow teachers. Such invisible functioning risks criticism from teachers who might say, “I don’t ever see the counselor, and don’t know what the counselor does.” What are some active measures you could take as a counselor to keep your teaching colleagues informed about what you do regarding referrals?
4. Create a brochure or flier about a counseling program that illustrates or describes the responsive services provided. What factors are most important to consider as you design this brochure?



CHAPTER 6

Program Development

Chapters 1 through 5 described the role of school counselors, presented the components of comprehensive counseling programs, and summarized the various services that make up counseling programs in school settings. Together, these chapters provide a philosophical foundation for the practice of professional counseling in contemporary schools. With this theoretical base, we now explore how school counselors actually set up a program of services.

This chapter offers some of the practical aspects of putting together a comprehensive program of counseling, consulting, coordinating, and assessment services in a school. These aspects are, of necessity, presented in a general nature, and are applicable across all levels—elementary through high school—of school counseling programs. They are not intended as a detailed description of how to design and develop a comprehensive program, but are an overview of procedures and processes school counselors use to create their programs of services. In addition, this chapter does not endorse any particular model of comprehensive school counseling programs, such as those introduced in earlier chapters. Rather, it offers a general framework compatible with existing models. Readers who wish more specific and detailed suggestions for developing comprehensive counseling programs should consult references cited throughout this chapter and suggested readings at the end of the chapter.

In this chapter, we use the four phases of designing a comprehensive program presented in Chapter 3 as major headings—planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating. Some of the practical considerations presented under each of these phases include assessing the current program, seeking input and support for change, assessing the needs of students as well as parents and teachers, determining resources, assigning responsibilities, marketing the program, scheduling services, balancing time, providing services, using technology, and evaluating outcomes. The last of these, dealing with program evaluation, is introduced for practical consideration here and presented more thoroughly in Chapter 11.

Before considering the practical aspects of developing a comprehensive school counseling program, we pause to recognize that many state and local initiatives in schools across the country influence the actual role of counselors. The educational reform movement that began in the 1980s continues to have an impact on state programs and local perspectives about what counselors should be doing in our schools. Indeed, in some communities, school administrators and committees consisting of people other than professional counselors control the counselor's job description. For this reason, students who learn about comprehensive school counseling programs through this text and other notable works need to apply these ideas within the context of the states and local school systems where they choose to work as counselors. With that caveat in mind, we now consider the phases of a comprehensive counseling program.

Planning

One of the first steps in planning a comprehensive counseling program is to determine what existed in prior years. This is particularly important for a new counselor coming into a school situation where there has been a program of services. As noted in Chapter 3, Gysbers and Henderson (2012) encouraged counselors to establish an organized plan for moving an existing program forward. The school counseling profession embraces this stance through the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model and other structures proposed in the literature (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012). In many instances, however, new counselors find that although a counselor was at the school in past years, for all practical purposes there was no comprehensive program of services. In either case, Gysbers and Henderson's encouragement and the profession's commitment are significant—an organized plan for change is imperative.

Assessing the Current Program

A first step in formulating this plan is to determine the breadth of services in past years. This means gathering data about what services existed, how program decisions happened, what processes evaluated services, and how people perceived the counseling program. As part of this assessment, Schmidt (2010) suggested that new counselors formulate questions for principals and teachers of the schools they are considering for employment. From the responses counselors receive to their questions, they could determine what changes to initiate in the overall program. Some sample questions to ask principals and teachers are as follows:

1. Is there an annual plan, with written goals and objectives, for the school counseling program?
2. Is there an advisory committee for the counseling program, and if so, how are the members selected?
3. What data are most important in generating goals and objectives for the program?
4. What service of the counselor was most helpful to students in past years? Most helpful to parents? Most helpful to teachers?
5. What are major needs of students that the counseling program must address?
6. Are classroom teachers actively involved in integrating developmental guidance into the curriculum and their daily instruction?
7. What has been the level of parental involvement in the school and the counseling program?
8. How adequate are the facilities of the counseling center in the school? What are the barriers to improving the facilities?
9. What service of the counseling program, if any, should increase in the coming year? What service, if any, should be decreased?

In addition to asking the principal and teachers about their perceptions, counselors might use surveys and interviews with parents and students to provide useful information for examining the counseling program. The key element in this process is to gather as many

perceptions as possible, so that decisions about changing aspects of the program take place within a broad vision. After the counselor is satisfied that crucial elements of the program have been identified for possible change, a next step is to involve people in the decision-making process.



PERSPECTIVE 6-1

Do you use a daily planner to keep track of your everyday events and appointments? If so, has that process been helpful in arranging and organizing your life? If not, how do you manage your time and keep appointments? Are any of the processes you use to keep organized and on top of important events transferable to planning and organizing a school counseling program?

Seeking Input and Support for Change

By definition, a comprehensive school counseling program is planned as part of an inclusive process. This means that the program does not belong to any single professional, nor is it the sole responsibility of the school counselor. By including as many people as possible in program planning, counselors are likely to have widespread support for their role in the school.

The first person to include is the building principal. Understanding how the principal perceives counseling services in the school and learning that the principal may be willing to adopt new perceptions about program areas is important. Only through an honest exchange of views and ideas are counselors and principals able to establish working relationships through which they can make appropriate programmatic decisions. Once the counselor and principal agree on the key elements of a comprehensive program of services, the next step is to solicit input from teachers, parents, and students. One medium that can facilitate this exchange of information is an advisory committee or council (Erford, 2011c).

An advisory committee of a school counseling program is a vehicle counselors use to obtain input from teachers, administrators, parents, and students about appropriate services and activities (Studer, 2005; VanZandt & Hayslip, 2000). An advisory committee might be appointed by the principal or selected by the counselor. In some schools, the advisory committee combines with other teacher committees, such as a child study committee or a student assistance team. Whatever its organization, the advisory committee assists the school counselor in designing needs assessment instruments, selecting annual goals and objectives, planning major school events to focus on student development, and determining program evaluation activities.

Counselors use a number of processes and systems for gathering information for program development. The advisory committee is supplemented by suggestions from school volunteers; ongoing evaluations by administrators and counseling supervisors; informal conversations with students; feedback from the school nurse, social worker, and psychologist; and ideas learned through involvement with professional associations. These avenues for receiving suggestions enable school counselors to focus on the major services expected for students, parents, and teachers.

School counselors also use these suggestions to supplement the findings of the needs assessment process. Typically, surveys of students, parents, and teachers discover some

critical concerns and needs of students in the school. Although these critical concerns are imperative to address and often result in crisis-oriented goals, such goals do not begin to satisfy the developmental needs of a majority of the students. Preventive and developmental goals broaden the vision of a school counseling program. In this way, counselors do more than repair wounds, mend fences, and solve mysteries. Instead, they do all these things and, at the same time, create healthy school climates, enhance human relationships, and develop systems for students to strengthen their self-awareness, motivation, and responsibility.

For counselors to identify appropriate services for their programs, they first attain an understanding of the most important critical and developmental needs of students, parents, and teachers. One of the first functions of an advisory committee is to assist the counselor in designing needs assessment instruments and developing assessment procedures.

Assessing the Needs of Students, Parents, and Teachers

In determining what goals and objectives to include in a comprehensive school counseling program, counselors first investigate the needs of the populations served. As noted earlier, these populations consist of students, parents, and teachers, whose needs vary from school to school and from community to community. This variability depends on a number of factors, including the following:

- size of the school
- socioeconomic status of the community and its cultural diversity
- concentration of learning problems found in the school
- educational backgrounds of parents
- community attitudes toward the school and education
- leadership of the school and district

Because each of these factors influences schools in unique and different ways, the needs of students, parents, and teachers have a similarly unique influence on the design and implementation of a school counseling program. For example, students and families who come from impoverished backgrounds express quite different needs from students and families of affluence. These differences are reflected in the school as a whole and in the development of a comprehensive counseling program. This is true in elementary, middle, and senior high schools.

For example, elementary counselors in schools with students who require substantial attention to meet their basic needs for food and shelter often find themselves playing the dual role of crisis counselor and social worker. In these situations, the scope and breadth of the counseling program may not span the full spectrum of preventive, developmental, and remedial services advocated in this text. By nature of its school population, this counseling program may have more of a remedial focus. Of course, a visionary counselor finds ways to include prevention and development in the program, and teachers in the classroom are agents who carry out this plan, even in schools and communities affected by serious social and economic adversity. The rationale for such a comprehensive approach is founded in the belief that to remedy existing concerns without helping students learn about themselves and make sound educational choices is merely a Band-Aid solution to a larger social problem.

One way that counselors collect needs assessment data is through surveys with students, parents, and teachers. In large schools, counselors might take a random sample of students in each grade level to cut down on time and cost and to streamline the analysis of data. They may do the same with samples of parents. Usually, counselors seek needs assessments from all teachers in the school. Forms 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 illustrate sample needs assessments to use with students, parents, and teachers.

As noted earlier, needs assessments can occur by using methods of data collection other than surveys. For example, counselors might interview students, parents, and teachers, or they might simply observe the school and community and draw conclusions from these observations. Counselors may also review students' records and other existing data banks, such as absentee rates and other methods of assessment. In comprehensive school counseling programs, counselors use a variety of methods and alter these approaches year after year to ensure an accurate assessment of their schools' needs. In some instances, counselors might use the results of their annual program evaluation as an assessment procedure.

Once the needs' assessment is complete, the school counselor determines available resources to suggest appropriate services for meeting selected goals. Determining available resources is another aspect of planning comprehensive counseling programs.

Determining Resources

Comprehensive school counseling programs cannot operate in isolation. For this reason, counselors learn about the various resources and support services available in their schools, districts, and communities. When speaking of resources for a school counseling program, we usually refer to people as the *primary resource*. A comprehensive program also benefits

FORM 6.1 Middle School Student Needs Assessment

Instructions: Please read the following statements and circle Yes, No, or Sometimes, showing how each one applies to you.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----------|
| 1. I usually do well in school. | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 2. My teachers think I can do better schoolwork. | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 3. I like coming to school. | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 4. I do not have any close friends. | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 5. I want to learn how to study better. | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 6. I am happy about my family life. | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 7. My parents (or guardians) listen to me when I have a problem. | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 8. I would like to talk to someone about a problem I have. | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 9. Most people like me the way I am. | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 10. I am lonely much of the time. | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 11. I want to learn more about jobs and careers. | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |
| 12. I would like to join a group of other students to help them with problems. | YES | NO | SOMETIMES |

FORM 6.2 Elementary School Parent Needs Assessment

Instructions: Please help us plan this year's school counseling program by completing the following questions. Circle your responses and return this form with your child, who will give it to the teacher. Thank you for your assistance.

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|--------|
| 1. My child likes going to school most of the time. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 2. My child has many friends at school. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 3. The school is a warm and caring place to be. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 4. My child needs special attention for learning. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 5. My child is responsible at home and usually does what he/she is told. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 6. I would like my child to be in a group with other children to learn about getting along together. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 7. I am worried about my child's progress in school and would like to talk with someone about it. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 8. I would like to join other parents in a group to talk about children and parenting skills. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 9. My child has physical problems that the school should know about. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 10. I want my child to see the school counselor. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 11. I have some concerns to share with the school counselor. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 12. I am available to volunteer at school if needed. | YES | NO | UNSURE |

FORM 6.3 High School Teacher Needs Assessment

Instructions: Please help us plan the School Counseling Program this year by completing this form. Circle your responses and return the form to the school counselor's mailbox in the office. Thank you for your assistance.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|--------|
| 1. I want my students to have access to group counseling this year. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 2. I want students to receive more career information. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 3. Students need to learn better study skills. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 4. Many of my students have concerns about substance and alcohol abuse. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 5. We need to do more about pregnancy prevention this year. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 6. I want to integrate guidance activities into my lessons this year. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 7. I want to join a teacher support group this year. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 8. I have students who seem quite depressed. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 9. Some students need help handling problems without resorting to violence. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 10. I have difficulty getting support from parents. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 11. I need better communication skills with students. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 12. I need help with class management skills. | YES | NO | UNSURE |

from the materials, equipment, and space available to the counselor, but without adequate human support, all these other elements may make little difference.

Successful school counselors are adept at learning about the talents of their teaching colleagues and are creative in soliciting support from other personnel. They recruit capable volunteers for the school, generate support from businesses and industries that donate money and materials to the program, use student helpers to network with their peers, and cooperate with other student services' team members, such as school nurses, social workers, and psychologists. In addition, successful counselors learn about the services and resources of the communities and states in which their schools reside. By knowing about health services, psychiatric treatment centers, family counseling clinics, recreational programs, and other resources, counselors create professional alliances that ultimately benefit students and families of the school. Without this knowledge, counselors run the risk of working in a vacuum and becoming frustrated and overwhelmed by the level of need expressed by their students, parents, and teachers.

Comprehensive programs also consist of adequate materials, equipment, and space to do the job. Counselors measure the adequacy and appropriateness of materials according to the developmental needs of students in the school. Elementary, middle, and senior high counselors, depending on the scope of their programs, use games, educational kits, videos, recordings, catalogs, books, and a variety of other items. Equipment such as computers, modems, recorders, and telephones enable counselors and their support staff to provide efficient and effective services. Adequate space for private counseling, individually and in groups, is desirable. In Chapter 4, the importance of location, design, materials, and equipment to a school counseling center was discussed.

To create programs that maintain a realistic vision, counselors assess school needs, interpret these data accurately, and determine what resources are available to provide the most effective and efficient services. Usually, counselors assess students', parents', and teachers' needs in the beginning of the school year and then develop year-long goals and objectives around these established needs. In most instances, counselors identify a few annual goals that remain consistent from year to year, regardless of how the student population changes over time. These goals become an ongoing part of the program. For example, in most secondary schools, counselors are concerned with helping seniors make plans for postgraduation, such as employment, marriage, childrearing, military service, technical school, trade school, or college. Although populations might change over the years, and subsequently students' needs after high school may vary, the process of assisting them with plans for the future continues as an important service in every school counseling program. Other goals for the counseling program may vary from year to year. This is why assessment processes are important and can help schools set goals for the counseling program, which moves us to the next phase of comprehensive program development—organizing.

Organizing

Successful counseling programs tend to have several things in common, but most important among the key elements is that the services of counselors are an integral and essential part of the broader school mission (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). Therefore, in organizing their programs, counselors attempt to set goals that address the identified needs of students, parents,

and teachers, by integrating activities into the curriculum, providing adequate plans to meet the needs of individuals, selecting appropriate responsive services, such as counseling and consulting, and fostering support from the school system that provides sufficient resources and supervision for the program.

Setting Goals

In setting goals, the counselor summarizes data from surveys, interviews, observations, and other assessment processes and presents results to the advisory committee. At that presentation, the counselor interprets the results, solicits reactions from committee members, and together they determine major goals and objectives for the annual program. Figure 6.1 illustrates a sample planning sheet used by a middle school counselor to identify students' needs and recommend program goals to classroom teachers.

In Figure 6.1, some of the statements show a high percentage of responses, indicating that many students expressed these concerns and thereby justifying them as program goals. For example, item 2, "Concerned about friendships," shows 68 percent of the students shared this concern. At the same time, other items with much lower percentages are also identified as needs, and program goals are recommended. An example is item 5, "Have strong feelings of loneliness and am very sad," to which only 8 percent of the students responded affirmatively. Although this percentage is low in comparison to other items, the serious nature of this question justifies its focus as a student need. If 8 percent of the student population feels sad, lonely, and depressed, this should be a critical concern for teachers and counselors to address.

FIGURE 6.1 Sample Planning Sheet for Aligning Needs' Assessment Results with Program Goals

Middle School Counseling Program	
<i>Students' Needs Based on the Seventh-Grade Survey</i>	<i>Recommended Program Goals</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Want more information about abilities and interests (42%)2. Concerned about friendships (68%)3. How to deal with feelings about family separation and divorce (37%)4. Need to develop better study skills (35%)5. Have strong feelings of loneliness and am very sad (8%)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Plan small groups for all seventh-grade students to explore their educational and career interests and compare these interests with their performance in school.2. Develop friendship units and integrate with social studies lessons in the fall semester.3. Offer small group counseling to students whose families are experiencing change.4. Develop a study skills unit for teachers and counselors to use in language arts block.5. Identify and observe students who are isolates or appear depressed. Offer individual counseling or referral services. School may also need to examine issues of cultural diversity.



PERSPECTIVE 6-2

Review Figure 6.1 and consider how this example fits with either RTI or PBS presented in Chapter 5. Does it help you understand how assessment is essential to program planning and school-wide initiatives?

Some goals are set because of local and state mandates and standards aimed at providing equal services to all students. In many states, departments of education set specific learning goals and objectives as part of a guidance curriculum. School counselors and teachers decide cooperatively how and when these goals and objectives will be met in each school's instructional program. All these goals, those set as a result of students' needs assessments and those mandated by the state, become part of a school plan to meet the developmental needs of students. Related to this school plan is the counselor's annual plan of goals, objectives, and services during the year. Two categories of goals useful in establishing comprehensive services are learning-related goals and service-related goals.

Learning-Related Goals. School counselors review the data gathered from needs assessments with students, parents, and teachers and relate these findings to their observations and to the observations of administrators and members of the advisory committee. In some cases, the selected goals relate directly to an identified need. For example, if a high school survey finds that students need to associate their educational success with future career satisfaction, a goal might be *to increase student awareness of the significant correlation between educational achievement and career development*. Such a goal would be a learning-related one for all students and met directly through the school's curriculum and career-guidance activities.

An elementary school example of a learning-related goal might be that students need information about personal safety. As a result, the counselor and teachers design activities and compile resources to teach young children the importance of being cautious with strangers, what to do if they feel threatened, and to report to their parents and teachers situations in which they feel unsafe.

Service-Related Goals. Sometimes goals address the expressed needs of students, parents, and teachers indirectly. In the previous examples of increasing students' career awareness and learning what to do in threatening situations, a counselor might choose broad program goals. For example, to address career awareness, the goal might be *to increase the number of career guidance sessions with eighth-grade students*. By choosing this type of service-related goal, the counselor addresses the relationship between educational achievement and career success by assessing how often this information is in lessons. Service-related goals, such as this one, illustrate ways that counselors assess particular standards by describing comprehensive services.

As you can see from these categories, goals can take different forms and receive attention through a variety of services and activities. Selecting appropriate services and activities is important, and equally important is how schools assign these services to various professionals and volunteers.

Assigning Responsibilities

As noted earlier, many people—professionals and volunteers alike—have a stake in seeing that an efficient and effective program of services is established in the school. Consequently, a number of people can assume assignments to help meet program goals. A well-organized school counseling program not only identifies important goals, but also assigns who is responsible for providing services and activities to address the intended objectives. An advisory committee often provides leadership in assigning responsibilities for activities and services to reach the program's goals. The committee can also be influential in helping to convince the principal and teachers of the importance of having wide involvement and participation in the school counseling program.

Activities incorporated into the curriculum, such as developmental guidance, are the primary responsibility of classroom teachers. Sometimes, counselors share this responsibility by coleading certain guidance lessons with teachers, or they might assume total responsibility for presenting a particular topic or subject matter that addresses an important aspect of student development. How choices are made about who is assigned particular guidance activities varies from school to school, and each advisory committee can help establish the criteria for making these decisions. Such criteria might be determined by asking the following questions:

1. Is the activity appropriate for all students in the school or at a particular grade level?
2. Can the intended goal of the activity be related to other goals or objectives in the curriculum, and is it reasonable to think that its integration into the curriculum will be effective?
3. Do teachers have the necessary knowledge and background to present the activity during classroom instruction?
4. Does the counselor possess special knowledge or skill that is required to lead this activity?
5. Are there existing programs through which this activity can be presented, such as an advisor–advisee program, a peer-helper program, or school volunteers?
6. What is the most efficient and appropriate way to deliver this service?

As the advisory committee discusses goals and objectives, it begins helping the counselor and teachers plan strategies and activities for the year. For example, assume that a middle school survey has found that eighth-grade students express anxiety about moving to the ninth grade at the senior high school. The goals, objectives, and strategies planned by the advisory committee of this middle school might look like the illustration in Table 6.1.

This plan to help students address anxieties about moving to high school includes services and activities provided by a number of people: (1) teachers who are advisors are actively involved; (2) language arts teachers incorporate learning strategies into their classroom instruction; (3) counselors use small group sessions to consult and counsel with students; and (4) the principal and counselors coordinate an orientation trip to the high school. This example illustrates how counselors and advisory committees analyze needs assessments and summarize their findings into plans for a counseling program. It also shows that the school counseling program involves the services of many professionals in the school and, therefore, consists of more than individual counseling or classroom guidance provided

TABLE 6.1 *Sample of Goals and Objectives*

STRATEGIES	ASSIGNMENT	TIMELINE
1. Each eighth-grade student will receive an orientation brochure to be discussed in advisor–advisee sessions.	Teacher–advisors	By January 1
2. Each eighth-grader will write an essay about his or her expectations of high school.	Language arts teachers	By April 1
3. Each eighth-grader will have a group session with a counselor to discuss special concerns regarding high school.	Counselors	By April 30
4. Eighth-graders will visit the high school for a half-day program to meet with ninth-grade teachers and counselors and to tour the school's facilities.	Principals and counselors	By May 1

solely by the school counselor. Rather, school counseling includes myriad services and activities planned to meet specific goals and objectives and delivered by designated personnel in the school.

When counselors, teachers, and other team members have organized components of a comprehensive program, they announce or advertise the program to prospective clients and consumers. In a sense, the counselor and advisory committee market the counseling program.

Marketing the Program

Counselors adopt a variety of methods to inform people about who they are and what they do in schools. From speaking to the parent–teachers association (PTA) at the beginning of each year to sitting on community boards that govern services for families and children, school counselors choose many avenues to publicize their programs. These marketing strategies have a twofold purpose: One is to educate people about services available to students, parents, and teachers through a comprehensive school counseling program; a second and equally important goal is for counselors to promote the school counseling profession by being visible in the schools and communities.

Samples of marketing and promotional strategies used by school counselors include the following:

- Brochures that define the role of the counselor in the school and describe major services provided to students, parents, and teachers. Although in this ever-increasing

high-tech world of Facebook® and other social platforms, having something tangible to give to people remains useful. These brochures are handed out at PTA meetings, placed in orientation packets for new students, and made available in the counseling center. Successful brochures are in clear and understandable language, brief in content, and attractive to the eye.

- A counselor's column in the school newspaper or local town newspaper. A regular article in some type of print media, written by the school counselor, educates parents and students about the role of the counselor, provides valuable information about services in the school and the community, and promotes other school programs.
- Websites about the counseling program and upcoming events and activities use the technology of our electronic age. In addition, using the Internet to communicate with students and parents may facilitate relationships and enhance information searches. Of course, privacy and confidentiality continue to be of primary importance as counselors and their clients use electronic media to communicate.
- Speaking engagements and Webinars at school meetings, civic groups, businesses, educational associations, and other organizations. These opportunities give visibility to both counselors and their school programs and allow counselors to highlight important issues about student development and learning for community members.
- Class presentations to students about the counselor's role and services available. This is a fundamental method of marketing services to students. School counselors must be visible in their schools, and these presentations, early in the school year, can help students identify who the counselors are in their schools and learn how to obtain their assistance.

This list provides a brief sample of ways school counselors can market their programs and promote themselves as professionals in the community. As noted, technology is useful in marketing the program and, in addition, it is beneficial in implementing other aspects of the program. Advances in technology for data management, assessment, communication, and information sharing continue to play an increasingly important role in how counselors disseminate information and methods they use in delivering other responsive services.

Using Technology

Technological advances continue to enhance and challenge all aspects of our lives. New tools developed through innovative technology have implications for school counselors at all levels of practice (Sabella & Booker, 2003; Van Horn & Myrick, 2001). In 1995, Gerler observed that the school counseling profession needed to address the challenge of entering the information age with the same enthusiasm used to train new high school counselors following passage of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 and to address the profession's expansion into elementary school counseling during the 1960s and 1970s. That challenge continues, as it is daunting to keep up with the acceleration of technological advancements.

Most students in this twenty-first century surpass adults when it comes to learning, using, and adjusting to the newest technology and terminology. Adding to the challenge is the speed at which companies introduce technology and software while recent advances quickly become obsolete. We now have a new lexicon that did not exist a few years ago,

and some of these terms may disappear before we know it: apps, blogging, broadband, DS® games, Facebook®, Google®, high-definition, iPod®, iTunes®, MP3 player, MySpace®, PalmPilot®, Personal PlayStation®, Second Life®, Skype®, smartphone, smartboard, text messaging, twittering, virtual worlds, webinars, Wii®, wireless, YouTube®, and more. For today's students, new technology and the language it creates are part of their world. They are as comfortable with it as their parents and teachers are to microwave ovens, television, and space travel. In this section, we explore a few applications of technology by school counselors.

Information Managing and Data Processing. As noted, schools handle and process a large amount of data. School counselors often share responsibility for monitoring student records, tracking student schedules, and following up on students' grades to provide academic counseling. In addition, counselors might keep data related to student and parent contacts, program management, counseling case notes, and other information to help them be more efficient and effective in providing services. With all these tasks, the computer has become an essential vehicle for processing and storing information. At the same time, it challenges our ability to keep privileged communications and other private matters confidential (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Gladding, 2009).

The ASCA National Model (2005, 2012) and other designs for comprehensive programs emphasize collection and use of data in planning and goal setting processes. Technology will continue to be of great assistance to counselors in these procedures. Therefore, up-to-date knowledge and competent use of computers and software programs will be imperative for future counselors. Sabella (2009) highlighted a few high-tech options for data management, analysis, and reporting, including the EZAnalyze TimeTracker (www.ezanalyze.com/tracktime), Hallways School Counselor Software (www.ihatepaperwork.com/index.htm), and noteCounselor (www.notecounselor.com).

EZAnalyze TimeTracker is an Excel-based application that helps counselors track how they spend time with and not with students, record notes, and generate reports about individual contacts, group work, and other activities. Similarly, Hallways allows counselors to automatically track activities and generate reports to demonstrate success of a comprehensive counseling program. The noteCounselor software is the first database created by a school counselor to store counseling notes. It helps school counselors follow students' progress in counseling, automatically generates reports, and reduces paperwork. These programs are a small sample of what is available. We can expect the marketplace to expand product offerings of this type in the future.

Dollarhide and Saginak (2012) noted that in some areas of the country, entire K–12 schools are providing online instruction. This trend follows what has been happening at the college level since the turn of the twenty-first century. It may be only a matter of time when an increasing number of K–12 students receive instruction over the Internet, rather than attending a school building daily. What this means for the school counselor's role in providing leadership, counseling, consulting, and other services is speculative, but will likely include online methods.

Assessment. Historically, a major function performed by counselors has been in the area of testing and assessment. We explore this function in detail later in this text, but here we briefly address the use of new technology in this area.

Assessment is an important part of the overall services that school counselors provide because it is the starting point for helping students, parents, and teachers make appropriate educational, career, and personal decisions. Without adequate and accurate assessment, counselors may not have sufficient information to help people make appropriate and responsible choices. New technology and software programs emerge every day, enabling counselors to administer and score individual tests more efficiently, allowing students to explore educational and career opportunities, and providing opportunities to learn and solve problems through interactive guidance programs.

Interactive Guidance and Counseling. Beyond the use of computers to assist with data management and assessment, school counselors now have available the technology to supplement traditional counseling and guidance strategies and techniques. Internet websites offer opportunities for online counseling, interactive guidance information, career assessments, and other possibilities. One example is the Kuder Career Planning System (www.kuder.com), which offers students the opportunity to do career planning, store information, and build resumes (Gladding, 2009). Another is DISCOVER (actapps.act.org/eDISCOVER).

Virtual reality programs are another online interactive possibility and currently used in education, the entertainment industry, for recreational purposes, and in the business world. *Second Life* (secondlife.com) is one virtual world that has been adapted for counselor education (Warren, 2012; sl.counseloreducation.org). Although there is little indication at this time of school counselors using virtual reality programs, clinicians in Australia and other locations are using this technology (www.virtualrealitycounselling.com). It seems reasonable to expect this medium to be applied by school counselors in the future, because it has potential for helping students with peer-relationship issues, problem solving, career exploration and decision making, and educational planning, among other topics.

In 1997, Elias and Hoover studied computer-assisted learning to help students with problem-solving skills. They examined the effects of computer-facilitated counseling with at-risk third-grade students over a 6-month period, and found positive results. Although their study did not specifically examine the efficacy of computer-assisted learning, it demonstrated one example of how computers could help deliver counseling services.

The Internet. Perhaps no other aspect of the information age has had such a profound and universal impact on people's lives than the Internet. Indeed, the World Wide Web has altered how we communicate, how families and institutions function, where we get information, how we spend leisure time, and how we spend our money. For better or for worse, these changes are taking place around the globe.

An emerging use of the Internet for professional counselors has been online counseling. As new technology alters routines, customs, traditions, and other aspects of people's lives, it is certain to influence the way that professional counselors offer services to clients, including students, parents, and teachers in schools. As with other innovations, online counseling offers an array of benefits, but also raises caveats for professional counselors and their clients (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Gladding, 2009; Granello & Young, 2012). One advantage of using e-mail and Internet chat rooms to assist students is the convenience and access that the technology provides. For example, students can send messages to their counselors during off-hours, thereby not missing instructional time in classes. Their counselors could respond to these inquiries either immediately or the following day, depending

on their schedule and the nature of a student's concern. Another advantage is that students, parents, and teachers could seek a counselor's assistance from the total privacy of their home without ever entering the counseling center. Technology for online counseling also allows counselors to keep a full record of sessions, which eliminates the need to take notes for appropriate follow-up and supervision requirements.

Some of the risks and disadvantages involved with online counseling include concerns about confidentiality. Because the technology is so new, procedures of ensuring confidentiality and preventing other people from reading exchanges between counselors and clients are still being developed and tested. Another concern is the lack of affect and nonverbal cues accorded by face-to-face counseling. Diligent use of their responding and questioning skills by counselors who use cybercounseling will be complemented by more frequent follow-up to ensure accurate understanding of clients' perceptions (Walz, Bleuer, & Yep, 2009).

Regulation of the use of electronic methods for counseling is another issue for school counselors to consider. California passed legislation governing the practice of psychotherapy and restricting the administration of mental-health services to clinical psychologists and medical doctors licensed in the state (Sussman, 2000); other states are sure to follow. School counselors should monitor legislation in their states to see if laws and regulations governing online counseling might affect their services. In addition, counselors should be aware of ethical standards established by professional counseling organizations such as the American Counseling Association (ACA), which included a section on Technology Assisted Services in its latest ethical code (ACA, 2005).

The Internet provides seemingly unlimited information through thousands of websites created by individuals, institutions, businesses, associations, and other organizations. Much of the information that students, parents, teachers, and counselors find through the Internet will be beneficial, but some of it might be inaccurate and misleading. School counselors assist students and others by becoming familiar with popular websites and monitoring the accuracy and appropriateness of the information found. They also search for sites that might be unfamiliar to students, yet provide useful educational, career, and personal/social information. Schools across the country have websites, and counselors are included with home pages where students locate information, send messages to their counselors, and find links to other useful sites. Figure 6.2 illustrates a fictional school counselor's web page.

Coming decades will most likely bring more innovations in technology that will have an increasing impact on how counselors serve students, parents, and teachers both in and out of the schoolhouse. This will influence how school counselors offer direct services, such as counseling and consulting, as well as services that disseminate information and provide learning experiences for students. These changes will also increase the need to have counselors who meet professional standards and hold appropriate credentials to practice in school counseling programs.

One outcome of all the discussed organizational processes is that counselors are able to assign themselves appropriate services within the school. As noted earlier, appropriate services and activities to assign school counselors include individual and group counseling, student assessment, parent education programs and consultation, and small group guidance for selected students. As these assignments are made, counselors begin to establish a schedule of services for their programs. Depending on school and program goals, a counselor's schedule might span a week, month, a grading period, a semester, or the full year. Designing a schedule for the counseling program is the initial step of implementing services.

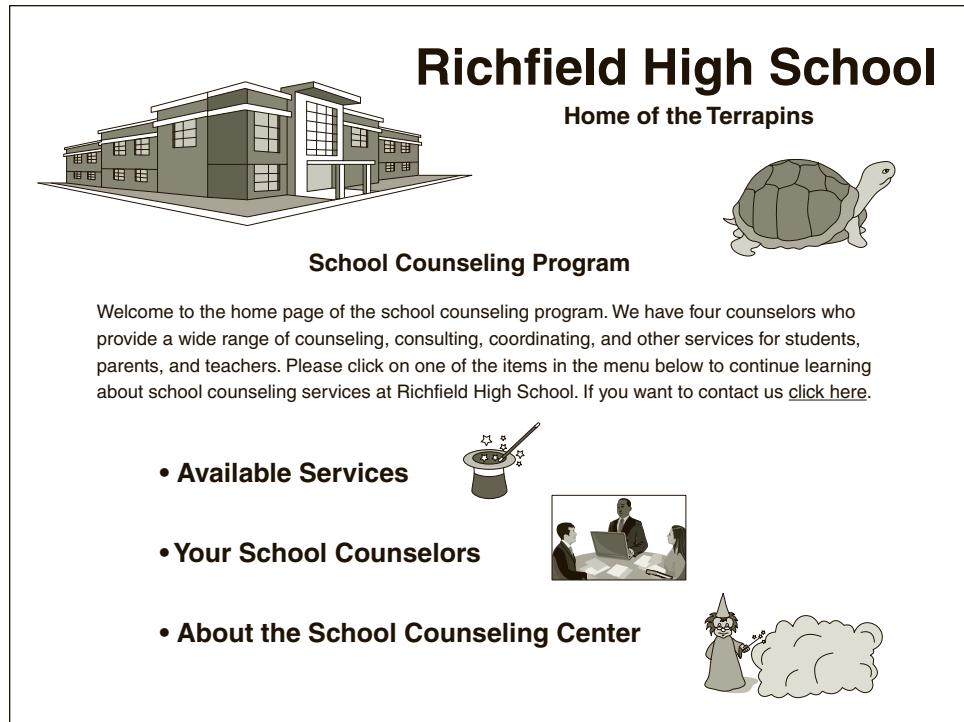


FIGURE 6.2 Illustration of a Fictional School Counselor Home Page

Implementing

To provide a comprehensive program, school counselors gain control of their time and subsequently schedule services to satisfy the goals and objectives of the program as well as the critical needs of students, parents, and teachers. Having a schedule helps counselors plan and allot time for selected services and, at the same time, illustrates for everyone the comprehensive nature of the school counseling program.

Scheduling Services and Setting Priorities

As specialists who focus on broad areas of student development and assume a leadership role in coordinating and delivering a comprehensive program, school counselors have a unique position that distinguishes them from their teaching colleagues. One illustration of this difference is how counselors and teachers structure their time and establish schedules. Classroom teachers have schedules set by administrators or by committees of teachers who design curricula, schedule courses, and assign students to classes. A teacher's schedule is therefore consistent from day to day. This may vary from elementary schools where teachers are responsible for the same students all day long, to high schools where teachers maintain identical or similar schedules every day. In elementary and middle schools, for

example, teachers have flexibility and control over their schedules because frequently they decide when particular subjects or certain activities take place. At the senior high level, however, schedules tend to be more rigid. Teachers are responsible for instructing specific subjects, but administrators usually set the schedule.

In contrast to teachers, school counselors usually have more control over their daily routine. The degree of control may vary from school to school, depending on administrative policy, but most counselors are able to design programs and establish schedules that reflect desired services and activities. The schedule of a comprehensive school counseling program illustrates its attention to a wide range of preventive, developmental, and remedial issues.

School counselors seek suggestions from teachers and administrators in establishing schedules so that their services complement rather than interfere with the instruction of students. By collaborating with teachers, counselors are better able to determine the best times to schedule individual counseling, group sessions, classroom presentations, parent education programs, and other activities. Many counselors post their schedules, weekly or monthly as the case may be, to announce services and to let people see how they are spending their time.

A counselor's schedule is also influenced by the goals and objectives selected after a needs assessment is complete. A challenge for each counselor and advisory committee is to take these identified goals and objectives and begin setting priorities. The process selected for setting priorities influences the schedule of services. Myrick (2003) proposed several different ways for counselors to approach their schedules systematically. The first way, already presented, is to set priorities according to the needs identified and determine which can be addressed through classroom interventions and which need the special services of a counselor. The second method is to set priorities based on current crises being experienced by individual students, the school, or the community. Again, decisions can be made about what group or individual services address the crisis most effectively and efficiently.

A third way of setting priorities is by emphasizing the different types of services the counselor is able to offer in the school. This method suggests a ranking of services. Assuming all types of interventions are equally effective, Myrick (2003) concluded that group work deserves a higher priority, because the number of counselors to meet the needs of individual students is inadequate.

A fourth method of setting priorities is by time management. Simply stated, the counselor examines the total amount of time in a day and determines how much time is needed to deliver each of the planned interventions—a certain amount of time for individual counseling, group work, classroom activities, and so forth.

None of the preceding methods by themselves is sufficient to set priorities for a counseling program and establish a reasonable schedule for the counselor. Each, however, contributes to this process. What is equally important, as mentioned earlier, is for counselors to seek input from others, attempt to coordinate their schedules with the instructional program, and let people be aware of their schedules.

By seeking suggestions from others, establishing schedules that fit the instructional program, and posting their schedules for others to see, school counselors accomplish several important goals. First, they demonstrate that the most important function of the school is to educate children and adolescents, and programs such as school counseling should

enhance this process. When school counseling services and activities detract from student-teacher relationships or impede student learning, they contradict the purpose of a comprehensive counseling program. Second, collaboration and cooperation with teachers place counselors in the visible role of letting people know what services exist and when they occur. Such visibility eliminates doubt and confusion about the role of a school counselor. Finally, by seeking suggestions and establishing visible schedules, school counselors demonstrate that the services they offer are vital to the development of all students and are an integral part of the school. The underlying challenge that counselors face in establishing a workable schedule is how to balance their time among the demands that people make.

Balancing Time

Many resources that help school counselors establish comprehensive programs stress the importance of time management (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Dahir & Stone, 2012; Schmidt, 2010). There is no mathematical formula or magic process that can help counselors balance their time across the varied services in comprehensive programs, but the different methods of setting priorities provide a good starting point. Other factors to consider are the critical needs of students and their families served by the school, as well as school programs and community agencies available as referral sources. As an illustration, counselors who work in schools with many students with severe learning difficulties or that serve a high percentage of families in economic distress plan services that appear quite different from counselors in other schools.

In addition to examining the priorities set by their advisory committees, counselors can identify the proportion of students who have critical needs. Typically, 10 percent to 20 percent of a student population is in need of some type of direct intervention. This is consistent with mental-health estimates for the population at large. If that percentage is accurate, a counselor in a school of 500 students can expect that 50 to 100 students will need direct service for one reason or another. These students become the target group of the counseling program and should receive high priority for individual and small-group counseling services.

Once the counselor identifies these students and determines whether individual or group services are most appropriate, he or she then addresses developmental needs of the remaining students. These needs are best identified through the formal and informal assessments done with teachers and students. As these needs are prioritized by the advisory committee and counselor, decisions about how best to meet them can be made. Activities that focus on developmental concerns include guidance lessons integrated into the curriculum by classroom teachers, special presentations by the counselor in the classroom, and school-wide events and initiatives.

Figure 6.3 illustrates a sample schedule of a middle school counselor. This fictional counselor is the only counselor in a middle school of 400 students. The percentage of exceptional students with learning problems is about 15 percent, which is relatively high for this school system. More than 40 percent of the students qualify for the free lunch program, and one of the school's goals is to increase parental involvement.

The sample schedule shows an attempt to balance services for approximately 50 targeted students, while also providing educational programs and consultation for parents. About 7 hours for individual counseling are allotted during the week. The counselor sees students in

FIGURE 6.3 Sample Schedule for a Middle School Counseling Program

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:45	Parent consultation	Parent consultation	Peer helper supervision	Planning and coordinating	Parent program
8:45	Individual counseling	Class presentation	Class presentation	Group counseling	Individual counseling
9:45	Class presentation	Group counseling	Group counseling	Observation	Individual counseling
10:45	Individual counseling	Testing/assessment	Observation	Class presentation	Parent program
11:45	Peer helper supervision	Teacher consultation	Class presentation	Group counseling	Group counseling
1:00	Individual counseling	Individual counseling	Group counseling	Testing/assessment	Principal consultation
2:00	Class presentation	Group counseling	Individual counseling	Teacher consultation	Planning and coordinating
3:00	Parent consultation	Teacher consultation	Referrals and follow-up	Referrals and follow-up	Planning and coordinating

half-hour sessions; therefore, this allows time for 14 students to receive individual counseling each week. An additional 7 hours are scheduled for group counseling. If each group has 5 to 6 members, 35 to 40 students may participate in group counseling sessions. Thus, individual and group counseling services combined could provide services for the 50 “focus students.”

Parent consultation and parent programs receive five hours per week to address the school’s goal of increasing parent involvement. Teacher consultation has three hours allotted per week, and classroom presentations received six hours. Because the schedule is for September, many class presentations probably will orient sixth-grade students to the school and the school counseling program. Additional presentations would focus on topics that seventh- and eighth-grade teachers identified in the needs’ assessment.

The schedule also shows that the counselor supervises a peer helper program and allows two hours per week for training and supervision. Testing and observation of students use four hours per week, program planning and coordinating have three hours scheduled, and two hours per week are for referrals and follow-up.

The preceding example briefly shows how counselors might process the needs of a school to establish a reasonable schedule of services and program leadership. One important aspect about a school counselor’s schedule is that it is flexible. Counselors are often asked to handle crisis situations, and at those times, they may not be able to adhere to a posted schedule. Another important aspect is that, while counselors are responsible for setting their schedules, they seek input from the advisory committee, administrators, and teachers so that their schedules can best meet the needs of the school population. By having an acceptable schedule, counselors are better able to manage their time, provide leadership for a comprehensive program, and develop a range of responsive services.

Counseling

As noted earlier, counseling services include individual and small group relationships in which counselors help students, parents, or teachers focus on specific concerns, plan to address these issues, and act on these plans. Counseling in schools covers a wide range of issues and concerns, from peer relationships to suicidal thoughts. As such, counseling can address academic areas, personal adjustment, career decisions, and a host of other topics. Generally, school counselors offer short-term counseling relationships when dealing with serious and critical concerns. If progress does not happen in these brief relationships, counselors refer students to other professionals, such as mental-health counselors, counseling psychologists, or psychiatrists in the community. In some cases, students with normal developmental concerns establish relationships with school counselors and continue these helping relationships throughout their school years. In these long-term relationships, counselors address different topics and issues and observe significant growth and development.

The sample schedule in Figure 6.3 shows that group counseling can help schools reach a larger number of students than through individual counseling. In schools, group counseling is an important service, yet it is often difficult to incorporate into the program because of scheduling problems, lack of suitable space, and misunderstanding about what it is. Teachers in U.S. schools are under increased pressure to show evidence of student achievement, so it is understandable why many are so protective of their instructional time. Consequently, they are reluctant to excuse students from class to participate in activities and programs they view as noninstructional, such as group counseling.

Establishing Groups. When organizing and scheduling group counseling sessions and group guidance activities, school counselors develop a plan that informs the administration, educates the faculty, introduces groups to students, develops an acceptable schedule, and involves parents when appropriate to do so. The first step in this process is to determine what student needs are best met through group processes and which type of group is most appropriate—group counseling or group guidance. Next, counselors convince the school administration and their teaching colleagues of the value of these group services.

Informing the Administration. Because group guidance and counseling services require special consideration to remove students from usual class schedules and instruction, counselors inform their principals about the nature and value of these activities. To do so effectively, counselors are knowledgeable about group procedures, clear about their goals, and up to date about current research on group procedures in schools. School principals want effective services for students, but instructional time and teacher satisfaction are two sacred elements that cannot be disturbed by new approaches started on a whim. To convince principals, counselors in schools readily demonstrate that group guidance and group counseling complement classroom instruction by helping students examine behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions that inhibit learning and restrict their development.

Once school counselors persuade administrators that group sessions are worth implementing in counseling programs, the next step is to sell the idea to teachers. Teachers are important allies of counselors. Without teachers' support and confidence, services such as group counseling are not likely to receive approval or succeed.

Persuading the Faculty. Successful school counselors convince teachers of the importance of new services by demonstrating positive results in the services they already provide. Competent and reliable school counselors win the respect of their colleagues and have a decided edge over counselors who are uncertain and inconsistent with their practices. Beyond their overall capabilities, effective counselors illustrate to teachers the relationship between student self-development and school achievement. Research on students' self-concepts and beliefs about themselves as learners demonstrates a connection with school achievement (Purkey, 2000; Purkey & Novak, 1996). Group procedures, particularly group counseling, facilitate the process of self-exploration, self-learning, and self-acceptance because

1. As with all people, students are social beings, and by belonging to a group, they interact with one another, reflect and evaluate perceptions of who they are, and practice new behaviors in a safe and nonthreatening environment.
2. Group members help each other, often more effectively than a counselor can individually with a student. In groups, students relate to what other members are saying, they compare similarities and differences in the concerns shared among group members, and they pool their ideas to offer a range of suggestions and alternatives to assist each other.
3. Groups offer a sense of belonging and camaraderie to students who feel isolated, rejected, and alone. Through group counseling and small-group guidance, students bond with other members, form friendships and alliances, and recognize the value of caring and helpful relationships.
4. Groups allow participation without demanding that students be active. Some students are not as verbal or outgoing as other students are. In groups, these students still benefit from the helping process by listening and watching other members. In time and with the appropriate encouragement and support, they may become more active, but even if not, they can learn about themselves and others by observing the proceedings of the group.
5. Groups are an efficient use of counselors' time. By establishing helping relationships with more than one student at a time, counselors reach a broader population, offering more services to a greater number of students.

In summary, persuading teachers of the value and importance of group processes in a school counseling program embraces the assumption that students who work together learn essential skills and strengthen their self-perceptions. For example, Corey and Corey (2008) reported favorable comments from teachers, parents, and counselors after students participated in group sessions. Children improved their self-understanding, altered aggressive behaviors, and demonstrated increased willingness to belong and get along with others. Gladding (2012) cited several studies of group work with children that indicate benefits in improved self-concepts, coping skills with family stresses, school adjustment, and academic achievement. These results translate into responsible student behavior and academic progress, two strong selling points with teachers.

Introducing Groups and Selecting Students. School counselors introduce their groups to students in a variety of ways. In elementary and middle schools, counselors present classroom guidance activities and use these opportunities to introduce other topics suitable

for small group sessions. Through this introductory process, counselors assess students' interest in participating in various groups. At the same time, counselors observe students during classroom guidance lessons and identify those who will benefit from either individual or group counseling.

Teachers, parents, and students are the referral sources who bring group ideas and suggestions to counselors. One senior high counselor reported that he approached a female student who was overweight and seemed withdrawn and isolated in the school. The student discussed her feelings and perceptions about her weight and relationships she had with her peers. During this exchange, the counselor asked the young woman if she thought other students might have similar concerns and would want to share them in a group. The next day the student returned with several classmates who wanted to establish a support group to work on their self-concepts.

When counselors select students to participate in small groups, they take precautions to assure compatibility of group members. This is not to say there can be no differences among participants, but a wide divergence may not lend itself to cohesiveness that is important to the group process (Toseland & Rivas, 2001). Although group cohesion is difficult to define and evaluate, common descriptions include "when students are clear about why they are in a particular group and when they feel purposefully connected to the content of the group" (Geroski & Kraus, 2010, p. 71).

In selecting students for small groups, school counselors consider age differences, language development, types of concerns, degree of concerns, and social class. A wide disparity within any one or more of these factors may inhibit sharing, supporting, and relating among group members. For example, an elementary counselor who places 5-year-olds in the same group with 10-year-olds may find the age spread is too great, and the students have little in common to share adequately in group sessions. Likewise, students who are in groups because of acting-out behaviors may not relate well with students who are shy, withdrawn, and overly anxious about school. Sometimes, however, divergence is helpful in groups. For example, by including students of different cultures to share their feelings and observations, counselors create an excellent forum for learning sensitivity and acceptance among students.

Selection processes are essential in creating successful groups (Corey & Corey, 2008; Geroski & Kraus, 2010; Gladding, 2012). Gladding (2012) suggested an individual or small-group interview with potential members wherein the counselor introduces the group idea to students, explains the purpose of the group, listens to students' reactions, and assesses whether a student would make a good group member. At the same time, the counselor hears what the student's expectations of the group might be if he or she were to join. Corey and Corey (2008) imagined this screening process as an opportunity for the counselor to assess students and ascertain what they expect from the group. It is also an opportunity for students to become familiar with the counselor and the group counseling program. In this interviewing process, the counselor explains the group rules and seeks commitment from students to abide by the rules and work on concerns if they join the group.



PERSPECTIVE 6-3

Why is leadership control of group membership so important to the success of groups? Can you think of situations when you would relinquish this responsibility?

By using a clear selection process, school counselors retain control over group membership, critical to their success as leaders of small-group guidance and counseling. At times, school administrators and teachers recommend students for counseling, either individual sessions or group counseling, and they insist that the students receive counseling services. When a counselor relinquishes his or her professional role and responsibility to assess students' needs and determine the suitability of particular interventions, they diminish their control of, and thereby jeopardize their overall effectiveness in, the school counseling program. Counselors want to accept referrals from others, assess situations properly, and make informed and responsible decisions about what services to provide for whom. Sometimes students who are referred for counseling may benefit more from other services, such as a medical examination and consultation, assistance from social services, or participation in a youth program; other times, it may be that teachers or parents may benefit from instructional or informational services that help students indirectly. On the occasions when counselors decide that group services will be beneficial to students, their next step is to schedule the sessions.

Scheduling Groups. In designing group schedules, counselors determine the frequency of meetings, the length of each session, the place where they hold sessions, and the number of sessions if they plan a closed group. Suggestions from teachers are essential in helping counselors design reasonable and efficient group schedules. The counselor's advisory committee, consisting of teachers, administrators, parents, and students (at the middle and high school levels) can assist with the task of designing an appropriate schedule that satisfies the faculty, is reasonable to the counselor, and meets the expectations of the groups.

Scheduling large group guidance is not difficult if teachers and counselors integrate these lessons into daily instruction. As emphasized throughout this text, the most effective large-group guidance occurs in the classroom as a result of a collaborative relationship between the teacher and counselor. When integrated as part of the ongoing curriculum, classroom guidance poses few logistical hurdles. By having teachers and counselors colead classroom guidance, the schedule allows for flexibility. For example, if a crisis occurs and the counselor is needed elsewhere in the school, the teacher is able to continue the guidance lesson without interruption.

Small-group guidance and small-group counseling are more difficult to schedule, particularly if a counselor leads many groups involving a large number of students. In elementary and middle schools, where individual teachers or teams of teachers instruct the same students during the day, scheduling is best coordinated between the counselors and teachers. To prevent students from missing the same subject matter every time their group meets, one solution is to stagger the times of the group meetings. For example, the first group session might begin on Monday at 10:00 A.M., the second session could meet the next week on Tuesday at 2:00 P.M., and so forth. This method of changing the day and time is also reasonable to use with groups at all levels—elementary, middle, and high school. By scheduling group sessions in this manner, counselors avoid taking students from the same teacher and out of the same course for the entire duration of the group. Instead, students miss only one or two classes from a given subject area.

Involving Parents. Because group counseling and group guidance complement the instructional program of the school, counselors want to inform and involve parents in selecting children to participate in these services. School counselors want to know whether their

school system requires parental permission for student participation in these programs, and if there is a local, state, or other policy that stipulates the need for parental approval. In general, professional counselors follow the guidelines and procedures of the agency or institution where they are working (Gladding, 2012). They also follow ethical standards of the profession in this regard. School counselors are wise to inform parents of group opportunities through their presentations at school functions such as PTA meetings, by publishing and distributing brochures about their school counseling program, and announcing services on the school website.

When screening and selecting students for groups, counselors inform parents about their children's participation. This is not necessarily a request for permission, but rather a courtesy extended to parents to include them in the helping process. One counselor uses the following announcement to parents:

Your child has asked to be in a group led by the school counselor. The group will meet once a week for eight weeks and will focus on school achievement, student relationships, and other aspects of school life and concerns of students. I encourage you to talk with your son or daughter about his or her participation and contribution in the group. Please call me if you have questions about the group or your child's participation.

In some instances, students may want to join groups without their parents' knowledge. Whenever possible, counselors should honor and protect this request. For example, students who have been physically or sexually abused have the right to receive support and treatment without fear of retribution at home or elsewhere. By informing administrators, persuading faculty, involving parents, and implementing the other steps discussed here, counselors will be successful in establishing group procedures as part of their programs. Their ultimate success depends on each counselor's leadership abilities, knowledge of counseling theories and approaches, and communication skills.

One approach counselors can use in persuading their teaching colleagues, principals, and parents of the benefits of group work is to run groups that will have positive effects on student study habits, attitudes toward school, and similar topics that may enhance student achievement. As counselors demonstrate positive outcomes in such groups and relate those outcomes to student performance in class, more teachers, administrators, and parents will see the value of group processes. We examine individual and group counseling, as well as other group processes, in detail in Chapter 7.

Consulting

School counselors assist parents and teachers with many aspects of child development and behavior. In most instances, counselors take the role of a consultant, bringing to the relationship a level of knowledge about human growth and development, needs of children and adolescents, and approaches for assisting students with behavioral changes. Many of the communication skills used in counseling relationships are similar to those found in consulting processes. The difference between counseling and consulting relationships may lie more in their design and structure than in actual process differences.

Parent education programs and teacher in-service activities are forms of group consultation. School counselors who design comprehensive programs offer these types of services

as an indirect method of assisting students. For example, parents who learn behavior management skills or how to structure homework time are better able to support and guide their children in beneficial ways. Likewise, teachers who hear about different learning styles are better prepared to create appropriate instructional activities for students in their classes.

Counselors also use consulting services when working with professionals outside the school. They frequently consult with health officials, social service workers, and professionals in other agencies to seek appropriate services for students and families. In forming these consulting relationships, school counselors share their expertise, include student information when it is appropriate to do so, and learn about programs and services of the agency from which they seek assistance. Gathering information from agencies, making initial referral contacts, and ensuring that the referrals are followed through are processes that relate to another primary service of a school counseling program—coordinating.

Coordinating

Because a comprehensive school counseling program consists of several components and activities, it is coordinated efficiently to reach success. Research has shown that school counselors spend a significant portion of their time coordinating events and activities (Hobbs & Collison, 1995; Kameen, Robinson, & Rotter, 1985). Today, the ASCA National Model (2005, 2012) and other authorities (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012) place significant importance on counselors' ability to coordinate activities and collaborate with others in forming partnerships that make comprehensive programs run efficiently.

Functions and skills that relate to program coordination include scheduling services, providing clear communication, setting timelines, delegating responsibilities, following up services and commitments, and time management. Given this expansive list of functions and skills, it seems that almost every service provided by a school counselor and every activity performed in some way relates to program coordination. In addition, special education services and increased system-wide testing programs that have resulted from school-reform initiatives require significant coordination effort that often becomes the responsibility of school counselors.

As discussed earlier, *coordinating* consists of many skills and processes, which gives it a general and perhaps indefinable connotation. Although *coordination* may have a broad and apparently all-encompassing meaning, it is nevertheless essential to successful programs. If a comprehensive school counseling program includes a variety of related services, all these services are in harmony with the school's educational program. For example, the counselor who provides effective individual counseling but fails to follow up referrals from teachers and parents finds that services are requested less frequently. In contrast, a counselor who accepts referrals, makes prompt contact with students, and provides appropriate responses to parents and teachers is appreciated and valued.

Appraising

To offer effective services, school counselors begin by gathering the necessary information to make appropriate and accurate decisions. When students are referred to counselors, a process of assessing the situation, appraising the student, and choosing appropriate responsive services is required. In comprehensive programs, counselors know that all students do

not need and do not necessarily benefit from individual or group counseling. Other responses, such as small-group guidance, parent education, and teacher in-service programs, may be more appropriate in addressing some concerns brought forth by students, parents, and teachers.

Gathering and using data from various sources, analyzing information, drawing accurate conclusions, and making recommendations to address the concerns of students and others are important aspects of effective counseling programs in schools. When counselors fail to appraise situations fully and resort to using the same mode of operation regardless of the case at hand, they limit their power as leaders and collaborators and restrict the services of comprehensive programs. Counselors who perform adequate appraisals, use available data, make accurate diagnoses, and select appropriate services win the respect of their colleagues and the people who seek their assistance. This is a hallmark of all professional counselors, regardless of the setting in which they work. We discuss student assessment in detail in Chapter 9.

All these functions are important to the overall implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program. As noted, a key to the counselor's success is in the design of a reasonable and flexible schedule that accomplishes three important purposes. As such, an effective counselor (1) takes active control of time management for the counseling program; (2) informs school personnel about the important functions and services provided by the school counselor; and (3) solicits the participation of administrators and teachers in planning how the responsive services are scheduled during the school day.

Suggestions from teachers and administrators in the design and schedule of a school counselor program also contribute to the annual evaluation of the services offered. In comprehensive school counseling programs, evaluation is a final element that defines the program, establishes its credibility, and demonstrates the vital role that counselors play in the school.

Evaluating

Accurate needs assessment, as seen earlier, is important to establish desirable school counseling services. Adequate evaluation is essential in determining the value of the services that counselors render. Chapter 11 describes evaluation procedures in detail, so the following section serves as an introduction and highlights a few important elements of evaluation, particularly its practical considerations when developing a program.

A successful school counseling program is one that gets results. Accordingly, students who receive counseling and related services are able to improve school performance, increase social skills, make sound educational and career decisions, and realize other identified goals. At the same time, all students in the school benefit from the counselor's presence by information received or through instruction about important developmental tasks and issues. Teachers and parents benefit from consulting services, as demonstrated by their increased knowledge of child and adolescent behavior and higher level communication skills for improving listening and teaching processes.

Evaluation in school counseling is an ongoing process of collecting data from students, parents, and teachers to assess services and activities. It is also an annual process of gathering reactions and opinions regarding the counseling program as a whole.

Counselors who design ongoing and annual evaluation processes demonstrate their effectiveness, alter services that are not achieving desired results, and continuously assess the direction of their programs. In addition, school counselors use procedures such as those endorsed by the American School Counselor Association and work with their principal or other school system evaluators to design appropriate and accurate annual performance appraisal systems.

Competent school counselors select appropriate and effective services to meet the needs of students, parents, and teachers. This is what we mean by *counselor accountability*—the ability to show what services are part of the program and the difference these services make in the lives of people. Counselor accountability has long been an important professional issue (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Dahir & Stone, 2012; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Erford, 2011d; Schmidt, 2010). Without demonstrating positive results, counselors are unable to validate their essential role in the school. Simply “being there” is not sufficient to warrant the cost of developing and staffing a school counseling program—today’s effective counselors show that the program services they lead and deliver help the school reach its educational mission.

From a practical standpoint, an important consideration in designing evaluation processes is to keep it simple. It is not necessary for school counselors to develop elaborate evaluation systems that take time away from the services they are attempting to deliver; that would be counterproductive. For this reason, counselors may find the advisory committee helpful in designing reasonable and efficient methods of evaluating services.

As indicated earlier, adequate evaluation enables the counselor and school to return to the assessed needs of students, parents, and teachers and the overall goals of the school counseling program. In this cyclical process, renewed planning, organizing, and implementing services continues. Each time this cycle is completed, evaluation helps the counselor recommend changes for future services. In a comprehensive school counseling program, all the procedures associated with this cycle of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating are coordinated by the counselor in cooperation with the school principal, the advisory committee, and the supervisor of counseling services.

All components of a comprehensive program contribute to the development and implementation of successful services. The services of a comprehensive program are described in detail in Chapters 7 through 10.

Additional Readings

Geroski, A. M., & Kraus, K. L. (2010). *Groups in Schools: Preparing, Leading, and Responding*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

A crisp and well-presented summary of the rationale and implementation procedures for using various types of groups in schools.

Schmidt, J. J. (2010). *A Survival Guide for the Elementary/Middle School Counselor* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

A guide for elementary and middle school counselors to establishing comprehensive programs,

developing effective services, and evaluating their performance. It encourages counselors to look beyond their immediate survival and design programs in which they can flourish as professional helpers.

Walz, G. R., Bleuer, J. C., & Yep, R. K. (2009). *Compelling Counseling Interventions: VISTAS 2009*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Consisting of 30 articles, this book offers useful and innovative information and interventions, including topics on counseling and technology.

Websites

Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program

counselingoutfitters.com/vistas/vistas06/vistas06.41.pdf

EZAnalyze Time Tracker

www.ezanalyze.com/tracktime

Hallways School Counselor Software

www.ihatepaperwork.com/index.htm

noteCounselor

www.noteounselor.com

Strengthening K–12 School Counseling Programs

www.therapeuticssources.com/82-58text.html

Note: There are numerous state sites under “Comprehensive School Counseling Programs.”

Exercises

1. Design a brochure for an elementary, middle, or high school counseling program. Present the brochure to your class and ask them to review it for clarity, brevity, and attractiveness.
2. Role-play with another student and pretend that you are being interviewed on a radio program about being a counselor in a school.
3. Assess your time management behaviors. Make a list of the positive aspects of your time management, and then list the barriers to becoming a better time manager. How will you overcome these barriers when you are a school counselor?
4. Visit a school counselor for a day, and observe how that counselor organizes the program, implements services, and manages time.
5. Create a website that describes the mission and goals of your school counseling program. What services would you list and what links would you include on this website?
6. In small groups develop persuasive arguments that you could present to a school principal who thought a school counselor’s time was best spent in coordinating special education services, the school’s testing program, and other administrative functions.



CHAPTER 7

Individual Counseling and Group Processes

The counseling profession takes its name from the function that defines and describes a primary role of its members. As noted in Chapter 1, counseling emerged as a major function of the profession because of the work of Carl Rogers and other theorists in the 1950s and 1960s. Throughout the development of the profession, counseling as a function has continued to be the mainspring for all other practices and services. This is true in all professional settings in which counselors work, whether they are in mental-health centers, family clinics, prisons, hospitals, or schools. The basis for most services provided by professional counselors is knowledge of counseling theories and the effective use of helping skills.

Effective and efficient helping skills encompass a wide range of behaviors, techniques, and practices that are compatible with the counselor's theoretical and philosophical perspectives. Successful counselors are adept at choosing and developing strategies that bring their theoretical beliefs to life for them and their clients. The hallmark of an effective counselor is the ability to take a particular theoretical stance, mold it to fit one's unique perspectives and beliefs, and acquire the communication and facilitation skills necessary to use these views and assumptions in helping oneself and others achieve optimal development. Today's counselors also adapt their skills and perspectives to facilitate relationships with diverse clients, many of whom might not be helped by models based on European and Western views (Robinson-Wood, 2009; Schmidt, 2006). Successful school counselors are particularly sensitive to this issue as they serve students and families with varied cultural backgrounds.

In this chapter, we examine individual counseling and group procedures as two complementary services of a comprehensive program. In addition, some counseling approaches are presented briefly with particular attention to brief counseling models suitable for counseling in school settings. Before exploring the processes and models associated with the practice of counseling individuals and groups, we address some fundamental questions: What is counseling? For whom is it intended? What is its purpose?

What Is Counseling?

The counseling profession has discussed, presented, debated, and labored over the question of "What is counseling?" since it began. The term *counseling* has been defined extensively in the professional literature, but this effort has not always resulted in consistent definitions. In part, this inconsistency is because of the varied settings in which counselors

practice and the abundant theories on which these definitions are based. In answering the question, it is helpful to review some historical sources. One approach has been to establish a clear meaning of *counseling* by distinguishing it from *psychotherapy*. This was common in earlier writings (Shertzer & Stone, 1966; Stefflre & Grant, 1972), and today the tradition continues in much of the counseling literature. For example, Gladding (2009) noted that psychotherapy focuses on the following:

- Past events more than present experiences
- Personal insight more than behavioral change
- Detachment of the counselor
- An expert role for the counselor

Years earlier, Blocher (1966) listed five parallel conditions that define counseling and the relationship between counselors and counselees:

1. Counselees (clients) are not mentally ill, but rather capable of setting goals, making decisions, and being responsible for their behaviors.
2. Counseling is concerned with the present and the future.
3. Counselors are essentially partners and teachers, and clients are collaborators as they move toward mutually defined goals.
4. Counselors do not impose values on their clients, nor do they attempt to hide their own values, feelings, and moral beliefs.
5. The goal of counseling is to change behavior, not simply to gain personal insight.

Although noting that the profession “has not made a clear distinction between counseling and psychotherapy,” Nystul (2011) nevertheless persisted that there are “subtle differences between these two processes” (p. 6). He distinguished the two across five factors: focus of the process, types of clients’ problems, goals of the relationship, treatment approaches, and professional settings. In his view, clients who seek counseling have problems related to life choices, whereas the problems of clients who are in psychotherapy are more complex. Similarly, the goals of counseling are short term, whereas those of psychotherapy involve long-term commitment. According to Nystul (2011), treatments used in counseling are preventive, whereas psychotherapy is, again, more complex and deals with unconscious processes. He noted that counseling is practiced in a variety of settings, whereas psychotherapy is usually found in private practice, hospitals, and mental-health clinics.

For the purpose of this text, there is no need to make further distinctions or to point out additional similarities between counseling and psychotherapy. Overall, the processes of both are similar, with many overlapping elements and skills. In this text, we are more concerned about what counseling is than about what it is not.

Contemporary definitions of counseling illustrate the profession’s focus on a wide range of human needs, including preventive, developmental, and remedial relationships. In 1984, Pietrofesa, Hoffman, and Splete presented counseling as a process facilitated by trained professionals for persons “seeking help in gaining greater self-understanding and improved decision-making and behavior-change skills for problem resolution and/or developmental growth” (p. 6). Nugent (2000) echoed this perspective by stating, “Regardless of where they work, counselors help individuals, families, and groups resolve conflicts,

solve problems, or make decisions in a social, cultural context” (p. 2). Similarly, Nystul (2011) defined counseling as a process that “involves a professionally trained counselor assisting a client with particular concerns … the counselor can use a variety of counseling strategies, such as individual, group, or family counseling … to bring about beneficial changes and generate a variety of outcomes” (p. 3). By constructing a broader purpose for helping relationships, counselors offer services for an array of people who are healthy and functioning individuals. Among this group, some people have psychological and social concerns, and others seek information and support for developmental decisions they are making for the future. Gladding (2009) summarized these elements by defining counseling as a brief relationship founded on a theoretical model or models to help relatively healthy people make life decisions.

Schools are specific settings in which the counseling process is practiced. As with other professional settings, the primary mission of schools colors the practice of counseling with its focus on the educational goals of students, parents, and teachers. As such, counseling in schools is a process of helping students, parents, or teachers learn about themselves; understand how their personal characteristics, human potential, and behaviors influence their relationships with others; and make choices to solve current problems while planning strategies for optimal development. By using a broad definition, school counselors assess which students, parents, and teachers will benefit from counseling relationships and determine whether they are the appropriate professionals to provide this service to these groups.

Who Needs Counseling?

In elementary, middle, and senior high schools, counselors provide services for a multitude of reasons. They offer a wide range of related and interrelated services to help people resolve problems and make decisions. Unfortunately, because counseling retains a mystical aura, some people believe that it is the answer to all problems. In short, the mistaken belief is that counseling should fix people who are not behaving the way others want them to behave. For example, sometimes teachers bring students to school counselors with a combined plea and command that a “student is not doing work in class and needs counseling.” Although such students may benefit from helping relationships with counselors, it may be equally beneficial in these situations for teachers to learn about the student’s academic needs, learning styles, or other characteristics that impede progress in school. In such cases, a *consulting* relationship with the teacher might be as helpful as counseling with the student. These types of leadership decisions are ones counselors make in implementing comprehensive programs.

When receiving referrals from students, parents, and teachers, school counselors first ask themselves, “Who needs what?” In deciding whether counseling is an appropriate service in a given situation, counselors investigate a number of criteria and ask several questions. The information they collect and the answers they generate from this investigation enable them to make appropriate decisions. Some questions that counselors might ask in reviewing criteria include the following:

1. *Does the counselee see the situation in ways similar to those who made the referral?*

There is little reason to counsel someone about a problem identified by others when the

individual does not see or admit that any problem exists. At the very least, the individual referred must know that a conflict exists with the person who made the referral.

2. Does the counselee perceive a need for assistance and accept counseling as a method of addressing this concern? Not all individuals enter counseling relationships with a strong desire to change. Gladding (2009) observed that many clients are reluctant or unmotivated to change. In such instances, success is possible when counselors and counselees establish genuine working relationships. As counseling research has repeatedly documented, genuineness on the part of counselors is fundamental in developing effective helping relationships. In instances of reluctance and discouragement on the part of counselees, counselors use persuasion, gentle confrontation, and other strategies to encourage counselees to take initiative and pursue helping relationships (Gladding, 2009; Ivey & Ivey, 2003).

3. How much control does a prospective counselee have in bringing about necessary change? One criterion that enables counselees to be successful is their ability to gain control of the situation in question. Students in schools rarely have full control over situations in their lives. This is particularly true with younger children in the primary and intermediate grades. Family relations, parental substance abuse, socioeconomic status, and a host of mitigating factors are beyond the control of individual students and may warrant counseling intervention (Newsome & Harper, 2011). Furthermore, cultural heritage, traditions, and worldviews are also influential in developing self-views (Schmidt, 2006).

In deciding whether counseling is appropriate, counselors identify the behavior or situation that needs to change and determine the degree to which the counselee will be able to effect that change. If students have the capability to control situations, make necessary adjustments, and choose new behaviors to cope in the future, counseling may be appropriate. At the very least, individual counseling might offer support for students who are trapped in circumstances beyond their control and might suggest coping skills to survive what appears to be an unbearable situation. In today's schools, students bring an array of critical concerns about domestic violence; physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; substance abuse; and other issues that require immediate attention. Individual counseling can help students acquire coping skills to survive these oppressive situations. By surviving initially, students gain time to make long-term plans, develop new skills, and strengthen positive self-perceptions.

4. Is the counselee committed to making changes, learning new behaviors, or seeking alternatives to the present situation? Counseling sessions that begin and continue without eliciting commitment is a one-sided and often frustrating process for both the counselor and the counselee. Commitment may not exist at the start of the counseling process, but if the counselor establishes a genuine relationship and accepts the counselee's views, it eventually emerges. Without some level of commitment, there is no counseling relationship.

The preceding questions and answers help counselors assess their clients' readiness for counseling and willingness to enter beneficial helping relationships. The questions and answers discussed here focus on problem solving and crisis oriented counseling. As noted before, school counseling serves other purposes as well, including developmental goals and objectives. In developmental counseling relationships, the need is established by a referring agent (such as a parent or teacher) or a client (student) who has the desire to

explore opportunities, assess potential, and enhance interactions with other people. By helping students cultivate opportunities for development and growth, school counselors move from problem-oriented perspectives to broader views of helping relationships. The answer to the question, “Who needs counseling?” depends on the goals and objectives of these helping relationships. Effective counseling is achieved by establishing appropriate and clear goals.

Goals of Counseling

What are the goals of counseling? On the surface, this appears to be a simple enough question, but it is not easy to answer. Determining the goals of counseling relationships depends on whose goals we are talking about—the counselor’s or the counselee’s. Sometimes the goals of counselors and their clients differ. For example, a high school student may seek ways of “getting my parents off my back about college,” whereas the counselor’s goal is to assist the student in self-assessment, career planning, and educational decision making. In many instances, people who ask counselors for assistance are searching for answers and ways to solve problems without taking any risks. They wish to avoid the issue of changing their own behaviors or of making important decisions. Instead, they want others to change or make decisions for them. Typical goals and objectives that most counseling approaches use, ask clients to

1. Facilitate changes in their behavior
2. Improve social and personal relationships
3. Increase social effectiveness and their ability to cope
4. Learn decision-making processes
5. Enhance their human potential and enrich self-development



PERSPECTIVE 7-1

Have you ever been a client in counseling? Reflect on your experience and recall the goals that were important to you.

Embedded in most, if not all, of these objectives is the importance of heightening one’s cultural awareness and acceptance of cultural diversity. In schools today, counselors and other professionals cannot ignore the importance of helping students become more aware of their own cultural influences and become sensitive to the cultural differences that surround them. This awareness and sensitivity add richness to one’s life and contribute to social harmony and progress.

Setting goals in counseling relationships is particularly important in schools where finding solutions and alleviating difficulties in a timely manner are important. The primary purpose of school counseling is to enhance educational planning, expand opportunities for learning, and strengthen students’ achievement. Given this primary purpose, successful counselors consider the following guidelines when selecting goals for individual counseling:

1. *Relate goals to some aspect of learning.* When counseling students in schools, the ultimate objective is to enhance learning and development. Therefore, the goals of counseling

should connect in some way to this outcome. Whether the main concern is social, such as peer relationships; personal, such as the loss of a loved one; or psychological, such as fears and anxieties, the counseling relationship addresses these issues in the context of their impact on the student's educational development.

2. Generalize the achievement of educational goals to other relationships. Because time is precious in schools, it is helpful for students to take the knowledge achieved during counseling and apply it toward other relationships and situations in school and at home.

3. Share learning experiences and skill development with others. The assistance that individual students receive in counseling magnifies and expands if they share experiences with others. Group-counseling, classroom-guidance, and peer-helper programs are a few vehicles that school counselors and students use to accomplish this goal.

4. Involve parents whenever possible. Students of all ages, children through adolescents, benefit from the support and nurturing of caring parents. In counseling relationships, school counselors are wise to win the cooperation of students and persuade them of the importance of parental involvement. In some counseling relationships, such as in child abuse cases, parental involvement may not be feasible, but in the majority of school counseling relationships, as noted in Chapter 3, this goal is not only possible, it is also desirable.

Knowing what counseling is, determining who needs what kind of counseling service, and establishing appropriate goals for counseling relationships enable school counselors to create beneficial relationships. Counseling is a process. It has a beginning, it is characterized by a series of sequential steps or stages, and it ends when identified goals are achieved. Just as there is an abundance of counseling theories, there is also a wide selection of helping models from which to choose (Newsome & Harper, 2011). Having effective models on which to base their counseling relationships permits counselors to structure and direct effective helping processes. In schools with young students, structure and direction are appropriate, even in counseling relationships.

Individual Counseling in Schools

Models of counseling range from three to a multitude of stages. The following sections illustrate a four-stage approach to the counseling process. This is a generic model of the counseling process and not aligned with any specific counseling theory. Specific stages, such as those that follow, offer a blueprint for counselors to build effective relationships. Figure 7.1 illustrates this four-stage model. By mentally processing different stages of their helping relationships, school counselors stay on course and consistently encourage students and others to move closer to their identified goals.

Establishing a Relationship

Counseling is a process of disclosing personal hopes, desires, concerns, fears, and failures in an attempt to change behaviors, alter external factors, and set future goals. This kind of intimate sharing and communicating is only possible in relationships founded on acceptance,

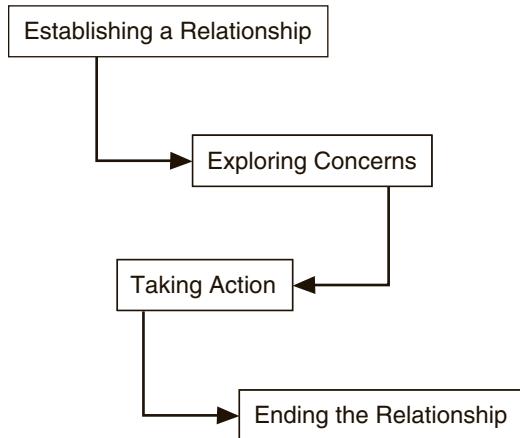


FIGURE 7.1 A Four-Stage Model of Counseling

understanding, and positive regard. Counselors demonstrate empathic understanding when they make every effort to perceive the world (or situation) the way clients do and accurately communicate this perceptual comprehension back to them.

Respect is another essential condition of the first phase of counseling relationships. Sometimes referred to as unconditional positive regard, respect includes the ingredients of equality, equity, and shared responsibility. In counseling, nothing is more important than the people in the process; therefore, it recognizes the rich complexity and unique value of each human being. In schools, this condition of respecting the person's value is vital to the successful outcome of helping relationships with students.

School counselors have an obligation to demonstrate a regard for students actively and visibly, showing that students have value, can be responsible, and are deserving of respectful treatment. This respect is not easily achieved. Counselors who practice honorably, with care, and at the highest level of professional performance are able to win the respect of students, parents, and teachers. However, those who neglect their obligations, divulge confidences, behave in nonaccepting ways, use ridicule, and defame the education and counseling professions demonstrate disrespect toward themselves and others, and invariably are avoided by students, parents, and teachers.

Genuineness relates to respect in that counselors who are accepting of others are in a better position to disclose their true feelings and reactions to the concerns expressed by their clients. At the same time, genuine counselors demonstrate consistent behaviors without discrepancies between what they say and what they do. *Genuineness*, sometimes called *congruence*, is a characteristic that allows counselors to be who they are without playing a role or hiding behind a façade. This congruence emerges from respectful relationships to let clients, especially students, know how they appear and come across to others.

One caveat is appropriate here: Genuinely facilitative responses are not blunt, frank reactions and reflections to “Let students know what life is *really* all about.” Quite the contrary; a genuine counselor balances empathy and respect with honest opinions and

feelings in a quest of mutually beneficial relationships. Through the process of sharing feelings and perceptions, school counselors and students establish beneficial interactions in the helping process and move from this introductory phase to a deeper and more meaningful exploration of concerns.

Exploring Concerns

Counseling is more than simply forming a relationship. It is the process of using the helping relationship to focus on concerns, either developmental or problem oriented, and make decisions to remedy a situation, acquire new skills, or enhance one's self-awareness. Relationships that fail to move to this next stage are not counseling. They may be friendships, conversations, or other types of interaction, but they are not professional helping.

Sometimes, school counselors seem unable to move their counseling relationships beyond the phase of building rapport toward a deeper exploration of issues and concerns. In part, this may be due to their lack of understanding of specific counseling theories and practices. All counseling approaches use similar skills and behaviors in the initial phase to establish a viable working relationship. Beyond this first stage, however, the language, assumptions, and beliefs of various counseling theories and models begin to distinguish themselves from one another. School counselors who have a clear understanding and command of specific approaches are more able to assist students in further exploration and to take action that addresses their concerns.

The *exploration phase* consists of constructs, language, techniques, and strategies created and endorsed by particular approaches selected by counselors. For example, Adlelian counselors focus on birth order, family constellation, goals of behavior, and feelings of inferiority, and they use lifestyle assessment techniques to help clients understand their private logic and its relationship to success in life (Sweeney, 1998). In contrast, behavioral counselors identify specific problem behaviors, collect baseline data, examine stimuli and antecedents of behaviors, and develop behavioral techniques, such as skills training, relaxation training, and systematic desensitization, to correct or change behaviors during the next phase of the counseling process (Halbur & Halbur, 2011).

School counselors who know their theoretical foundations and have command of basic skills and techniques compatible with their assumptions about human development are in a position to be a beneficial presence in the lives of others. In particular, they guide students through adequate exploration of pertinent issues and toward selection of alternatives for resolving conflicts, gaining greater awareness, and making life-enriching decisions. This moves the relationship into the next stage, sometimes called the *action phase* of counseling.

Taking Action

A relationship that fails to include definitive action to address a client's concerns is not counseling. Earlier, you learned the importance of setting a goal in the initial phase of the counseling process. The action phase of counseling relationships enables clients and counselors to realize the goals they have chosen. Similar to the exploration phase of counseling, the action phase is influenced by the theoretical beliefs and helping models embraced by practicing counselors. Psychodynamic approaches, for example, usually feature development

of insight, reorientation of attitudes and beliefs, redefining goals, and choosing alternative behaviors. In contrast, behavioral strategies tend to include social modeling techniques, behavioral contracts, skills training, self-monitoring, decision-making models, and similar approaches.

In the action stage, the counselor and client agree on a particular plan and strategy, monitor the implementation of that plan, and evaluate the outcome of the strategy used. When evaluation indicates that the problem has been resolved, the counselor and client have the opportunity to examine other issues or other areas for developmental growth. If their decision is to continue in a helping relationship, they return to the exploration phase once again. When the client identifies no other concerns or issues to address, the counseling relationship can end.

Ending the Relationship

All relationships eventually end, either naturally or circumstantially. Counseling relationships are no different. They too complete a final stage, which we call *closure* or *termination*. In this stage, the counselor and counselee arrive at a point where the purpose and goals of their relationship have been achieved, and now it is time to move on to other goals and other relationships.

Gladding (2009) emphasized that this phase of counseling is the least understood and most neglected of all the stages. Perhaps this is because in many successful helping relationships, both the counselor and counselee find it difficult to sever the ties that bind them. In some ways, the idea of ending a helping relationship is contradictory. By definition, a helping relationship is continuous. However, a counseling relationship that sets no time frame for closure may continue indefinitely without adequate attention to the exploration of concerns, commitment to change, and decisions about appropriate plans of action. This is a poor use of counselors' time and passive deceit of counselees who believe the counselor is helping them.

In school counseling, the process of ending or concluding a helping relationship deserves extra care and consideration. Because students remain in school with the counselor, the closing of specific helping relationships takes on a different meaning than when counselors end relationships with clients in agency settings. Students who see counselors for individual sessions also interact with them in other ways during the school day. They may talk with counselors about career information, participate in classroom guidance, or be supervised by a counselor in after-school extracurricular activities. Because these interactions are ongoing, counselors plan and carry out closure of individual counseling relationships gradually.

In some cases, the decision to end counseling with a student may be made jointly with the child, parents, and teachers involved in the process. Preparing them gradually for termination during the latter phases of counseling also facilitates ending counseling relationships with students. By reinforcing the progress students have made, emphasizing the skills they have attained, encouraging them to express their feelings about ending the counseling relationship, and helping them learn about other avenues for continued support, school counselors bring appropriate closure to successful helping relationships.

Occasionally, counseling sessions end prematurely or without planning (Gladding, 2009). In schools, this may happen for a variety of reasons, as illustrated in Table 7.1. The

TABLE 7.1 Some Reasons That Counseling Might End Prematurely

-
- Student moves to another school
 - Student stops coming for counseling without explanation
 - Parent objects to student missing class time
 - Student has extended illness
 - Counselor leaves job at school
-

reasons listed are not all-inclusive; rather, they illustrate a sample of explanations why counseling might end unexpectedly in schools.

Because school counselors provide a range of services and work with large populations, they usually do not have time to continue long-term counseling relationships. Although no exact number of sessions can (or should) be assigned to counseling relationships in schools, contemporary approaches encourage models for brief counseling. School counselors should be adequately prepared to perform interventions with emphasis on establishing helping relationships and brief counseling.

Brief Counseling

As presented in this text, counseling is both an educational and a therapeutic process. School counselors attempt to help students identify concerns that may detract from their development and learning. At the same time, school counselors help students address areas that they could enrich to improve their lives. Brief counseling endeavors to address a developmental issue or to remedy an existing concern over a relatively short period, perhaps in a few sessions. In general, brief counseling is appropriate for helping students enhance their immediate situations by resolving pressing difficulties or making educational and career decisions.

Brief counseling is advocated in the literature (Davis & Osborn, 2000; de Shazer, 1985; Metcalf, 2008; Murphy, 2008; Skalare, 2005), and can be applied to a range of theoretical approaches. It is particularly valuable in schools where time constraints are crucial to counselors. By way of summary, brief counseling usually centers on specific concerns or behaviors of students and tends to be an action-oriented approach. In most cases, brief counseling follows a sequence of steps or questions that the counselor follows or the student addresses. Three separate, yet similar, examples follow.

Lopez (1985) presented a four-step model of brief counseling that is adapted here for school counseling:

1. *Ask the student to describe in concrete terms what he or she would like to change.* In this step, the counselor explores with the student concerns, worries, or behaviors that are hindering development. The counselor assesses the situation and attempts to narrow down the student's most critical concerns.
2. *Examine what the student has done already.* Most students know when they have a concern or when they face an obstacle, and they attempt to resolve these problems. In this

step, the counselor helps the student look at all the attempts made thus far to see if any have further use and, if so, how they might be changed to be successful.

3. Identify a goal clearly. Counseling in schools must be purposeful to be successful; therefore, school counselors and students need to establish measurable goals to know when the helping relationship has been effective.

4. Develop and implement strategies. To ensure success, counselors and students must create reasonable strategies aimed at reaching their identified goals.

Myrick (2003) created a similar sequential structure for brief counseling, but his consists of four questions in an approach he called the *systematic problem-solving model*. With it, counselors ask students to process these questions:

1. What is the problem or situation?
2. What have you tried?
3. What else could you do?
4. What is your next step?

As with other approaches to helping, Myrick's model requires a high level of facilitative responses during the initial questions. This strengthens the relationship and allows counselors and students to process action questions more quickly.

Solution-focused counseling is another approach to brief therapy that has potential in school counseling (de Shazer, 1985; Skalare, 2005). Basic to this approach is the hypothesis that students' problems are maintained by their belief that the difficulty is constantly occurring. According to Harrison (2000), these students often "see themselves as flawed or having something wrong with them as people" (p. 92). The goal for counselors in working with these students is to focus on *what is right* rather than *what is wrong* with them. One intervention to address this goal is the *miracle question* developed by de Shazer (1991). Essentially, this question asks the student, "What will happen if you wake up tomorrow morning and you no longer have this problem? What will be different, and how will you know the problem is solved?" Key to the question is the focus on "What *will*" as opposed to "What *would*" happen. The word *will* more emphatically states that without this problem, there *is* a difference.

Newsome and Harper (2011) summarized other techniques used in solution-focused counseling, including

- *Cheerleading* —offer genuine excitement, support, and encouragement that acknowledge student successes.
- *Flagging in the minefield* —help student anticipate obstacles and barriers to success and encourage them to explore ways of overcoming them.
- *Identifying instances and exceptions* —ask students to recall a time when the *miracle* happened to some degree, and what was happening.
- *Mindmapping* —identify specific behaviors that the student found led to successful outcomes in the past.
- *Scaling* —let students set a baseline for measuring their progress. For example, the counselor might say, "On a scale of 0 to 10, where are you right now with this problem?"

By having an uncomplicated structure for brief counseling, school counselors take a pragmatic course and encourage short-term relationships with students. This serves several purposes; first, it demonstrates to students that they are not sick, disturbed, or abnormal. Rather, they are healthy individuals who can resolve their concerns. Second, forms of brief counseling are an efficient use of counselors' time. With such approaches, counselors are more accountable to their students and the schools that employ them. Finally, short-term approaches to counseling encourage independence and foster self-responsibility and self-reliance, all of which are admirable goals for students in school.

As with most approaches to counseling, models of brief counseling are always practiced with the best interests of students in mind. Efficiency in counseling is marvelous, but not when it compromises the integrity of the student or the counseling process. As noted earlier, brief counseling requires the same level of facilitation as other models of counseling. For this reason, forms of manipulation and the use of unreasonable control as a pretense for helping are a misuse of the counselor's position. If not blatantly unethical, they are at least questionable practices.

Crisis intervention is another application of brief counseling models. As noted in Chapter 5, schools reflect the trends and concerns found in society, and as a result, crises that occur in families and communities are often brought into the schoolhouse. For this reason, school counselors need to be prepared to counsel students who have critical concerns.

Crisis Counseling

In addition to counseling students who have developmental concerns or relationship problems, school counselors enter crisis-oriented relationships with students. In doing so, they establish initial helping processes that precede referrals to other professionals and agencies in the community. Crises require immediate intervention that begins with assessment to determine the degree of risk and the level of crisis that students face (Puleo & McGlothlin, 2010). Assessment includes interviews with students, parents, teachers, and others; observations of students' behaviors; review of medical records; use of questionnaires; and whatever other methods are appropriate for the situation.

Crisis counseling is distinctive from traditional counseling relationships and, by nature, tends to be directive and action-oriented. When students are in crises, counselors do not have the luxury of time to allow students to pause for self-reflection or in-depth exploration of their perceptions and concerns.

Typically, students in crises want direction, and it is only after they are stabilized and feel secure that they are able to assume some decision-making responsibilities. This responsibility comes gradually, after an initial plan of action has been established and the student has experienced preliminary success. (Schmidt, 2010, p. 156)



PERSPECTIVE 7-2

Recall a crisis in your life. Did you receive help or counseling during this crisis? If so, what elements were most helpful in working through this situation?

A final aspect of crisis counseling, as with all other forms of helping relationships, is the follow-up and evaluation of outcomes. When students have made changes, adjusted behaviors, chosen directions, or made other significant decisions that parallel the goals and objectives of the counseling relationship, school counselors assess the results. Even though students may make progress in the helping relationship, school counselors sometimes decide that they have gone far enough within the scope of their competencies and program guidelines. In these instances, they refer students to other services in the school system or community.

As with brief counseling, crisis counseling is usually a structured and systematic procedure. During a crisis intervention, the primary focus is on the safety and welfare of the client. In schools, crises may occur in countless ways, from the sudden death of a student or teacher to multiple acts of violence perpetrated by an intruder. Therefore, administrators, counselors, and teachers often use a team approach to tap the expertise of many staff members (McGlothlin, Jackson-Cherry, & Garofalo, 2010). By developing a strategic team approach, the school assigns every professional specific responsibilities to handle the crisis effectively. This means that the school counselor is in the forefront as a team member and offers first-line assistance to students and teachers in crises. After assessing the situation, determining what immediate services are necessary, and securing the client(s) who is (are) most vulnerable or at risk, the counselor meets with other team members to plan further actions. In this way, a team approach capitalizes on the expertise and skills of several professionals, with the school counselor assessing individuals' needs as well as the overall school atmosphere. As a team member, the school counselor offers initial counseling services and other types of support for students and teachers.

Counseling Approaches

School counselors receive training in many different theories and approaches to helping. Although there appear to be countless theories and models from which to choose, a few approaches have gained prominence in school counseling. In practice, most school counselors, similar to counselors and psychologists in clinical settings, probably say they embrace an eclectic philosophy. *Eclectic counseling* is the integration of a number of related theories, approaches, and techniques into a personalized and systematic process. Over the years, eclectic practice has been both encouraged and condemned in the counseling literature. When counselors select approaches systematically, with purpose and understanding, their integrative styles allow them to expand options for their clients. However, when this selection process is haphazard and without rationale, the counseling process may appear unfocused and without clear direction. In this regard, Halbur and Halbur (2011) noted a difference from being an eclectic counselor and simply applying numerous techniques. They observed that an eclectic counselor changes "fundamental beliefs about human development, psychopathology, and epistemology from situation to situation, client to client" (p. 7). This is different from using various techniques while holding firm to basic beliefs about human development and processes.

In schools, counselors sometimes choose from specialty therapies that use media, music, role-play, or other modalities to help students communicate concerns and solve problems. Because this text provides an overview of designing, implementing, coordinating, and evaluating comprehensive counseling programs, it is impossible to devote space to all

types of therapies available to school counselors. In brief, these include—but are not limited to—art therapy (see American Art Therapy Association, www.arttherapy.org), drama therapy (see National Association for Drama Therapy, www.nadt.org), music therapy (see American Music Therapy Association, www.musictherapy.org), and play therapy (Association for Play Therapy, www.a4pt.org).

As noted, there are numerous counseling theories and approaches from which professional school counselors make logical choices. Simultaneously, school counselors face the challenge of helping students, parents, and teachers evaluate their situations, explore concerns, examine alternatives, and make decisions within a reasonable period of time. These two conditions make it palatable for counselors to adopt an integrative posture, choosing from a range of approaches found to be successful in school settings. In doing so, they search for common elements among compatible theories and approaches and recognize the important differences that exist when merging various philosophies and practices. Counselors who borrow from different perspectives to establish an eclectic practice are successful when they choose intentionally with adequate knowledge of the approaches selected, are aware of related research findings, and have a clear understanding of their therapeutic purposes and goals.

Group Processes

School counselors search for interventions that enable all students to develop their fullest potential. Although individual counseling relationships are effective in helping certain students, one-to-one processes are not always the most efficient use of a counselor's time and resources. More important, individual relationships do not capitalize on the human resources available to counselors through the expertise of students, parents, and teachers. In contrast, group methods allow counselors to reach out to more people and effectively use the helping potential of others.

Chapter 5 introduced two main types of group processes used by school counselors: group counseling and group consultation. *Group counseling* is a confidential helping relationship in which the counselor encourages members to focus on developmental, preventive, or remedial issues with which they are concerned. *Group consultation* encompasses a range of activities that use instructional, informational, and problem-solving processes. Examples of group consultation include teacher in-service activities, classroom guidance lessons, and parent education programs. In determining what types of groups to establish in comprehensive programs, school counselors want to have a clear rationale with which to persuade administrators, teachers, and parents.

A Rationale for Group Processes

In the history of education, many philosophers and scholars have encouraged schools to take a proactive role in instilling values and developing students' character. What Kohn (1991) proposed more than two decades ago holds true today—character education should include caring about others:

If we had to pick a logical setting in which to guide children toward caring about, empathizing with, and helping other people, it would be a place where they would regularly come into contact with their peers and where some sort of learning is already taking place. (p. 499)

Schools offer this ideal setting, and school counseling programs, in the context of group guidance and group counseling, provide the structure to help students learn empathic behaviors, problem-solving skills, and a host of cooperative, prosocial attributes.

Today's schools are under fire from all directions and all segments of society to overhaul their services, improve instruction, and increase learning. School counselors should be part of this movement and, in fact, should be leaders for change. An essential role for school counselors is as an agent for change (Dahir & Stone, 2012; Erford, 2011a). This role is implied in all the major functions, particularly group work, addressed in this text. By advocating more group processes in the instructional and counseling programs of the school, counselors lend their expertise to the process of restructuring education and enhancing student development and learning.

In the next section, we focus on two types of group processes used specifically with students: group counseling and group guidance. This section presents the purposes of these two types of groups, their advantages and limitations, and how counselors offer them in schools. We begin by defining and differentiating group counseling and group guidance.

Group Counseling and Group Guidance

Group counseling and group guidance are two processes used by school counselors to handle a wide range of students' concerns and interests. Many students in schools have concerns that are similar in nature. Sometimes these are normal developmental issues such as making friends, becoming comfortable with physical changes, making educational decisions, and learning problem-solving skills. Other times, students confront major problems, often of crisis magnitude, that counselors should deal with expeditiously. Group procedures offer efficient and effective formats for assisting students with many different issues, from educational planning to grieving over the loss of a loved one. Groups also allow diverse activities with dissimilar audiences who have various goals and objectives. Part of the school counselor's role is to select appropriate group processes to meet these expanded needs.

Many texts and articles have described group processes in detail (e.g., Corey & Corey, 2008; Erford, 2011e; Geroski & Kraus, 2010; Gladding, 2012), and school counseling literature has encouraged the use of group guidance and counseling since the late 1950s, beginning with Driver's now classic book, *Counseling and Learning through Small Group Discussion* (1958). Today, the American School Counselor Association identifies group counseling and guidance as responsive services of elementary, middle, and secondary school counselors.

By using group counseling, school counselors encourage interaction among students, thereby facilitating their willingness and ability to help each other. Under the leadership of a professional counselor, students share concerns, self-disclose in a safe environment, listen to the ideas and opinions of other group members, and give one another support and suggestions about the concerns they have raised.

Purpose and Nature of Groups

An essential difference between group counseling and group guidance is that counseling creates a confidential and personal relationship, and group guidance is more instructional

and informational in nature. Gladding (2012) described the purpose of group guidance as the prevention of personal or societal difficulties through information sharing and skill development. In general, group guidance, originally developed for school settings as psychoeducational groups, focuses on development through learning. Myrick (2003) encouraged counselors to differentiate large group guidance from small group counseling by observing the purposes of various types of groups and the ways in which they function.

The purpose of group counseling is for members to explore issues affecting their development and to form intimate relationships in which they accept and support one another in the process of resolving and coping with their concerns. As noted earlier, group guidance is more instructional in nature and differs from counseling in the depth of personal interactions and the level of sharing among group members. Although many of the leadership skills used in group counseling and group guidance are similar, group-guidance activities tend to be more didactic than group-counseling sessions. Typically, guidance groups focus on specific learning objectives or information needed by students for their development. In summary, the differences between group counseling and group guidance are found in the purposes of the groups, the level of personal interactions among group members, and the leadership behaviors of the counselor.

Group Processes and Comprehensive Programs. Both group guidance and group counseling are essential functions in comprehensive school counseling programs. Yet, literature indicates that some school counselors neglect group process because of resistance from teachers, difficulty of scheduling, and lack of confidence in their group leadership skills. Too often, counselors resist the use of group processes due to feelings of inadequacy regarding their leadership skills and abilities. In a 1987 national survey of elementary, middle, and senior high school counselors, Bowman summarized counselors' views regarding group work:

1. Counselors at all levels agreed that small-group guidance and counseling are important functions to include in their programs.
2. Counselors used groups to focus on a variety of topics depending on the developmental age and needs of students.
3. Counselors agreed that their school counseling programs would be more effective if they increased the number of groups they scheduled, but at the same time they noted the difficulty of restructuring the time available to do this and the challenge of obtaining teacher support.
4. Senior high counselors indicated that scheduling and leading groups in their schools is more difficult and less practical than at the elementary and middle grades.
5. Opinions were mixed among the counselors regarding their training to run small-group guidance and counseling effectively as part of their programs. A total of 22 percent of the counselors indicated they needed additional training to implement effective groups.

These findings would likely be relevant today among school counselors. Here in the twenty-first century, time, level of school practice, counselor preparation, and confidence in one's group leadership abilities continue to be influential factors in a counselor's use of group processes in schools.

The important role of group process in comprehensive school counseling programs continues to be sustained in the literature, in counselor training programs, and among practicing counselors. Counselors who examine this issue and choose to establish group-counseling and group-guidance services in school programs begin by selecting the types of group structures most conducive to their setting.

Group Structures. In small-group guidance and group counseling, there are essentially two types of structures—open and closed. *Open* groups allow students to enter and leave the group as needed, and the schedule of group sessions is for an indefinite time period. By contrast, a *closed* group begins with identified members who continue with the group until it ends. In closed groups, a specific number of members are selected through a screening process. These participants attend all sessions and remain in the group until the last session. One problem with closed groups occurs when too many members stop attending and the support network discontinues. In contrast, open groups replace members who leave with new members who rejuvenate the group by bringing fresh perspectives and ideas. Although this open structure may afford new stimulation, adding new members to a group runs the risk of adversely affecting the cohesiveness established earlier in the group.

Closed groups, by definition, are structured and tightly scheduled, which may be more appealing to teachers and administrators who want to adhere to more precise schedules and routines. Open groups may be confusing and difficult for students who have to remember which group they are in and when their groups meet. Furthermore, students in closed groups have the advantage of knowing when their group sessions will end. In practice, this helps students focus on their concerns, bring up issues more readily, and attempt new behaviors to address their problems. By knowing when groups will end, students and counselors set a timeline of sorts that they use to influence and facilitate desired changes. In contrast, open groups may unintentionally encourage members to procrastinate and put off disclosing their concerns or making the necessary decisions to effect change.

One aspect related to group structure and success is member participation. In particular, each member's voluntary participation in a group, as opposed to involuntary assignment, can make a significant difference in how a group functions. In schools, students are sometimes asked to participate in groups to address their behaviors, academic progress, alcohol and drug use, or other problematic aspects of their development. In these cases, counselors may assign students to groups as a condition of their continued progress and attendance in school. Such students may be reluctant participants at best. School counselors who use group procedures follow ethical guidelines regarding voluntary participation and enlist the cooperation of all group members (Gladding, 2012).

Even though some students are assigned by counselors to particular groups involuntarily, it is essential that their actual participation—sharing, self-disclosing, and supporting others—remains voluntary. Although counselors may initiate groups based on referrals from parents, teachers, and administrators, the students participate voluntarily. Students in groups may choose not to contribute actively in the group sessions to which they are assigned without their consent. Effective counselors who are highly skilled in group relationships call on all their leadership abilities to encourage these students and invite them to participate for their benefit and the good of other group members.

By determining the types of groups to include in their programs and choosing the processes for establishing particular groups carefully, school counselors identify their

professional role in developing and leading groups. Because teachers and parents sometimes oppose services that remove students from classes, counselors want to have a clear process for establishing groups by informing people about the program, selecting and including students carefully, scheduling sessions, and obtaining permissions when required. Chapter 6 included ideas for establishing groups within a comprehensive program.

Leading Groups

Small-group counseling requires the same knowledge of theory and approaches that individual counseling demands. The process of group counseling is similar to individual counseling in that the group members start by forming relationships, continue by exploring concerns and issues of importance to them, examine alternatives and strategies, and create individual action plans. When all issues have been addressed and action plans have been implemented, the group reaches closure. Active listening, appropriate questioning, adequate structuring, and other communication and leadership skills are required in group work with students.

Small-group guidance involves communication skills similar to those used in counseling and presentation skills used in classroom guidance. Because small-group guidance takes the form of instructing or informing, counselors tend to use skills that are more didactic in these sessions with students. Sometimes group guidance consists of a single session to focus on a particular learning objective. In these instances, the counselor's effective use of time, preparation of materials, group management skills, and acceptance of comments from students to evaluate the lesson ensure that the session's goal is reached with most—if not all—students.

In both group counseling and small-group guidance, it is important that counselors retain their leadership role. To achieve this, counselors set ground rules with each group member during the screening interview, and they reiterate these rules at the start of the group and during subsequent sessions as needed. Table 7.2 illustrates eight sample ground rules used with students in group counseling and small-group guidance.

TABLE 7.2 Eight Sample Rules for Students in Groups

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1. Set your goals early in the group, and stick to your commitment to address these learning objectives and behavioral goals.
 2. Present your concerns clearly to the group, and discuss them honestly.
 3. Listen to the opinions and concerns of other group members, and respect their points of view.
 4. Keep information discussed in the group confidential*; you may discuss what you say with your parents, but do not discuss what other members reveal in the group sessions.
 5. Be on time for the group, and remain for the entire session.
 6. Be respectful of the room and furnishings in the group room.
 7. Accept and respect the counselor's role to lead the group.
 8. Agree that the group makes decisions by consensus.
-

*Note: Confidentiality cannot be assumed in all types of groups. (More about this topic in Chapter 12, Legal and Ethical Issues.)

Ground rules set the foundation for cooperative relationships in the group process. Combined with effective counseling skills, ground rules and other structural aspects of establishing groups increase the likelihood that group counseling and small-group guidance sessions will be successful. To ensure the appropriate use of group services, counselors understand all the advantages as well as the limitations of these helping relationships.

Advantages of Group Counseling

- 1.** Group counseling offers a social setting in which students can share concerns, practice new behaviors, and support one another in a safe and nonthreatening environment. In groups, students have the opportunity to exchange ideas, test assumptions about themselves and others, and compare and contrast their views with others. Individual counseling does not offer the opportunity for such broad experiences and exchanges.
- 2.** By sharing their concerns in groups, students learn about and identify with common issues and perceptions held by others. This process of identifying with others increases cohesiveness and enhances understanding about students' concerns.
- 3.** Group counseling encourages listening and facilitates learning. For group members to reach an acceptable level of understanding, empathy, and helpfulness with their peers in the group, they must develop effective listening skills. Any services that help students improve their listening skills should be beneficial to the learning process.
- 4.** Controlled peer pressure can be used in groups to encourage and confront students about their behaviors, goals, and attitudes that inhibit their development and progress in school. Under the direction of a competent group counselor, students gently persuade and cajole their peers to accept the group's consensus about changes they need to make and to choose appropriate plans of action.
- 5.** Group counseling is action oriented. The purpose of placing students in groups for counseling is to help them select goals, identify changes they want to make in their lives, formulate plans of action, and implement steps to realize their objectives. These decision-making processes and skills are valuable to students in all areas of learning and development.
- 6.** Group counseling can be less intense and threatening than individual counseling. In one-to-one relationships, students sometimes feel overwhelmed by the presence of the counselor and feel inhibited about sharing personal concerns without support from others.
- 7.** Group counseling is economically more efficient than individual counseling because more students can receive services in the same time span. Although this is an advantage, it is not so important that counselors should relegate individual counseling to a lower priority in school counseling programs. Both individual counseling and group counseling are important services, and school counselors should consider each on the basis of students' needs, objectives of the helping relationships, and preference of the students who seek services.

Limitations of Group Counseling

- 1.** Effective group work takes a high degree of leadership skill. Group counseling is more complex than individual counseling because the factors to consider and the dynamics of the process are many and multifaceted. Some school counselors seem overwhelmed by students' needs and the facilitative skills required of them to be successful group leaders.

2. Group counseling requires a high energy level from the counselor to keep track of the group direction, address members equally, and establish effective relationships. Fatigue can occur when counselors attempt to lead too many groups in a given time period. Keeping track of the dynamics in the group and relating to each group member effectively can be emotionally draining as well as physically exhausting.

3. Scheduling groups, as noted earlier, can be difficult. It is much easier for school counselors to call in one student at a time than it is to schedule groups of students out of classes. Counselors who work closely with their teaching colleagues in designing group schedules are likely to be successful with their group counseling services.

4. Group counseling may not be suitable or effective with some students. Students who have severe behavioral disorders or other dysfunctions may not be suitable for group processes. Disruptive behaviors, limited cognitive abilities, and severe emotional disabilities, for example, may limit the likelihood of success in groups.

Advantages of Group Guidance

1. In group guidance, counselors and teachers can impart information or instruction to larger numbers of students. Group guidance reaches more students than individual consultations, and opens avenues for discussion and sharing that may not occur with individual students.

2. Group guidance does not require any special training in counseling theories and techniques because it uses instructional processes. Effective teachers who have strong facilitative skills can be quite successful in leading group guidance.

3. Guidance is best implemented as an interdisciplinary approach. Schools can integrate group guidance with other subjects in the school curriculum, such as language arts, social studies, mathematics, and physical education.

4. Group guidance has the potential to enhance the total environment of the classroom or school by emphasizing positive aspects of human development and relationships. Information learned and behavioral skills achieved through classroom guidance can be generalized by students to address personal, educational, and career goals in their lives.

Limitations of Group Guidance

1. Because guidance groups are more educational and informational than they are therapeutic or personally enhancing, they may not result in significant changes in students who have critical conflicts or serious difficulties in their lives and in school. However, group guidance activities often help identify such students so teachers can refer them to the counselor for more intense intervention.

2. Depending on the size of the group, guidance activities do not allow as much interaction among group members as do group counseling sessions. Therefore, personal support, caring, and the development of trust are not as in-depth as they are in group counseling.

3. Group guidance does not necessarily offer individual assistance toward specific personal, educational, or career goals for all group members. When group guidance presents a series of topics, counselors may overlook individual needs of students in an attempt to

reach the instructional objectives of the lessons. In contrast, group counseling focuses directly on the individual needs and expectations of each group member.

4. Because group guidance uses instructional processes and techniques, and the size of groups is sometimes 25 or more students, counselors need to be more structured and directive in these activities. This leadership style may seem contradictory to counselors who prefer helping relationships with more freedom of expression for students.

When determining whether to use individual counseling, group counseling, or group guidance approaches in school programs, counselors consider all the advantages and limitations of each approach, the primary goals and objectives of counseling services, their individual and group skills, and the acceptance of the school and community for these services. In addition, counselors become familiar with the research about the effectiveness of the counseling models they choose and the different types of group services they offer.

Research on Counseling

Much of the research on counseling has focused on the “core conditions” first proposed by Rogers (1951). Although he developed the person-centered approach, and subsequently these conditions have been closely associated with this perspective, research of other counseling models has indicated that these qualities are universally important to all helping relationships. The now-classic research efforts of Rogers, Carkhuff, Truax, Berenson, and many others have examined extensively the contribution of genuineness, empathy, positive regard, and concreteness to the establishment of beneficial relationships and the attainment of successful outcomes in counseling (Carkhuff & Berenson, 1967; Rogers, Gendlin, Kiessler, & Truax, 1967; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967). In addition, investigations by these and other researchers have expanded this list of essential conditions to include further dimensions of effective counseling.

Research has not supported any particular approach to counseling as being more effective than any other. In a summary of research examining the effectiveness of counseling approaches and techniques, Sexton and Whiston (1991) confirmed past findings and reported that successful counseling relationships include “mutually interactive” processes in which counselors are empathetic, involved, warm, and credible in the eyes of their clients. In addition, most benefits occur in the “first 6 months of weekly sessions” (p. 343). These authors also noted that the “most crucial aspect of counseling … seems to be the skillfulness of the counselor implementing the intervention” (pp. 343–344). On this basis, effective counseling is best measured by the degree to which counselors help their clients focus on identified problems, set goals to master these situations, and gain independence in learning to solve life’s difficulties (Sexton, 1999).

In a 1992 review of research of comprehensive school counseling programs, Borders and Drury noted that the purpose of counseling interventions is “to promote students’ personal and social growth and to foster their educational and career development” (p. 491). They cited numerous studies from the 1970s and 1980s that indicated students who received counseling services showed improvement in attitudes, behaviors, and academic performance.

Sink (2005) summarized several studies that support the use of brief counseling and its application in school settings. Combined, these studies provide quantitative data and qualitative findings indicating success of brief counseling methods across an array of issues including academic, career, personal, and social issues and across culturally diverse populations. More recently, Whiston and Quinby (2011) summarized research on individual counseling and noted that brief methods of counseling may be as effective, if not more so, than lengthy counseling.

Effective school counselors keep abreast of research findings about counseling and other services they provide. This means reading professional literature and reports about approaches that demonstrate success with students in school. It also means learning how to assess the value and effectiveness of counseling approaches selected in one's own school program.

Research studies appear regularly in numerous scholarly journals, including *Professional School Counseling*, the national journal of the American School Counselor Association. School counselors are aware of research studies that examine different approaches to use with students, and they adapt available research to select viable strategies and interventions to use in individual counseling.

Because school counselors have responsibility for a wide spectrum of student needs, and because they provide such an array of different services for students, parents, and teachers, they usually find that more than one view and approach to counseling is required to satisfy all their program goals and objectives. They also know that individual helping relationships have limitations and absorb a considerable amount of time. For this reason, research on group processes is equally important to a comprehensive school counseling program.

Research on Groups

In 1989, Gazda noted that research studies of group processes have increased in the counseling literature in recent years. He analyzed 641 research studies published between 1938 and 1987 according to the following variables: type of controls, treatment period, type of group, assessment instruments, statistics used, type of study, experimental designs, size of samples, and the nature of outcomes. On the basis of his analysis, Gazda (1989) concluded that the research on group counseling has generally made considerable progress in identifying variables related to group effectiveness. Although research methodology has improved in recent years, Gazda noted that some areas of group counseling need additional study, and some existing problems with research methods need to be corrected. Gladding (2012) noted that group research was still in its infancy, yet findings show promise, particularly for group psychotherapy. More sophisticated designs and statistical analyses may help researchers in identifying aspects, processes, and other factors that contribute or detract from group effectiveness.

Whiston and Sexton (1998) reported on several studies that examined large-group and classroom guidance sessions. According to Sink (2005), research on large-group programs, although not extensive, illustrates a level of effectiveness across a wide range of topics including self-esteem, career development, study skills, cultural knowledge, and other issues. Although noting that the research is mixed, Whiston and Quinby (2011)

summarized several studies of groups in schools that showed positive results. They qualified this conclusion by observing that the most positive groups were often with younger students. Clearly, more research with all ages of students would be helpful to counselors trying to make decisions about group programs.

The remainder of this chapter presents research studies of group counseling and group guidance. The studies presented here form a sample of research to give a broad view of the types of groups used by school counselors and illustrations of results reported in the counseling literature. We begin with group guidance research.

Group Guidance Research

Although the school counseling literature has advocated the use of small- and large-group guidance for several years, research on the effectiveness of guidance activities has been limited when compared to the number of studies on individual and group counseling. In some instances, reports of research studies do not indicate clearly whether the groups were guidance oriented or group counseling sessions. The following are studies of groups that appear to be instructional or informational in nature, and therefore are classified here as group guidance.

Stickel (1990) reported on a multimodal group project with kindergarten students to improve social skills, develop problem-solving skills, increase cooperation in small groups, and enhance their expression of feelings. Four groups of five children each made up the study, and each group met for 7 sessions, 20 minutes every other day. The sessions consisted of three segments including a leader-directed activity, a student-involvement activity, and a sharing time among group members. Each session focused on one of the modalities described in the BASIC ID paradigm of the multimodal model. Although the researchers did not report statistical findings in the results of this study, the kindergarten teacher “noted increased cooperation and interaction among certain children following the groups and thought it allowed the counselor to get to know the children better as individuals and give them some needed individual attention” (p. 286).

A 1986 study in Florida demonstrated that classroom guidance units can generate positive results in altering student attitudes and behaviors (Myrick, Merhill, & Swanson, 1986). Fourth-grade students in 67 elementary schools were randomly assigned to either treatment or control groups. A pretreatment assessment by teachers rated each student’s attitude. Counselors presented a six-lesson guidance unit to the treatment groups. Sessions focused on (1) understanding feelings and behaviors, (2) learning about perceptions and attitudes, (3) helping someone new to the school, (4) making positive changes, (5) experiencing the “I am lovable and capable” activity, and (6) looking for personal strengths. Results from 37 schools were complete enough to use in the analysis. Data were collected using teacher and student inventories of their perspectives on a number of behaviors and attitudes. The results indicated that students who participated in classroom guidance “were significantly different from those in the control group in terms of finishing class assignments on time ... and saying kind things to others” (p. 247).

In this study, teachers’ perceptions of the control groups and treatment groups also demonstrated significant differences. Teachers viewed treatment groups more positively than control groups on a number of factors, including (1) getting along with others, (2) working hard on assignments, (3) following directions, (4) liking their

teachers, (5) being liked by their teachers, and (6) believing they were important and special persons. These positive results were noted across student populations, from those in preassessment who were identified with poor attitudes to students who were rated highly on the attitude scale. All students seemed to benefit from the classroom guidance sessions. The Florida study was replicated in Indiana with 731 fourth-graders, and similar results were found.

A study using affective education to improve reading performance of second-grade students indicated positive results in a twelve-week program (Hadley, 1988). Three treatment groups and four control groups of second-graders were included. A program consisting of self-esteem activities to diminish negative attitudes, improve patience, and enable students to handle anxieties was presented to the three treatment classes. Results indicated a significant impact on academic growth as measured by reading scores on the Stanford Achievement Test for students who participated in the classroom guidance program.

Gerler and Anderson (1986) investigated the effects of classroom guidance on students' attitude toward school, achievement in language arts and mathematics, and classroom behavior. In this study, 896 fourth- and fifth-grade students from 18 different schools were presented a classroom guidance unit entitled "Succeeding in School." The unit consisted of classroom guidance lessons presented by the 18 counselors in the participating schools. Results of the study indicated that the program had a positive effect on students' classroom behaviors. In comparison with control groups, the treatment groups improved behaviors while the control groups remained the same or became worse. Attitudes about school and academic achievement were additional variables indicating favorable results for the treatment groups.

Lee (1993) used the "Succeeding in School" lessons (Gerler & Anderson, 1986) in a follow-up study. She found that fifth- and sixth-grade students significantly increased their math achievement over a control group of students. Increases in language and conduct scores were also noted.

A group guidance stress-control program demonstrated some positive effects with elementary students from an inner-city school (Henderson, Kelby, & Engebretson, 1992). Sixty-five students were assigned randomly to either the experimental or control group. Two graduate assistants who were trained in classroom guidance conducted nine 50-minute sessions for the treatment group. The sessions included topics on stress, relaxation, exercise awareness, time management, assertiveness, handling anger, expressing other emotions, friendship, and creative problem solving. The study found significant differences between the treatment and control group in two aspects of self-concept related to stress in school—behavior with peers and school-related tasks. The treatment group also reported significantly more appropriate coping strategies after the program than the control group.

Research of a study skills program with 118 fourth-grade students demonstrated significant increases in average test scores on the California Test of Basic Skills (Carns & Carns, 1991). Over a single year of participating in the study-skills program, students' mean scores increased an average of 3 years, 1 month in grade-equivalency scores.

More recently, Schlossberg, Morris, and Lieberman (2001) investigated the impact of classroom guidance units with ninth-grade students. Their study of 93 students in a large urban high school used six 45-minute developmental guidance lessons facilitated by

counselors and teachers together in the classroom. Results of the study indicated significant differences in student ratings on scales measuring behavior, attitude, and information favoring the students who participated in the developmental guidance lessons. In addition, teacher ratings on these same students showed significant differences in the areas of attitude and information learned.

These and other research studies demonstrate that classroom guidance, also referred to as *affective education*, *developmental guidance*, and *psychological education*, can have positive effects on students' attitudes and behaviors. This conclusion agrees with that of Erford (2011e), who noted that based on the hundreds of studies over the previous 50 years, "the short answer to the question, 'How effective is group work?' is: very effective" (p. 314). Yet, as noted earlier, more research is desirable (Whiston & Quinby, 2011). Although changes in attitudes and behaviors have occurred in many studies of guidance groups, significant change in self-concept as a result of classroom guidance has not been a consistent finding. This is not surprising, because self-concept theory postulates that self-perceptions create a certain stability in the human personality (Schmidt, 2006). As such, we can expect change in the self-concept to occur gradually after intense treatment over time. Classroom guidance does not allow for this type of intense, long-term intervention. Group counseling, however, is more conducive to establishing this type of helping relationship.

Group Counseling Research

Research on group counseling covers a broad area of treatment topics, student behaviors, and models of counseling. Borders and Drury (1992) reported that "a number of empirical studies have verified the positive effects of group counseling interventions" (p. 491). In studies cited by the authors, students showed significant improvement in school attendance, school behaviors, achievement, attitudes, and self-esteem, among other characteristics. The following are a few examples of studies from the 1980s into the twenty-first century using group counseling with student populations.

In 1985, Myrick and Dixon identified 24 students in two middle schools who demonstrated poor attitudes about school. Six students in each school were randomly assigned to group counseling and the other six were placed in a comparison group to receive counseling later. Group counseling consisted of six sessions that focused on topics related to feelings about school, how feelings relate to behaviors, consequences of behaviors, giving and receiving feedback, taking the first step toward improvement, and being positive. Data collected on the two groups indicated that teachers rated the students in group counseling significantly higher in improved classroom behavior. This was true for both boys and girls in the groups. Students who participated in the groups reported positive feelings about themselves and a greater understanding of others.

Omizo, Hershberger, and Omizo (1988) examined the use of group counseling with elementary-grade students identified as aggressive and hostile by their teachers. Students in the study were assigned to either experimental or control groups. Those in the experimental groups participated in group counseling using cognitive-behavioral techniques, modeling, role-playing, and positive reinforcement. Results indicated that students in group counseling tended to decrease their aggressive and hostile behaviors to a greater degree than students assigned to control groups.

Divorce has been a popular topic for group counseling with students. Tedder, Schermer, and Wantz (1987) used group counseling with fourth- and fifth-graders whose parents had divorced and who teachers or parents referred because divorce adjustment was a concern. Two groups of students participated in 11 sessions of group counseling and guidance. Parents and teachers completed two instruments, the *Walker Problem Behavior Identification Checklist* (Walker, 1962) and the *Child Behavior Rating Scale* (Cassel, 1970), in pretest and posttest assessments for all the children. Results showed that teachers' ratings of students' behaviors did not change, but parents noted that children were less distractible and exhibited fewer behavior problems at home.

Omizo and Omizo (1987) also investigated the use of group counseling with children of divorce. A sample of 60 elementary students from divorced families were randomly assigned to an experimental or a control group in a study that examined differences in student aspiration, anxiety, academic interest and satisfaction, leadership initiative, identification and alienation, and locus of control. The experimental group met for 10 sessions in which the counselor specifically addressed divorce using bibliotherapy, role-play, and discussion. Findings indicated significant differences between students in the group counseling and those assigned to the control group in aspiration, anxiety, identification versus alienation, and locus of control. Group counseling was found to be "beneficial for enhancing some areas of self-concept and an internal locus of control among elementary school children experiencing divorce" in this study (p. 51).

De Luca, Hazen, and Cutler (1993) reported on the effectiveness of group counseling with elementary school girls who had experienced sexual abuse. Seven girls participated in a 10-week counseling program in which 90-minute sessions focused on "feelings about the offender, responsibility, guilt, fears, assertiveness, social skills, problem solving, sex education, and prevention" (p. 104). Results of this preliminary study suggest that group counseling can have a positive effect on anxiety and self-concept. The authors encouraged counselors to evaluate the possibility of using group approaches with students who have experienced sexual abuse.

In a group study of children of alcoholics, Riddle, Bergin, and Douzenis (1997) found that students showed benefits of participating in group counseling. Self-concept scores improved, social skills increased, and anxiety scores decreased over the 14-week period that the group met. The 40 students who participated in the program also learned about alcoholism and ways to cope in families suffering with this disease.

Many research studies of group counseling and group guidance offer similar results to those listed here. School counselors who want to persuade their principals and teachers of the efficacy of group work should become familiar with research findings to make a strong case. In addition, counselors want to develop a rationale for using group processes to help students learn from one another, instruct them in social skills, and enable them to become caring and cooperative members of society.

Through their leadership in group counseling and group guidance, school counselors contribute to the broad effort and mission of educating the whole student. Group guidance, especially when integrated into the curriculum by teachers and counselors, uses the classroom as a social setting to explore issues and values essential to students' character development. This is not a new concept. Good teachers have applied these ideas in their relationships with students since schools began; therefore, group guidance and group counseling are vehicles with which counselors can assist teachers in continuing beneficial traditions in education.

Additional Readings

Corey, M. S., & Corey, G. (2008). *Groups: Process and Practice* (8th ed.). Florence, KY: Cengage.

A popular and readable guide, this book gives a thorough overview of various group processes for children, adolescents, and adults.

Cormier, S., & Hackney, H. (2012). *Counseling Strategies and Interventions* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

A classic book that presents basic theoretical tenets of professional counseling relationships as well as practical skills in helping clients.

Halbur, D. A., & Halbur, K. V. (2011). *Developing Your Theoretical Orientation in Counseling and*

Psychotherapy (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

A clear and concise presentation, this book helps beginning counselors find their theoretical position and provides several practical case studies to help theories come alive.

Skalare, G. B. (2005). *Brief Counseling That Works: A Solution-Focused Approach for School Counselors and Administrators* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

A brief guide to brief counseling, this practical guide is necessary have for professional school counselors.

Websites

American Art Therapy Association
www.arttherapy.org

American Music Therapy Association
www.musictherapy.org

Association for Play Therapy
www.a4pt.org

Association for Specialists in Group Work
www.asgw.org

Institute for Solution-Focused Therapy
www.solutionfocused.net

National Association for Drama therapy
www.nadt.org

Exercises

1. Visit a school for a few hours during the day. Your goal during this visit is to observe the one-to-one interactions between students and teachers, students and students, and students and counselors. Note differences and similarities among these three pairs of interactions. Present your findings in class and discuss their implications.
2. In a small group, talk about the many one-to-one interactions a school counselor has with students, parents, and teachers during a typical day. List as many of these as your group can in a minute. Once your list is made, determine which of these interactions would be considered *counseling relationships*. What factors did you use to identify those interactions that are counseling?
3. List five beliefs you now hold about human development, based on the following:
 - a. Why do people choose the behaviors they do? (In other words, what causes behavior?)
 - b. What conditions affect a person's success in life?
 - c. How can people change?

After you have written your list of beliefs, share them with a classmate and decide which theory of counseling most aligns with your assumptions.

4. Several research studies have found that group guidance can have positive effects on student variables. Review studies of group guidance effectiveness within the past 10 years, and note how many of them compared counselor-led groups with teacher-led groups. Summarize your findings for a class discussion.
5. In a small group, think of topics that might not be appropriate for group counseling in a school setting. If there are such topics, how would you suggest school counselors address them, if not through group processes?
6. A new school counselor has confided her apprehension about doing large-group guidance with middle grade students. She was a mental-health counselor before coming to the school setting and has never worked with large groups of students. What recommendations would you give that would decrease her anxiety and build confidence in her ability to lead groups?

CHAPTER 8

Collaboration and Consultation

Although school counselors have primary responsibility for developing comprehensive programs, they cannot fully meet this challenge without assistance and support from other professionals in the school system and the community. For this reason, school counselors systematically initiate collegial relationships with a variety of educational, medical, and other professionals who provide auxiliary services to school populations. These alliances of counselors and other helping professionals help deliver the broad spectrum of services expected in a comprehensive school counseling program. In accordance with the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model and other designs for comprehensive programs, they ensure the availability of appropriate responsive and other services for students, parents, and teachers who seek the assistance of school counselors.

Forming successful alliances requires a clear understanding of the services needed and knowledge of the types of services offered in the community. At the same time, professionals who work in community agencies, health departments, family centers, and other organizations need to know about the role and training of school counselors. By achieving a mutual understanding of their professional roles and functions, school counselors and community practitioners establish beneficial relationships with students, teachers, and families, as well as collaborative relationships with each other.

These collaborative relationships are not limited to professionals in the school and community. Rather, they include and perhaps begin with the cooperative associations that school counselors create with parents. Because parental involvement is a vital ingredient of successful school counseling programs at all levels, counselors in schools make every effort to establish lines of communication with the home, invite parents to plan educational goals for their children, advertise services of the school counseling program, and, when appropriate, include parents in learning about the critical concerns of their children and adolescents.

Collaboration is an important aspect of all consulting relationships formed by school counselors. In this chapter, you will learn about many individuals, professionals, and agencies with whom school counselors create and maintain working relationships on behalf of students, parents, and teachers. Some authorities distinguish between the terms *consultation* and *collaboration*, whereas others present varying models of collaborative consultation in the literature (Brown, Pryzwansky, & Schulte, 2011). For example, Fishbaugh (1997) offered three models of collaboration: a consulting model, a coaching model, and a teaming model. Each model, according to Fishbaugh, has a particular focus and purpose. The *consulting model* tends to take a traditional approach of offering expert advice. In contrast, she defined the *coaching model* as creating equality in a relationship that follows a cycle of supervision (Brown et al., 2011). The *teaming model* advocates an interactive process within which participants address identified problems and create possible

solutions. The teaming approach is one advocated in recent transformation literature (Dahir & Stone, 2012). Offering another perspective, Dettmer, Dyck, and Thurston (1999) proposed a *collaborative school consultant* approach that calls on the counselor's facilitative communication skills, cooperative relationships among school personnel, and the coordination of needed services.

Numerous views of collaboration and consultation have been presented (e.g., Brown et al., 2011; Caplan & Caplan, 1999; Dougherty, 2008; Kampwirth & Powers, 2012; Parsons & Kahn, 2005); consequently, school counselors want to be familiar with the professional literature regarding collaboration and consultation so they can communicate their understanding of the terms to other student services' team members, teachers, and parents. In this text, we take the view that collaboration is one form of consulting. It is particularly useful in schools because of its emphasis on building partnerships with parents, teachers, student services professionals, and other personnel in the school system and community. Because authorities have varying views on the use of these terms, what seems important is that school counselors attain their own understanding and use the terms consistently to define and describe their program of services. Readers should refer to the sources cited in this chapter to expand their knowledge of collaboration and consultation and arrive at an understanding of what these terms mean for them.

This chapter presents an overview of the consulting skills and processes that enable counselors to establish and facilitate collaborative relationships with different participants. Counselors who develop effective consulting skills are in an excellent position to create superior programs of expanded services for their schools. They learn about the various agencies and services offered in their communities, develop effective communication networks, and use this knowledge and skill to establish strong alliances that benefit students and their families.

The next two sections examine many groups and professionals with whom school counselors consult and collaborate to establish effective services for students. For clarity, these groups are classified into two categories: school services and community agencies.

School Services

Today's schools and school systems consist of a multitude of professionals and volunteers who provide countless services to students, parents, and teachers. In comprehensive programs, school counselors interact, directly and indirectly, with all these groups. This is not an easy accomplishment. Demands on their time often prevent counselors from seeking supportive services beyond their own counseling program.

Because a significant role is to provide services to students in the school, counselors occasionally create a narrow focus for their programs by overemphasizing their own counseling and consulting services with students. As a result, they neglect to collaborate and consult with agencies and individuals who could supplement these services. In some cases, the tendency to overlook school or community programs misses a vital service that counselors could use to assist students more directly and effectively than they are able to do by themselves. The first step in ensuring that this does not happen is to learn about all school-based services and the professionals who perform these functions. At the same time, counselors learn about parents and other guardians of students in the school. As mentioned

earlier, collaboration with parents and guardians has substantial impact on direct counseling services with students.

Parents and Guardians

Although families in the United States have various configurations, in most instances, one or two adults in a given family play significant leadership and guardian roles. In traditional two-parent families, these adults are a mother and father; in others, a single-parent, same-sex parents, stepparent, grandparents, aunt or uncle, foster parents, or friends of a parent assume a leadership role. In all these cases, whether the child is relating with a parent or other guardian, school counselors have responsibility for establishing collaborative working relationships.

Chapter 3 noted that parental involvement may be strong in the elementary years and taper off as students move through the secondary school level. As such, we might expect that collaborative relationships are more apparent in the primary and intermediate grades than in secondary schools. Although this may be true, parental involvement continues to be an important factor during the early adolescent years, and in contemporary U.S. society, it seems to retain importance well into early adulthood. This extended role for parents is the result in part of the higher percentage of people attending college and pursuing advanced degrees in professional and graduate schools, as well as economic considerations.

Economically, parental involvement appears to be an essential ingredient that enables young people to continue their formal education well into their twenties and beyond. At the same time, employment trends and the cost of living have necessitated continued parental support in providing housing for children who are beginning careers and in offering financial assistance for young couples who are just starting out.



PERSPECTIVE 8-1

Think about social and economic ties have you maintained with your parents/guardians in present time. How have these connections influenced your career and life decisions?

This trend toward longer parental involvement in children's developmental and decision-making processes has an effect on the overall involvement that parents expect to have in their children's education. The result is that schools, teachers, and counselors must form cooperative working relationships with parents and guardians in designing educational programs for students, selecting helping processes and strategies, and making plans for future educational and career directions. The first step in this process is for counselors to learn about the families served by their schools and determine the needs of parents by assessing the role they expect to play in the schooling of their children.

Through needs-assessment procedures, counselors determine which services to offer parents, the types of programs to which parents will respond, and the services for which parents will volunteer in the school. A comprehensive school counseling program touches all these areas because counselors (1) counsel and consult with parents and guardians; (2) design informational and instructional programs for parents; and (3) invite parents to assist with functions such as student tutoring, test monitoring, career guidance, and educational information (Perry, 2007).

The relationships that counselors establish with parents and guardians are often important ancillary functions to individual and small-group counseling with students. This may be particularly true for elementary counselors because they serve students who have little control over the environments and situations influencing their lives. Parents of young students and middle-graders have a tremendous impact on the choices their children make regarding school performance, career direction, friendships, and other developmental elements. By consulting with parents, school counselors design support networks and channels of communication to complement the goals and objectives of counseling with students. Parents and guardians who want children to benefit from these helping relationships welcome the opportunity to meet with school counselors, gain understanding about their children's needs, and develop strategies to nurture positive parent-child relationships at home.

When collaborating with parents and guardians, school counselors create many avenues through which they provide direct services or offer indirect assistance. For example, counselors frequently contact parents about students' progress in school and consult about ways to support their educational development at home. Relationships such as these illustrate a cooperative effort that says, "We are together in this effort to help children learn and develop their fullest potential." Such a stance is more facilitative than one that views parents as the opposition, a "them against us" mentality. Counselors who believe facilitative relationships are essential for improving home-school communications work to establish mutual respect between parents and teachers.

Another direct service that counselors provide for parents is educational programs. Parenting is a challenging role for which few of us are prepared in any formal sense. The parenting skills most of us have learned, we adapted from the parenting styles of our parents and guardians when we were children. Unfortunately, these behaviors are not always conducive to healthy and affirmative relationships. To assist in the parenting process, school counselors facilitate parent meetings, establish support groups, and lead parent education programs. Sometimes these events are informal get-togethers where parents exchange ideas about what works with children in their families. For example, one elementary counselor holds periodic coffee and doughnut gatherings for parents on their way to work in the morning. Such exchanges are beneficial ways of brainstorming limitless strategies to assist parents in communicating effectively with their children and adolescents. By facilitating these exchanges and designing educational activities for parents, counselors demonstrate the school's willingness to cooperate and work with parents in creating optimal learning opportunities for all students (Table 8.1).

In Chapter 3, we discussed how some educational programs for parents are packaged and marketed commercially. Typically, these programs have a trainer's manual for the counselor to follow and a participant's handbook for parents. Parent education programs can be organized in a single session or in a series of meetings to present specific information about child behavior, leadership strategies, and other issues of interest to parents. Some programs continue for several sessions and cover a wide range of issues and topics about child development and parenting skills.

School counselors arrange their work schedules to accommodate parent education programs. Often, parent groups meet at night to fit work schedules, but occasionally, counselors lead parent groups during the daytime, when students are in school. When counselors schedule groups during the day, they seek suggestions from their principals and advisory committees to examine the ramifications of using school time to assist parents. If positive

TABLE 8.1 Examples of Collaboration and Consultation with Parents/Guardians

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- Initiating informal contacts by written messages, telephone calls, or through electronic messages to monitor student progress
 - Leading parent education programs, either through face-to-face meetings or electronic means, such as webinars
 - Coordinating informal gatherings to encourage parents to share with each other and interact with you, the counselor
 - Facilitating parent support groups, which capitalize on the expertise of various parents
-

parenting skills equate to increased learning and participation of students, counselors are able to convince principals and teachers of the importance of these daytime activities.

Support groups for parents usually center on a particular concern or issue, such as being a single parent, and counselors lead these groups in discussion of common concerns and exploration of actions to handle everyday problems. Parents' support groups endorse each member as an expert on his or her child. The assumption is that no one knows the child better than the parent does. This expertise becomes pooled in group discussions, and counselors use this collective knowledge to assist individual parents who need help or alternative ideas to handle current situations or problems. Groups such as these allow parents to see that they are not alone in their struggles and, at the same time, enable them to gain support from the collective wisdom of the group. During this process, the counselor is the facilitator of discussion, the keeper of time, and the coordinator of the group activity.

Few students develop at optimal levels without support and encouragement from parents and guardians. Through services such as these, counselors let parents know about available resources to help students. One way of informing parents is through direct contact. By consulting directly with parents, counselors provide current information, instruction, and essential problem-solving services.

Counselors who address the informational and educational needs of parents ensure that schools and parents move in the same direction and have similar goals for students. To verify this parallel movement, counselors also consult and collaborate with teachers in their schools.

Teachers

No school counseling program is successful without the support of teachers. Teachers are a vital link in the integration of affective education into the curriculum. They are the first-line helpers in the school counseling program, and they are referral sources for students in need of additional assistance. For these reasons, counselors at all levels of educational practice wisely cultivate collaborative relationships with all the teachers in their schools.

One of the first signs of collaboration between counselors and teachers is the input counselors request about the nature, scope, and focus of comprehensive school counseling programs. Counselors who send these requests are well received and respected because they demonstrate mutual regard for teachers and the teaching profession. This partnership is not merely a mutual admiration society, but shows a genuine respect for what it takes to be an excellent teacher, balanced by an acceptance of the unique role that counselors play in school programs.

TABLE 8.2 Examples of Collaboration and Consultation with Teachers, Including Teachers of Exceptional Students

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- Requesting input from teachers about the school counseling program
 - Maintaining regular contact with teachers, both informally and formally, about students receiving counseling services
 - Tapping the expertise of teachers about curriculum matters or their specialty areas
 - Being available to participate in parent-teacher conferences
 - Consulting with teachers during team meetings
 - Facilitating teacher support groups
 - Planning, collaborating, and presenting teacher in-service sessions
-

Counselors collaborate with teachers in many other ways, some of which are similar to the individual and group processes for parents described earlier (Table 8.2). For example, teachers and counselors consult with each other to identify the needs of individual students, gather data to assess these needs, make decisions about practical strategies to assist students, and evaluate outcomes of these strategies. Counselors also consult and collaborate with teachers in group sessions, such as team meetings in middle schools and departmental meetings in senior high schools. Counselors who are sought out by individual teachers and invited to team meetings are respected for their collaborative skills and empathic understanding of the teacher's role. Similarly, these counselors seek out teachers for their guidance and suggestions and thereby demonstrate respect for teachers' knowledge of curricula and command of instructional methods.

Teachers' support groups are another medium by which school counselors collaborate with their colleagues. As with parents' support groups, teachers' groups rely on the expertise of group members to explore concerns, identify pertinent issues, suggest alternatives, and plan reasonable action. The emergence and application of this kind of teachers' expertise are possible through the facilitative skills of the counselor as a group leader. By relying on the observations and suggestions of other teachers in the support group, counselors lead these groups in discussions while avoiding the role of expert. This is another way counselors learn to appreciate the challenge of teaching in elementary, middle, and high schools. At the same time, teachers in support groups have an opportunity to watch the communication and facilitation skills of their counseling colleagues.

Collaboration between counselors and teachers also occurs when they cooperate to plan and present in-service activities for staff development. Sometimes counselors give these presentations as a result of suggestions from teachers. Other times, counselors recruit teachers who are skilled in particular areas of instruction or child development. Experienced teachers who are skilled facilitators are often the best people to present faculty in-service in schools. Instructional and informational programs for school faculties are successful when teachers and counselors cooperate by setting staff development goals, planning appropriate activities, and following through on these action plans.

Teachers of Exceptional Children. Teachers of exceptional children are also especially important collaborators with school counselors. These professionals are highly

trained to identify and provide instruction for children and adolescents who require special education services.

As you learned in Chapter 2, coinciding with the development of special education programs in the 1970s was the emergence of a professional specialty for teachers of exceptional students (sometimes called *special education teachers*). These teachers are prepared in pedagogical theories and methods of curriculum and instruction, and they have specialized knowledge and skills to address the needs of students identified with specific challenges. The educable handicapped, learning disabled, emotionally disabled, academically gifted, physically impaired, and multihandicapped children and adolescents are among students served by special education teachers.

Because school counselors provide services for all students in schools, they especially want to collaborate with special education teachers in assessing students' needs, locating school and community resources, planning counseling services, and examining school policies that have positive or negative effects on the educational progress of challenged children and adolescents. Special education teachers assist counselors in all these functions and, in addition, collaborate to keep counselors up to date about current regulations and research findings regarding various areas of exceptionality. At the same time, counselors offer these teachers support and understanding as they create and deliver appropriate instruction for the school's most challenging—and most challenged—students.

School counselors and teachers of exceptional students also cooperate by helping parents and guardians of these children adjust to the challenges of nurturing, guiding, and caring for them. Parents of these children face obstacles unknown to most families. This is particularly true of students who have a debilitating mental, emotional, or physical handicap. The guilt sometimes associated with having born a child with any type of disability, combined with the challenges of daily care, supervision, and parenting, often seems insurmountable. Counselors and teachers who offer parents support and guidance can help immeasurably.

Counselors who form close alliances with teachers of challenged students are better able to create effective helping relationships with these students and their parents. They learn about the exceptionailities, disabilities, and handicaps with which the family and child are dealing and, therefore, are in better position to design and implement successful interventions and services. Counseling these students and consulting with their parents have special features that require particular knowledge and skills (Kampwirth & Powers, 2012). By collaborating with teachers of exceptional students, counselors in schools are able to acquire this knowledge and skill.

School counselors have a responsibility to include special education students in their comprehensive program of services. Too often, counselors neglect this population because of unreasonable counselor-student ratios, unnecessary administrative obligations, and the mistaken perception that the special education teacher provides sufficient individual attention for these students. By collaborating with teachers, counselors can provide guidance lessons in special education classes, place students in appropriate small-group counseling and guidance activities, and see particular students for individual counseling. To plan appropriate counseling and guidance services for these students, it is essential that school counselors be actively involved in developing each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), as noted in Chapter 2.

TABLE 8.3 Examples of Collaboration and Consultation with Principals

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- Requesting regular meetings to update the principal about the counseling program and special concerns in the school
 - Initiating ideas for school-wide events and programs
 - Informing the principal about ethical standards of school counselors, particularly those relating to confidentiality
 - Sharing assessment data and evaluation results about the school counseling program
-

Principals

Principals prepared in educational administration, curriculum, law, and other aspects of school governance manage schools in U.S. systems. These administrators are ultimately responsible for everything that goes on in school buildings and in educational programs. Therefore, directly or indirectly, principals supervise every service and activity scheduled and provided by school counselors. This truly awesome responsibility makes it imperative for principals and counselors to collaborate about the design of the counseling program, selection of major goals and objectives, identification of appropriate functions, evaluation of services, and countless other details related to comprehensive school counseling programs. Collaboration between principals and counselors is an ongoing process that enables counselors to include their principals in program planning processes and, at the same time, to inform school administrators of issues affecting students' educational development (Table 8.3).

Many activities planned by counselors have a school-wide focus to meet the needs of a broad spectrum of students, parents, and teachers. In determining goals and strategies for these events, counselors collaborate with school principals to check on the feasibility and appropriateness of particular activities. Principals have knowledge of local policies, financial limitations, and other restrictions that guide the selection and implementation of activities planned for the entire school. By establishing working relationships with their principals, school counselors are better informed about the parameters within which programs of services need to function. Similarly, effective communication with administrators allows counselors the opportunity to convey their assessment of students' needs and the overall school climate and how these two elements interact in the school.

When sharing information with principals, counselors are careful to follow ethical standards and legal guidelines regarding confidential matters and privileged communications. Counselors frequently receive confidential information in their relationships with students, and this information remains private unless there is imminent danger to students or others. Ethically, school counselors do not reveal confidential information to principals or other people without the consent of their clients. However, because counselors are privy to information that reflects on the overall condition and climate of the school, they have an obligation to inform principals about these conditions. For example, if a senior high counselor has learned from students that a number of girls are pregnant, the counselor needs to inform the school administrator of this situation. Of course, the counselor cannot reveal the identities of the young women, but he or she can tell the principal that the condition exists.

By having this information, the school administrator is in position to plan educational services these students need and consult with the school nurse about appropriate health services to provide. In addition, the principal might confer with the counselors and teachers about preventive services the school should develop for the future. Detailed information about when to maintain confidential information is in Chapter 12.

By collaborating with their principals, counselors take charge of school counseling programs. They inform the administration about their annual plans; they focus on responsive services for students, parents, and teachers; and they keep lines of communication open to receive advice from their school administrators. In addition, counselors become the coordinators for all student services, including those provided by school nurses, psychologists, and social workers.

Nurses, Psychologists, and Social Workers

Some schools and school systems have student services beyond the elements of a comprehensive counseling program, including nursing and health, psychological, and social services provided by highly prepared professionals in each respective area.

These student services overlap to some degree in that they each focus on the physical, emotional, and social health and welfare of students and families. Because their functions overlap, student services professionals realize it is imperative to collaborate with each other and coordinate activities. In schools where counselors work full time, it is logical for them to coordinate student services. This is especially true when the nurse, psychologist, and social worker are at the school part time. As a full-time employee, the school counselor coordinates referrals, follows cases, schedules team meetings, and performs other functions to make certain students receive appropriate services.

One form of collaboration is a team approach where student services staff members meet on a regular basis (sometimes referred to as *student-study teams, SST*; Kampwirth & Powers, 2012). Through these regular meetings, the counselor, nurse, psychologist, and social worker share information, update cases, assign responsibilities, and avoid duplication of services. They also focus on specific cases to ensure that students receive appropriate services from the school, and that they pursue and monitor referrals to community resources adequately.

Effective collaboration among these student services professionals begins with a mutual understanding and respect for their unique roles in schools and regard for their individual areas of expertise. In situations where this respect and regard are not achieved, student services are not well coordinated, and as a result, students' needs are not addressed adequately. In today's schools, students, parents, and teachers face sufficient challenges to require the services of all these professionals. Adequate coordination and timely collaboration provide appropriate and effective services for all concerned.

Collaboration within the school and school system helps counselors stay abreast of students' needs and select appropriate services to meet these demands. Sometimes, schools seek assistance from agencies and resources within the local community and from county and state organizations. By collaborating with available agencies, counselors give their schools an edge in initiating referral procedures and receiving timely services for students and families. This is most important in rural areas, where schools and communities do not always have the resources and funds to meet the demands of students and families. As a

result, counselors in these schools use their creative and leadership abilities to help people join forces to reach program goals. The next section presents a few of the agencies typically used by schools to locate social, health, psychological, and family services for their students.

Community Agencies

Schools are a major agency in a community, but alone, they cannot offer all the human services necessary to help a town, city, or county educate its citizens, provide health care, and offer basic services to improve the human condition. The primary mission of schools, and therefore the primary mission of school counseling programs, is to ensure the educational development of all students. In their attempt to reach this goal, school personnel offer an array of related services such as counseling, psychological evaluation, health care consultation, and social services. They offer these services to assist the school in its primary mission of education. The assumption is that as personal needs, health concerns, and learning difficulties of students are identified and addressed, students' educational progress is assured and their opportunity for success in life is enhanced.

When services offered by schools are insufficient to remedy the concerns of students and families, counselors and teachers turn to community resources (Brown et al., 2011). Not all communities have ample services, so school counselors locate those that exist and establish collaborative professional relationships to benefit students, parents, and teachers. Successful collaboration rests, in part, on the school's ability to convey its role and mission to these community resources while also learning about the agencies' roles. The primary mission of public agencies and private practitioners in the community is to assist in one or more of the human service areas. For example, most communities have access to a health department that offers a wide range of medical services and health education programs.

Health Departments

School counselors and other student services professionals collaborate with health departments in a variety of ways. Elementary and middle school counselors rely on community health services to assist families with medical checkups and offer recommendations to the school about health and medically related issues affecting the educational development of students. In some communities, health consultants work closely with the school to develop appropriate guidance activities on the physical growth, sexuality, and health care needs of students. Similar services are available to senior high schools and, in addition, there are health services for pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, substance abuse, and other critical problems.

A strong cooperative relationship between the school and health care professionals is vital to student welfare. When schools and health care professionals form active partnerships, adequate services are accessible and accurate information becomes available to students and their families. When health concerns appear to be other than physical, schools turn to community mental-health services.

Mental-Health Centers

At times, the emotional and personal concerns mentioned by students to counselors, nurses, psychologists, and social workers require in-depth and intensive interventions.

Although student services professionals may be competent to offer these interventions, time, schedules, and other factors associated with comprehensive school-based programs make it appropriate to refer these students and their families to mental-health centers.

Mental-health counselors, social workers, and psychologists spend a majority of their time in one-to-one and small-group therapy helping clients remedy social, emotional, and behavioral problems that interfere with development and learning. Collaboration between school counselors and mental-health practitioners is essential because, while students are receiving treatment at the centers, they usually remain in school and continue their contacts with school counselors regarding classroom work, academic progress, and school behavior. By collaborating, mental-health counselors and school counselors are careful not to confuse students in their respective helping relationships. In most instances, the agency counselor has primary responsibility for focusing on immediate social, emotional, or behavioral concerns. The school counselor supports this intervention by encouraging the student at school, locating and establishing support systems, and implementing strategies suggested by the mental-health professional and agreed on by the school, classroom teachers, and parents.

Social Services

Among the challenges faced by U.S. families in today's society is the real prospect of economic disadvantage, unemployment, and financial ruin. The gap between the lower and upper classes of our society continues to widen. Frequently, students and their families confront job losses, homelessness, lack of heating fuel, need for food, or other critical concerns. Counselors and teachers are usually the first to learn about severe economic losses and limitations of families, and therefore, they are frequently in touch with departments of social services in their communities.

In addition to these severe economic needs, children and adolescents in many families are increasingly at physical and emotional risk as a result of neglect and abuse. In part, economic stress contributes to this social illness, but alcohol and substance abuse are often significant factors. Federal and state laws require school personnel to report instances of suspected child abuse to the appropriate authorities, and in most communities, this is the protective services division of the Department of Social Services (DSS) or a similar agency.

Because the issue of child abuse and neglect is so sensitive and potentially explosive, counselors collaborate with DSS to ascertain proper reporting procedures, the responsibilities of each agency, and the role of the school in handling these cases. Without this type of communication and cooperation, reporting procedures may be misunderstood, responsibilities blurred, and the safety of children unattended. It is essential that school counselors be aware of federal and state laws regarding child abuse reporting, know their school system's policies and procedures, and follow reporting guidelines of the local child protective services.

Family Services

When children and adolescents struggle in their educational development, contributing factors often emanate from familial disturbance and dysfunction. Conversely, students' educational problems sometimes contribute to family stress and hardship. Often, it is impossible to separate students' concerns from their interactions with family members.

For this reason, school counselors establish collaborative relationships with clinics and professionals who specialize in family counseling services.

Frequently, mental-health centers and departments of social services employ counselors, psychologists, and social workers who specialize in family interventions. Other community resources include family counseling services sponsored by United Way agencies, churches, universities, and other nonprofit organizations. Knowing which agencies and institutions offer these kinds of services enables school counselors to pursue appropriate avenues for referral.

By collaborating with family services in the community, school counselors recognize the influence of family dynamics in child and adolescent development. Harnessing this influence and using it to establish positive goals and strategies are imperative, and cooperative relationships between schools and family practitioners are avenues through which to accomplish these objectives.

Counselors can use opportunities to form collaborative relationships between the school and family practitioners. For example, family counselors can educate school personnel about family needs and stresses, and thereby encourage involvement and inclusion of parents and children in schools in nonthreatening ways. These community professionals can sensitize the school to family breakups that have destroyed what were once loving relationships, but that now fuel resentment and bitterness among family members. Consultations between school counselors and family counselors allow the school, especially teachers, to become informed about stress and difficulty affecting children's daily lives.

In some instances, school counselors may work with entire families (Hinkle, 1993; Nicoll, 1992; Sink, 2005). Some authors have encouraged the use of models of family counseling for implementation in school counseling programs. For example, Williams, Robinson, and Smaby (1988) proposed a "group skills model that incorporates techniques associated with problem solving and interpersonal communications" (p. 170). They designed a model for intervening in childhood and adolescent problems that stem from dysfunctional family relationships. Amatea and Fabrick (1981) recommended the family systems approach as an alternative to traditional counseling with students. Adlerian counseling, another approach to family service, is also encouraged in school counseling practice and counselor training (Nicoll, 1992). Sink (2005) deduced that "school counselors are in a strategic position to support and counsel families because they have an understanding of the school system, a background in child and adolescent development, and knowledge of family dynamics and counseling interventions" (p. 127).

Colbert (1996) advocated for a model of collaboration and coordination efforts that encouraged counselors to establish partnerships with families. He maintained that such efforts were consistent with school reform initiatives and redefined the role of school counselors in comprehensive programs. Similarly, Keys and Bemak (1997) suggested,

the school counselor's "school only" focus is too narrow to provide the multidimensional services needed to effect long-term change . . . help for an individual must occur within a larger network of school-community interventions targeted at families and students. (p. 259)

Comprehensive counseling programs, in contrast to traditional services, plan activities for parents and attempt to focus on entire families when situations suggest a link between a student's development and family functioning. In most comprehensive school

counseling programs, however, family counseling and parent education services are limited. For this reason, school counselors who provide family services continue to rely on community agencies and private practitioners as primary referral sources. In some communities, where public services are insufficient to meet the tremendous needs of student populations, school counselors rely on psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, and other therapists in private practice to assist students and their families.

Private Practitioners

Physicians, counselors, clinical social workers, and psychologists in private practice offer an array of services to children, adolescents, and families to assist with educational, psychological, and social development. By identifying private practitioners in their communities, school counselors expand the list of resources available to students, parents, and teachers. The longer the list, the more options and alternatives schools have available.

When counselors suggest community resources to assist students and parents with identified concerns, it is best to have a list from which people can choose. In this way, counselors rely on clients to make the final selection and thereby demonstrate respect for their ability to make responsible decisions. Parents and students consider costs, personal preferences, and other factors when selecting agencies and professionals for additional services. It is best for the referring counselor to provide as much information as possible, offer a list of two or more options, and let the individual make the decision about where to seek further assistance.



PERSPECTIVE 8-2

Although skills are similar across counseling and consulting relationships, collaborating with parents and other adults may require levels of confidence and assertiveness different from when working with students. Consider your readiness at this stage of professional development to collaborate with adults.

In all these collaborative relationships with parents, teachers, administrators, specialists, community agencies, and private practitioners, school counselors call on their preparation in communication and consulting skills to establish successful associations. In many respects, these consulting skills are similar to the competencies and communication skills that counselors use in individual and group-counseling relationships (Gladding, 2009; Kampwirth & Powers, 2012). Although this is true, the consultative roles assumed by school counselors when working with parents and other professionals have a distinct purpose and make a unique contribution to the development and implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs.

Counselors as Consultants

Consultation is not new to the school counseling profession. Several decades ago, Aubrey (1978) noted that its place in school counseling was first advanced in a 1966 joint report of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the Association for Counselor

Education and Supervision (ACES). In the late 1960s, Faust gave particular emphasis to the consulting role of school counselors in his book *The Counselor/Consultant in the Elementary School* (1968b). Similarly, Fullmer and Bernard (1972) referred to the school counselor–consultant as an “emergent role” in the profession (p. 1). Since that time, many articles and books have examined various ways that school counselors use consulting skills and processes with students, parents, teachers, and other professionals. As school counselors help students, parents, and teachers face increasingly complex problems, the expectation is that consultation will continue to be a major function (Dougherty, 2008; Parsons & Kahn, 2005).

School counselors spend considerable time in consulting relationships. In particular, counselors consult with teachers about students’ progress, motivation, and classroom behaviors. As seen earlier, they also serve as referral agents for parents and teachers in locating information and resources with which to help students; and instruct students, parents, and teachers in issues, topics, and skills to assist all groups in realizing their educational and career goals. There are many perspectives and approaches to consultation for counselors to consider, depending on the purpose of their helping relationships. For a comprehensive overview of consulting models and processes, consult the references cited in this section.

In Chapter 5, we introduced different ways that counselors consult with students, parents, and teachers to distribute information, give instructions, assist with problem-solving services, encourage curriculum changes, and plan school-wide events. The skills and processes associated with these different consulting roles are similar to other helping relationships established by school counselors. Yet, structurally there are differences. In this section, we examine some of the aspects that distinguish consulting relationships from direct counseling services.

Consulting Processes

In his now classic mental-health model, Caplan (1970) defined *consultation* as “a process of interactions between two professional persons—the *consultant*, who is a specialist, and the *consultee*, who invokes a consultant’s help in regard to a current work problem” (p. 19). Likewise, Bergan (1977) described the consulting relationship as a problem-solving process.

School counselors use consultation in a broader context that includes educational, informational, and problem-solving relationships. As Parsons and Kahn (2005) noted, this perspective views consultation as an umbrella for many services of a comprehensive program rather than as a solitary technique. For example, in some instances, counselors assume consulting roles to help their schools prevent problems; in other cases, counselors consult with teachers, parents, and others to plan activities that focus on developmental needs of students. These consultations form a triadic relationship consisting of the counselor–consultant, a consultee, and a situation with another person (the client) or other type of external concern.

One way to visualize consulting relationships is as a triangular, or *triadic* (Kampwirth & Powers, 2012), relationship that consists of a consultant, a consultee, and a situation. In such consultations, the counselor–consultant assists the consultee in finding and

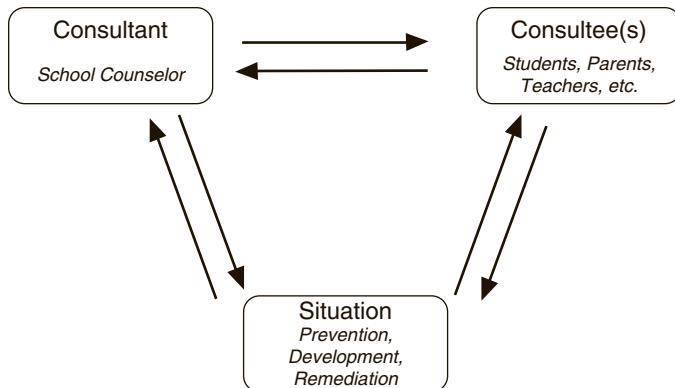


FIGURE 8.1 Triangular Structure for Consulting in School Counseling Programs

implementing solutions to the problem situation. Sometimes group conferences may include more than one consultee, but the triangular structure is still applicable.

Another perspective on consultation is of situations that demand a preventive response. In consultations with a preventive focus, identified problems or situations receive attention through instruction or by sharing information. For example, if middle school teachers want to hone their communication skills to enhance advisor–advisee relationships, the counselor may serve as an instructional consultant. In this scenario, the teachers are the consultees and the situation is teacher–student communications. Figure 8.1 illustrates the triangular nature of consultations used by school counselors. The arrows in the diagram indicate communications, fact-finding processes, and responses among the three elements in the consulting relationship.

This triangular view of consultation differs from direct counseling relationships because the ultimate goal is to address or remedy a situation or other aspect external to the relationship between the consultant and consultee. In this sense, the consultant works with the consultee, who in turn makes adjustments or intervenes with the identified situation. In contrast, a counseling relationship assists another individual in making direct changes in his or her life.

In an early article, Kurpius and Robinson (1978) outlined different modes of consultation that include various purposes. Later, Kurpius and Fuqua (1993) delineated four generic modes of consultation that offer different roles that counselors can adopt when performing consulting functions. The first role is one of an *expert*, where counselors provide answers to problems by offering expert information to students, parents, and teachers. In some instances, the expert consultant uses direct skills in fixing a broken situation. The second role is similar to the expert mode and is the *prescriptive role*, which counselors assume when they gather information, diagnose situations, and recommend solutions. A third consulting role is that of a *collaborator* when, as we saw earlier, the counselor works in partnership with consultees to define areas of concern and design strategies to effect change. The fourth role is that of *mediation*, where the consultation takes on the appearance of negotiation or mediation when counselors assist consultees who are at odds with each other or with an external situation. In these instances, the counselor–consultant

becomes the *mediator* and *negotiator*, and attempts to find common ground between conflicting views and sometimes negotiates compromises. To these four modes, we add a fifth consulting role for school counselors: that of *instructor*, and is usually the role school counselors take in parent education programs, teacher in-service, and classroom guidance with students. This interpretation is expanded from other authorities and their definition of *instructional consultation*, which focuses on teachers as consultees and changes in teachers' behaviors (Brown et al., 2011; Kampwirth & Powers, 2012).

The consulting role that counselors assume as *collaborator*, which we addressed earlier, establishes an equal relationship among participants to facilitate change (Kurpius & Fuqua, 1993; Kurpius & Robinson, 1978). The collaborative mode is generally accepted as a viable role for school counselors when consulting with students, parents, and teachers (Brown et al., 2011; Kampwirth & Powers, 2012), and is also effective in consulting with school administrators, social workers, and other professionals who seek ways to enhance the educational opportunities and developmental progress of students.

In schools, instructional and informational consultation is clearly different from counseling relationships. However, problem-solving consultations resemble counseling processes because the feelings of the consultee are considered in the exploration and selection of viable alternatives and strategies. The use of consulting processes in school counseling programs to convey information, offer instruction, or resolve difficult situations requires the application of different processes. As a result, the roles and processes chosen by school counselors are determined in large part by the goals of the consultation itself.

Informational and instructional consultations require processes such as preparation, presentation, feedback, and evaluation. Problem-solving consultations, however, have a different focus, and therefore require different skills and processes. In problem-solving consultations, counselors gather information, identify the main problem, help consultees explore alternatives and strategies, facilitate decision making, win agreement, follow up this agreement, and evaluate outcomes. We now consider these different consulting roles and the processes associated with each of them.

Informational and Instructional Consultation. The processes and skills used to convey information and present instruction are similar. Counselors plan programs with teachers, lead parent education groups, and facilitate classroom guidance and other instructional activities using similar behaviors. In many respects, the skills and processes used by school counselors in these types of activities resemble instructional approaches used by classroom teachers. Instructional approaches can be classified into four categories: information processing, social interaction, individualized consultation, and behavior modification (Good & Brophy, 2008). School counselors use all four of these approaches in various instructional and informational activities with students, parents, and teachers.

Information processing is used by school counselors to disseminate educational and career materials to students and parents. Presenting course information, discussing financial aid opportunities, and reviewing community resources are examples of informational presentations school counselors plan and implement.

Social interaction approaches are used in teacher in-service, parent education, and group work with students. In these relationships, participants interact with each other to learn about the topics addressed in the program. By using social interaction procedures, school counselors rely on the combined expertise of group members to find solutions,

offer ideas, and explore alternatives. In this way, counselors avoid becoming sole experts and instead become facilitators of the learning process.

Individualized consultations provide information and instruction in brief contacts with students, parents, and teachers. The counselor-consultant in these instances acts as a sounding board and enables individuals to choose a direction, find appropriate materials, learn a necessary skill, and reach an identified goal. An example of this type of consultation is when a high school student seeks a counselor's assistance in deciding to which colleges to make application. The counselor shows the student how to review resources, administers interest inventories about college selection, and gives other assistance to enable the student to narrow or expand choices.

Behavior modification strategies are helpful in both individual and group consultations. Behavioral approaches with individual students can be helpful in teaching a skill or learning to cope with particular situations and can be used to instruct parents and teachers in management skills for home and school. Sometimes, behavioral instruction is a strategy used in problem-solving consultations as well.

Each of these approaches relies on particular processes and skills on the part of the counselor-consultant. Generally, these processes and skills include behaviors related to preparation, presentation, feedback, and evaluation.

Preparation. Successful instruction and information sharing require adequate preparation of materials and time. Counselors who present classroom guidance activities, teacher in-service, and parent education programs are successful when they choose instructional goals carefully, plan appropriate learning activities, and schedule their presentations within a reasonable time frame. For example, when counselors present classroom guidance, they plan developmentally appropriate activities for all students in the group. The content of their lessons and the activities they choose for instruction include vocabulary and concepts that elementary, middle, or high school students understand. At the same time, counselors allow adequate time for the lesson in accordance with the age and development of students. Elementary, middle, and high school students tolerate various types of presentations for different lengths of time. Knowing these differences and planning programs accordingly increases the likelihood that students will attend to the presentation and achieve the intended learning objectives.

When counselors choose developmentally appropriate objectives, use materials and media to which participants will be responsive, and schedule beginning and ending times that facilitate optimal learning, their presentations to students, parents, and teachers are more likely to be successful. Adequate preparation begins this process and is followed by effective presentation skills.

Presentation. In many respects, successful guidance, in-service, and other presentations by school counselors depend on skills similar to those used by effective teachers. Research on effective teacher characteristics has not produced conclusive findings, but consensus among educators highlights teaching skills and behaviors that distinguish effective instruction (Ryan & Cooper, 2010), including the following:

1. Design lessons and state goals to let students know what is expected and what they will learn.

2. Monitor students' progress with regular feedback and task-oriented assignments.
3. Use well-paced instruction to maximize the content covered in the lesson.
4. Ask high-level questions that require students to analyze, synthesize, or evaluate information.
5. Communicate high expectations for all students.
6. Manage classrooms with appropriate skill, positive reinforcement, and attention to student achievement.

This list is by no means all-inclusive. Other teacher behaviors relate to student learning and instructional effectiveness. Table 8.4 illustrates some specific behaviors that may be useful in presenting effective lessons, such as classroom guidance, that may also be helpful with presentations to parents and teachers for instructional or informational purposes.

Regardless of the type of presentation, counselors use effective behaviors and evaluate the outcome of their services. In sum, successful presenters

- are deeply involved in their activities
- encourage exchanges between themselves and their audiences
- facilitate appropriate interaction among group members
- use management techniques that maintain order without inhibiting participation
- pace presentations to keep a high degree of interest without moving so quickly that some members of the group get lost

Feedback. For instructional and informational consultations, counselors set goals to distribute information or teach knowledge and skills to selected audiences. To create learning environments in which people accept information and attain skills, counselor-consultants seek ongoing feedback from participants. In this way, their presentations become more than didactic discourses. Instead, they encourage a free exchange of ideas and opinions about the subject matter presented. Classroom guidance often teaches character education, citizenship qualities, and other traits revered in society. Although it is appropriate

TABLE 8.4 Useful Leadership Behaviors in Presenting Guidance Lessons

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1. Start the lesson promptly and use time efficiently.
 2. State the purpose of the presentation clearly.
 3. Give clear instructions and directions.
 4. Encourage participation of all students.
 5. Demonstrate adequate group management skills.
 6. Facilitate the session with listening, questioning, reflecting, clarifying, and summarizing skills.
 7. Respect the individuality of students.
 8. Affirm and reinforce students' willingness to contribute.
 9. Provide effective feedback to students.
 10. Use evaluative measures to assess the outcome of the lesson.
-

and proper to include these objectives in a guidance curriculum, teachers and counselors remain open to views that express different and sometimes conflicting opinions about important issues. A healthy exchange among students, parents, and other participants in these types of presentations fosters acceptance and instills democratic principles embraced by society and its schools.

Evaluation. Counselors measure the effectiveness of their presentations by asking two questions: (1) Have participants acquired the information or content of the activity? and (2) Have participants indicated satisfaction with the presentation?

They answer the first question by observing the skills acquired by participants or by assessing whether participants have obtained the information and knowledge desired. For example, a counselor who presents conflict resolution strategies to middle-graders might evaluate the effect of this activity by having classroom teachers monitor student behavior and measure the acquisition of negotiation and mediation skills. Another evaluative process the counselor might use is to have the students complete a questionnaire to measure their understanding of the information presented as well as their satisfaction with the group program. Form 8.1 illustrates a sample questionnaire a counselor might use with a middle school group on conflict resolution.

By evaluating their presentations, school counselors are able to make adjustments in their programs and accurately meet the needs of students, parents, and teachers. There is little reason for counselors to continue activities that do not result in desired outcomes or are dissatisfying to participants. Because time is limited, counselors evaluate their activities and services based on how well they meet the needs of intended populations and discard those that have minimum effect on program goals and objectives. In Chapter 11, we examine some evaluation processes that school counselors can use to assess programs and services.

FORM 8.1 *Sample Group Evaluation Form*

Your participation in the Conflict Resolution Group has been appreciated. Please evaluate our group by answering the following questions. Indicate your answers by circling either YES, NO, or UNSURE. Thank you.

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|--------|
| 1. Did you learn about yourself in this group? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 2. Did you learn about other people in this group? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 3. Was the group helpful in teaching you about conflict? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 4. Did you learn ways to handle conflict? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 5. Did the counselor listen to the people in the group? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 6. Were you allowed to give your opinion? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 7. Did other group members help you? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 8. Was being in this group helpful to you? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 9. Did the counselor's leadership help? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 10. Would you recommend this group to other students? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
-

Problem-Solving Consultations. In addition to group presentations that focus on developmental learning and facilitate the dissemination of information, school counselors assist consultees in examining problems, exploring solutions, choosing strategies, and evaluating outcomes. Many problem-solving models have been developed and presented in the consulting literature for school counselors (Brown et al., 2011; Kampwirth & Powers, 2012; Kurpius, 1978; Kurpius & Brown, 1985; Parsons & Kahn, 2005; Purkey, Schmidt, & Novak, 2010). Generally, consulting models consist of similar phases or stages. The variations found in these proposed stages, or with the language used to describe processes within stages, usually relate to differences in theoretical foundations of the models. For example, behaviorally oriented consultations differ from Adlerian approaches, not because of any fundamental difference in consulting structures, but because of the way each theory views human development and behavior. Behavioral views focus on external factors that influence behavior and development, whereas Adlerian theory emphasizes people's perceptions and interpretative powers in self-creating a unique view of the world and their role in it.

A generic four-stage model that can be adapted to different divergent theoretical perspectives illustrates problem-solving and situational consultations performed by school counselors. This model consists of introduction, exploration, implementation, and evaluation phases, and Figure 8.2 illustrates the process.

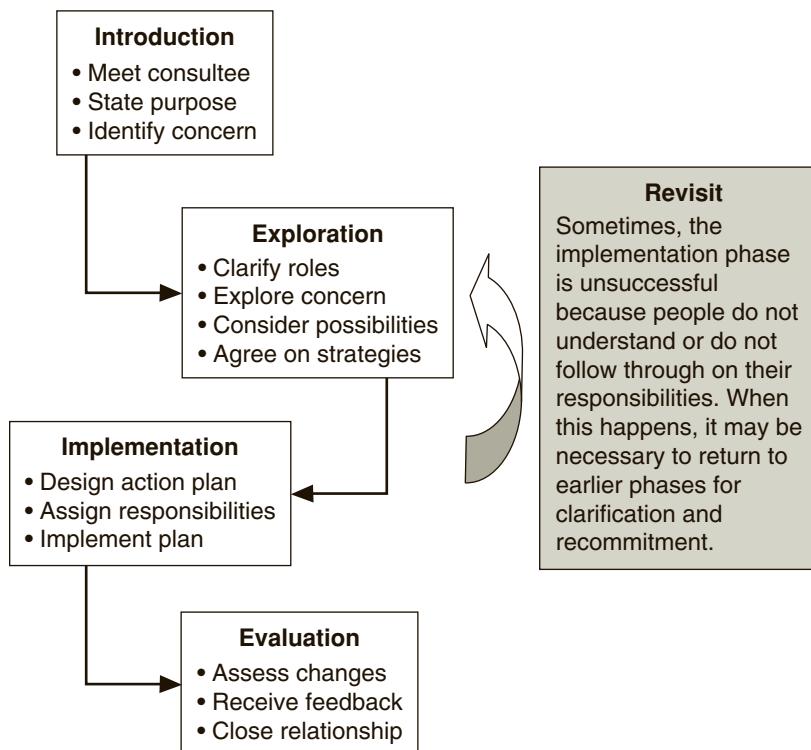


FIGURE 8.2 *Problem-Solving Consultation Model*

Introduction. In the *introduction phase*, the counselor–consultant meets the consultee, makes introductions, states the purpose of the meeting, and hears the main concern. The essential goal of this phase is for the consultant to help the consultee identify and express the concern clearly. In this stage, the consultant and consultee establish rapport and begin gathering information that enables them to agree the main issue and the actual problem that needs immediate attention.

An additional reason for gathering information in the introduction phase is to enable the consultant and consultee to have data and other material to assist in the exploration of alternatives and possible solutions. Counselor–consultants use observations, tests, inventories, records, interviews, and other processes to gather pertinent information. This gathering is a nonjudgmental process in which the consultant accepts input from the consultee as it is given. Later, by evaluating and sorting various pieces of information, the consultant formulates opinions about various data to give an accurate direction to the consultation, but in this early stage, information is simply collected.

Exploration. After the relationship is established and a clear understanding of the problem is attained, the *exploration phase* begins, when the roles of the participants must be explored and clarified. This process is essential so that all persons in the relationship know their responsibilities as well as the other obligations assumed by everyone else involved. For example, when a parent consults with a school counselor about a child’s behavior at home, both the counselor and parent agree that the counselor’s role is not to go to the home and manage the situation, but rather to offer resources, information, and instructional opportunities from which the parent can select strategies to handle the problem successfully.

When roles are clarified, the participants in the consultation are ready to explore the situation and consider strategies to address it. In this phase, the information gathered earlier is closely examined, strategies and approaches attempted previously are discussed, and additional possibilities are debated. Sometimes consultants encourage brainstorming techniques to expand the alternatives. *Brainstorming* is a process of listing all the ideas available, regardless of how outrageous, impractical, or unlikely they might be. Once they generate this list, the consultant and consultee begin to narrow the alternatives. Whatever process the consultant chooses to explore possibilities, the result of this phase of the relationship is to identify and agree on one or more strategies to implement.

Implementation. Exploration without action leads nowhere. A successful consulting relationship uses the agreement reached in the exploration phase to design a plan of action, assign responsibilities, and make a commitment regarding these assignments. An action plan, used during the *implementation phase*, lets each participant in the consultation know what will be done, by whom, and when it will be accomplished. Only by designing and implementing an action plan with clear assignments and time lines are counselor–consultants able to perform adequate follow-up and evaluation of their consulting relationships.

Evaluation. A successful consultation is not complete until follow-up and *evaluation phase* conclude. In this phase, the school counselor (consultant) makes contact with all participants in the relationship, receives responses from each of them, and ascertains whether assignments were fulfilled according to the plan. If the counselor discovers that consultees did not complete assignments, the consultation returns to the exploration phase for further

TABLE 8.5 Consulting Phases, Skills, and Objectives

PHASE	SKILLS	OBJECTIVES
Introduction	Listening and attending Responding to content and feeling Clarifying Summarizing for understanding	Establish rapport Identify concerns and problems Gather information
Exploration	Questioning Structuring Focusing Clarifying roles Interpreting data Instructing/Informing Brainstorming	Narrow concerns List options Seek agreement on possibilities Move toward action
Implementation	Mediating/negotiating Confronting Prioritizing Planning	Choose strategies Assign responsibilities Set goals and time lines Revisit earlier phases if necessary
Evaluation	Observing Documenting Assessing Summarizing	Evaluate results Follow up on agreements Reach closure

clarification of roles and examination of selected strategies. If all assignments are completed, then an assessment of change is next. Closure in the consulting relationship is possible when the identified problem or concern has been addressed and resolved adequately by implementing the action plan.

This four-phase model for problem-solving consultations provides a structure by which school counselors can process information with students, parents, teachers, and other professionals and formulate agreements to carry out specific plans of action. In all these phases, there are specific skills that consultants incorporate to move the consulting process toward a successful conclusion.

Table 8.5 presents a problem-solving model using the four phases of consultation and includes consulting skills consistent with each phase as well as objectives. Each skill, of course, is useful throughout the consulting relationship and may appear in more than one phase. In Table 8.5, the skills listed are essential for the phase in which they are indicated, but they are also useful during other stages of the consultation. Because so many skills are recommended for different types of consulting relationships, a few cautions are necessary. First, the counselor-consultant must be knowledgeable and skilled in the use of these facilitative behaviors. Skills used without proficiency are potentially damaging to relationships. Second, the frequency with which a particular skill is used can affect the success of a given session or interaction. For example, a consultant might be very knowledgeable and proficient in the use of paraphrasing, but if he or she uses this skill repeatedly, the consultee will begin to tire of it. Eventually, the relationship will falter, and the consultant's assistance will be rejected.

A third caveat in using consulting skills relates to timing. Even the best intentions miss their mark when they are ill timed. Successful consultants know what to do, and, equally important, they know when to do it. A well-intentioned question asked at an inappropriate time will not achieve its goal. Successful consultations, like magic shows, require precise timing of proficient skill.

Research on Consulting

Research on consultation is plentiful, but as some authors have noted, methodological problems are prevalent, making it difficult to draw concise and accurate conclusions (Brown et al., 2011). For one thing, consultation lacks clear description and definition because of the variety of structures and models proposed in the literature and used by counselors in schools. Also, research studies have not compared the effectiveness of processes used by different professional helpers in various programs of services. Much of the literature and research in school consultation, for example, appears in both school counseling and school psychology sources. Yet, these two professional areas have not been compared to determine if there are differences in the effective practice of consultation with parents, teachers, and other professionals. Future research might examine how counselors and psychologists use these approaches to determine whether professional focus and training make a difference in consulting relationships.

In school counseling, research has focused on a few theoretical approaches, namely Adlerian (Frazier & Matthes, 1975; Jackson & Brown, 1986; Williams, Omizo, & Abrams, 1984), rational emotive behavior therapy (Warren, 2011), and behavioral programs (Giannotti & Doyle, 1982; Henderson, 1987; Weathers & Liberman, 1975), in examining the effective use of consultation. Some research has reported the effects of special training and consultation programs, such as support groups for abusive parents (Post-Krammer, 1988), bullying prevention (Jenson & Dieterich, 2007), and parent education (Whiston & Quinby, 2011).

Although a number of studies have examined the efficacy and effectiveness of parent consultation programs, research on counselor–teacher consultation is limited. In one study, Cunningham and Hare (1989) reported success in instructing teachers in child bereavement processes. By training teachers in death education and child bereavement, counselors were able to increase teachers' effectiveness in helping children through the grieving process (Hare & Cunningham, 1988; Molnar-Stickels, 1985).

Generally, research indicates positive results with many types of consulting services and programs used by school counselors. However, more and better-designed studies are required. By way of example, a few studies are summarized here. Henderson (1987) reported positive results in improving children's alternative thinking skills by combining affective education programs with parental involvement. Students received classroom guidance instruction, and parents participated in a seminar titled "Helping Our Children with Reading." Although the study failed to show significant results on all variables, students whose parents participated in the seminar performed significantly better on alternative thinking measures than students whose parents were not involved. Alternative thinking was children's ability to generate alternative solutions to different types of interpersonal problems.

Giannotti and Doyle (1982) used *Parent Effectiveness Training (PET)* with parents of children with learning disabilities to investigate parental attitudes, children's perceptions of parental behavior, children's self-concepts, and children's behavior in school. Using a pretest–posttest control group design, the study found significant differences on all four variables. Parents who participated in PET reported more confidence in their parenting skills, a greater awareness of the effect their behavior had on their children, better understanding of their own needs, and more willingness to trust their children than did parents who were not in PET. In addition, children of parents in the PET group scored higher on self-concept measures than those whose parents were in the control group. Teachers' ratings of student behavior also indicated significant differences in some areas. Students whose parents were in PET were seen as less anxious about school achievement, having more self-reliance, and seeking more positive relationships with their teachers.

Two studies of *Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP)*, a program based on Adlerian principles, demonstrated some support for this type of consultation. A 1984 study measured changes in parents' attitudes after participating in a STEP program (Williams et al., 1984). The study also investigated changes in locus of control measures for the children of participating parents. All of the children in the study were identified as learning disabled. Parents were assigned to either the experimental group (STEP) or a control group. The STEP program was presented to the experimental group for 9 consecutive weeks in 2-hour sessions. Results indicated that the experimental group showed significant differences from the control group of parents. As measured by the *Parent Attitude Survey (PAS)* in a pretest and posttest design, STEP parents were more accepting and trusting after participation in the program, and they perceived their own behavior as more of a contributing factor in their children's behavior.

Another study of STEP placed 25 parents in an experimental group and 20 in a "waiting list" control group, and used an 8-session format of 1.5 hours per session (Jackson & Brown, 1986). The study investigated changes in children's self-concept, perceptions of parent behaviors, and parents' attitudes. Unlike the study reported by Williams et al. (1984), this investigation found only one significant difference in parent attitudes: Parents in the STEP program scored higher on the trust scale than parents in the control group. No other significant results were found on either parents' or children's variables. The authors concluded that these results failed to support findings of previous research, but they noted that the modest support found for the STEP program "should be encouraging to counselors who hope to influence positively the attitudes of parents toward their children" (Jackson & Brown, 1986, p. 103).

Classroom guidance is another type of consultation used by counselors to provide information or instruction, and Chapter 7 reviewed research studies pertaining to this service. In their review, Borders and Drury (1992) explained that the movement toward more comprehensive programs in school counseling has advocated the integration of guidance with the curriculum. This infusion of guidance into daily instruction can occur only if school counselors take the lead in encouraging teachers to adopt this philosophy, help teachers plan the integration, and provide resources for teachers who want to include guidance objectives in their daily instruction. To take such a leadership role, counselors should be conversant in what the research says about the effectiveness of guidance activities in the classroom.

More research would be helpful in determining the effectiveness of consulting approaches across situations. Nevertheless, consultation remains an emerging and important

practice in school counseling. Through individual and group consultation, counselors extend their services to a broad audience and collaborate with other professionals to design and implement appropriate and effective services for students, parents, and teachers. An important aspect of these collaborative relationships is gathering accurate and reliable information to make suitable decisions about programs and services. This process of gathering information brings us to the next important service of comprehensive school counseling programs, student assessment, explored in Chapter 9.

Additional Readings

- Brown, D., Pryzwansky, W. B., & Schulte, A. C. (2011). *Psychological Consultation and Collaboration: Introduction to Theory and Practice* (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
A thorough yet understandable treatment on consultation, it provides historical and theoretical perspectives on consulting and presents information on important processes and skills to use with parents and teachers.
- Kampwirth, T. J., & Powers, K. M. (2012). *Collaborative Consultation in the Schools: Effective Practices for Students with Learning and Behavior Problems* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
Although the subtitle focuses on students with learning and behavior problems, the content of this guide is applicable to all types of collaborative consultation.
- Parsons, R. D., & Kahn, W. J. (2005). *The School Counselor as Consultant: An Integrated Model for School-Based Consultation*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole-Thomson Learning.
A guide to various uses of consulting in schools, this text presents a new integrated model of consultation. As such, consulting is not simply a service, but rather an overarching structure under which all school counseling services exist.
- Purkey, W. W., Schmidt, J. J., & Novak, J. M. (2010). *From Conflict to Conciliation: How to Diffuse Difficult Situations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
A practical guide that illustrates a six-step approach using collaboration and consultation to help professionals deal with conflict.

Websites

- Crisis Prevention
[http://pages.uoregon.edu/ivdb/articles-abstracts/
PaineSprague.html](http://pages.uoregon.edu/ivdb/articles-abstracts/PaineSprague.html)
- National Association of School Nurses
www.nasn.org

- National Association of School Psychologists
www.naspconline.org
- School Social Work Association of America
www.sswaa.org

Exercises

1. Investigate available services in your community. Use the local telephone book, the Internet, and other resources to compile a list of services to use as referral sources for students in schools. Divide these services into categories such as *Family Services*, *Substance Abuse Services*, and others to determine the range of services available.
2. Form a group of four with other students in your class. Design a role-play situation where one student is the counselor-consultant, a second is a parent, and a third is the teacher. Make up a situation in which the parent expresses a concern about the child's progress in school. During the role-play, the fourth member of your group is an observer who will give feedback about the various roles and skills observed.
3. Contact school counselors in the community and ask what, if any, parent education programs are used in the school. Establish a list of the most prevalent programs used by elementary, middle, and high school counselors. Some programs used by counselors may be original designs, and you may want to ask the counselor for a copy to share with your class.
4. Interview a school nurse, psychologist, or social worker. Ask them about their understanding of a school counselor's role and preparation. Ask what they know about a comprehensive school counseling program. Share your findings in class.



CHAPTER 9

Student Assessment

School counselors have historically applied assessment techniques to help students gather data about themselves and make appropriate educational plans and decisions. With the increased emphasis on school accountability and public demand for higher student achievement, states across the country, with direction from federal legislation such as the No Child Left Behind Act (US Department of Education, 2002), use test results as benchmarks for student progress, instructional accountability, and evaluation of individual school performance. In addition, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model (2005, 2012) and other designs for comprehensive school counseling programs advocate the use of data in making decisions that support educational success for all students (Lee & Goodnough, 2011).

Counselors in schools often coordinate school-wide testing programs, administer educational assessments to individual students, and interpret test data to parents, teachers, and professionals who provide services to students. Student appraisal functions—those procedures used to collect and interpret data about students' abilities, achievements, interests, attitudes, and behaviors—remain part of the school counselor's role.

Student assessment was briefly introduced earlier as one service of a comprehensive school counseling program. Now, we examine this function in detail. The chapter concludes with a brief consideration of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, commonly known as the current text revision, *DSM-IV-TR* (American Psychiatric Association, 2000), and a rationale for why an understanding of this manual is useful to school counselors.

This is not a comprehensive treatment of the subject of measurement and appraisal in schools, but, instead, a brief description of how student appraisal fits into comprehensive school counseling programs. For more in-depth information about this function and related processes, consider the sources cited throughout the chapter and listed in the references.

Before reviewing common assessment instruments and processes used by school counselors, an explanation of the terms used to describe and define measurement in counseling is appropriate. Several terms describe the scope of assessment procedures in counseling (Drummond & Jones, 2010). Through an understanding of these terms, school counselors are able to take an appropriate role in student appraisal.

Appraisal and *evaluation* are synonymous and encompass processes for measuring student attributes, abilities, and interests and for making professional judgments based on the results of these measurements. Student appraisal and evaluation involve collecting data from a variety of sources, forming opinions and making comparisons with those data, and drawing conclusions with which to guide students and others in educational and career decisions.

Assessment consists of the instruments and systematic procedures used to gather data for student evaluation. Educational tests, psychological evaluations, interest inventories, interviews, and observations are samples of assessment procedures used by school counselors, psychologists, teachers, and other school personnel.

Individual analysis is a description of a student's behaviors, with emphasis on strengths and weaknesses. It is a process that includes the observation and interpretation of behavior, and therefore is a special form of student assessment.

Interpretation refers to processes that explain and give meaning to various data, observations, and information that counselors gather in student assessment. In particular, counselors interpret behaviors to give them meaning and purpose within the context in which they are observed. School counselors interpret test results and school policies to help students, parents, and teachers understand problematic behaviors.

Measurement is a process to determine the degree and boundaries of specific traits and characteristics assessed. Measurement assigns a numeric value or an evaluative description to the trait or characteristic in question. As such, it is the aspect of assessment that tells us "How much?" or "How often?" By themselves, measurement data are of limited use. It is only when applied statistically or comparatively that they acquire any significant meaning.

Diagnosis refers to specific identification, grouping, and categorization of measurement results to make the best guesses or best judgments about student behavior and performance. Diagnosis is not always a comfortable, acceptable term for school counselors, perhaps due to its medical and analytic implications. Nevertheless, diagnosis is one aspect of assessment and is, therefore, an important element of the decision-making process that school counselors use to select appropriate services for students and other clientele.

Standardized Testing

In the arena of student assessment, no single issue has raised more concern, fueled more debate, and caused more public uproar than the use of standardized tests. This controversy has focused on the plight of education in the United States and what some see as the failure of our students to compete successfully with students from other developed countries. An outcome of this concern has been an increased demand by politicians, parents, school-board members, and other stakeholders for more testing and evaluation of student achievement. In states and school systems across the country, money and energy have been spent developing, purchasing, administering, and analyzing test results. Thus far, despite all the time, effort, money, and best of intentions, beneficial outcomes across the nation are uncertain at best. In other words, a link between emphasis on increased standardized testing and higher student achievement has yet to be identified.

One major criticism of using tests in schools and other settings is their limitation with culturally diverse populations and the possibility of test bias. A test may be unfair when students from the same ability group generate disparate scores because of their cultural background or affiliation. Several concerns related to the testing and assessment of minority students continue to be relevant to the selection and use of assessment instruments in today's schools. These concerns translate into guidelines for counselors and other school personnel to use in assessment:

1. Assessment is unfairly discriminatory when students are not tested in their native or dominant language. The purpose of tests is to discriminate, but when unfair biases and inappropriate items are used, the validity of tests and reliability of results are questionable.

2. Tests are unfairly discriminatory when developed with sample populations that do not reflect culturally diverse populations to which they are administered. To avoid bias, student populations to which tests are administered always reflect the normative populations on which tests are developed.
3. When school counselors are poorly prepared in assessment and the characteristics of culturally diverse students, they contribute to test bias and discriminatory practices.
4. When certain groups are overrepresented in special education programs (such as programs for the educable mentally retarded) and underrepresented in others (such as gifted and talented), there is evidence of possible test bias or improper assessment practices.
5. The practice of permitting students to remain in ineffective educational programs for years of schooling without demonstrating reasonable progress is indicative of cultural bias and unreliable assessment procedures.
6. Parental involvement is essential to appropriate assessment practices. When parents are excluded from decision-making processes or are uninformed about tests, testing procedures, and their children's results, full and accurate use of data is questionable.
7. Decisions made on limited test data place students at risk of being deprived access to educational and career opportunities. Proper appraisal consists of a wide range of information and data.
8. Tests and testing results used to reinforce prejudices and stereotypes are a violation of legal rights and clear examples of unethical practice. Effective schools use tests to enhance opportunities for learning and create possibilities for student development, rather than to discourage, demean, and deny their potential for growth.
9. When tests intentionally or unintentionally limit a student's choices for educational and career development, they contribute to existing prejudices and contradict the mission of schools.
10. When schools use tests in isolation without consideration of other types of information and data, they violate basic principles of assessment and equity. School counselors who wish to create equitable procedures for all students attempt to include a wider spectrum of people in the decision-making process to ensure proper selection and use of assessment instruments. (Adapted from Oakland, 1982)



PERSPECTIVE 9-1

What experiences have you had taking tests? Have you ever felt a test was unfair? Recall that experience and try to ascertain exactly what was unfair.

Another caution about testing involves the misuse and misunderstanding of test results. Unfortunately, enthusiasm for finding a method of assessing academic progress fades in the wake of hasty decisions, improper procedures, unreliable scores, and inaccurately interpreted results. None of these conditions adds to the acceptance of assessment

processes or measurement instruments in schools. As professionals prepared in appropriate use of tests and other standardized assessment instruments, school counselors have responsibility for proactively assisting their schools and school systems in the selection, administration, and utilization of tests and test results. The first step is to understand the meaning of standardization and to know the different types of standardized tests.

Standardization

Assessment instruments, such as tests, are *standardized measures* when school personnel administer and score them according to uniform procedures. Standardization allows users of assessment instruments to compare performance over time, or to compare an individual's scores with the scores of others who have taken the instrument. Therefore, test standardization requires uniform testing conditions every time school personnel—teachers, counselors, or other personnel—administer a particular test.

Responsibility for adequate standardization rests with both the developer and user. The developer (i.e., test publisher) formulates specific directions as part of the standardization procedure, and the user must adhere to these directions without deviation. Standardization includes the oral instructions given, materials used, time constraints, demonstrations, methods of handling students' questions, and other details related to administration of the test or other instrument. In addition, other subtle factors may alter the administration to such a degree that it violates standardization. For example, if a test administrator reads the directions at a pace much quicker than called for by the standardized procedures, such an administration may render the results unreliable and invalid.

Another aspect of standardization that allows for the comparison of scores across administrations or among students who take a particular assessment instrument is the use of norms. For example, standardized tests are developed and administered to a large representative sample of subjects, known as the *standardized sample*, for whom publishers intend the tests. *Norms* are the average scores of specified groups within the representative sample. As an illustration, on a spelling test, if the average 10-year-old correctly answers 15 out of 30 items, the *10-year-old norm* is a raw score of 15 correct. When reporting scores, standardized tests use either *age norms* or *grade norms*. The preceding example is an age norm.

Standardized scores derive from *normal curve distribution theory*, which says that on a given trait, individual scores tend to cluster near the center of the range of scores and gradually taper off as the extreme low and high scores are approached. The central score of this curve is the *mean, median, or mode*, depending on the type of statistical average used. We call these three different types of averages *measures of central tendency*. The statistical term used to describe the degree to which participants vary from the average score is the *measure of variability*, and two types of variability are the *range* and *standard deviation*. Figure 9.1 illustrates a normal curve with the percentage distribution of cases across the range of scores.

In addition to age and grade norms, schools commonly report test scores of students by using percentile ranks or standard scores. *Percentile ranks* indicate the percentage of students who fall below a particular raw score and show the relative position of students within the representative sample. For example, a percentile of 45 means that 45 percent of the students in the sample obtained a lower raw score. Although percentiles are relatively

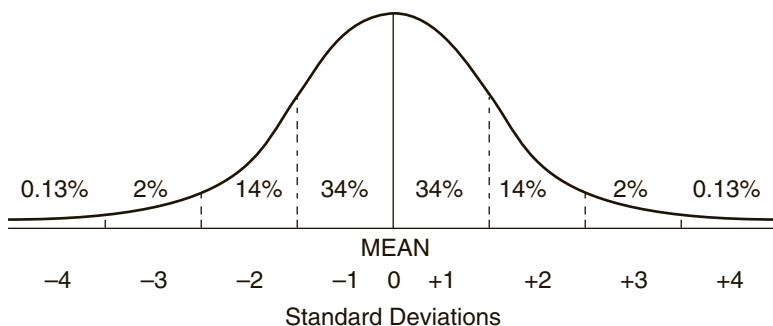


FIGURE 9.1 Normal Curve Distribution with Percentage of Cases across a Range of Scores

easy to understand, they are often misinterpreted and misunderstood. Testing manuals that explain percentile scores usually warn that percentiles do not represent percentages of questions correct. Therefore, the percentile rank of 45 does not mean that the student answered 45 percent of the items correctly. Percentile rank alone does not indicate how many items were on the test or how many correct responses students achieved. This is important for school counselors to remember when interpreting percentile scores to students, parents, and others who may not be sophisticated when interpreting test scores and may mistakenly interpret a percentile rank as the number of answers correct.

Another type of score, a *standard score*, indicates students' performance by the distance above or below the average score for the group. Test developers use several different types of standard scores, including *z* scores, *T* scores, deviation IQs, stanines, and sten scores (Drummond & Jones, 2010). These standard scores express students' performance in terms of standard deviation units from the mean score. The *mean* is the average score for the sample population, and the *standard deviation* is the measure of variability or spread of the scores across the group. As seen in the normal curve distribution in Figure 9.1, standard deviation of plus or minus 1 presents scores in either direction of the mean and includes approximately 68 percent of the sample population. Accordingly, we would expect 68 percent of the students' scores to fall within this range of -1 to +1 standard deviations.

Unlike percentile bands, standard scores have the advantage of consisting of relatively equal units; therefore, equal bands of standard scores indicate approximately the same performance difference along the distribution. For example, the difference between the scores of 400 and 500 on a test is roughly the same as the difference between the scores of 600 and 700. Percentile bands do not have this characteristic. The difference in students' performance from the 35th to 45th percentile rank cannot equate to the difference between the 75th to 85th bands. Another advantage of standard scores over percentile ranks is that they can be averaged mathematically.

Two examples of tests that schools use and report results in standard scores are intelligence tests and college admissions exams. Intelligence tests that use deviation intelligence quotients set a score of 100 as the median (i.e., *median IQ = 100*), and a standard deviation of 15 (depending on the instrument, this standard deviation may vary). As such,

the range of plus or minus 1 standard deviation from the norm is 85 to 115. College admissions exams, such as the *Scholastic Aptitude Test* (SAT) developed by the College Entrance Examination Board (now the Educational Testing Service [ETS]) issues the codes for the SAT, also use standard scores. For example, SAT scores range from 200 to 800 on each of the three subtests—writing, math, and critical reading—with a mean score of 500 and a standard deviation of 100 on each scale. Therefore, using the normal curve distribution, we may assume that 68 percent of the students who took this administration of the SAT scored between 400 and 600 on a particular subtest. We may also assume that 68 percent of participants scored between 1200 and 1800 on the combined three scales.

Stanine score systems use a 9-point scale, where 9 is high and 1 is low, and the mean is 5 with a standard deviation of 2. Stanines 1 and 9 cover the tails of the normal curve distribution. Each of the remaining stanines (2 through 8) includes a span of raw scores with a width equal to one-half of the standard deviation.

Stanines are popular scores, particularly for reporting local norms, because they are easy to translate and explain to students and parents, and scores on different tests can be compared (such as between mathematics and language arts). In addition, stanines are easily recorded due to their single-digit form, and they are computed in the same way as percentiles, yet have the arithmetic advantages of standard scores (Miller, Linn, & Gronlund, 2009).

Sten scores are similar to stanines, but they use a 10-point range, with a mean of 5.5 and a standard deviation of 2. The average range of sten scores is 5 to 6, with a high range of 8 to 10 and a low range of 1 to 3 (Drummond & Jones, 2010).

The preceding description of standardization and types of test scores does not do this topic justice. Readers who desire more in-depth explanation and information should consult the references cited in this chapter. At this point, we examine two types of standardized tests used in schools: norm-referenced and criterion-referenced.

Norm-Referenced Tests. Tests that compare an individual student's performance to the performance of a group are called *norm-referenced tests*. Scores on these tests, such as percentile ranks and stanines, illustrate a student's relative standing in the normative sample. For example, a stanine of 6 in a language arts subtest indicates the student scored within the first standard deviation above the mean for the group. Likewise, a percentile rank of 34 in mathematics indicates the student scored higher than 34 percent of the students in the representative sample (of same age or grade level, for example). These tests report scores based on local, state, or national norms, which is why they are called *norm-referenced* tests.

Norm-referenced tests are helpful in comparing students' performance and achievement with other students in their age or grade level, but they have limits when evaluating student knowledge or mastery of subject matter. As an example, if we evaluated 10 students using a norm-referenced mathematics test, the results would show each student's relative position in comparison to the normative sample on which the test was developed. Yet, these scores alone would not help teachers learn the mathematical strengths and weaknesses of each student. All 10 students could be quite able in math, but their scores would simply rank them against a sample population. One would be ranked highest and one lowest, despite their comparable knowledge of mathematics. To evaluate these students' mathematical knowledge, teachers use a second type of assessment called a *criterion-referenced test*.

Criterion-Referenced Tests. A *criterion-referenced test* assesses student performance in terms of specific standards or learning objectives. Returning to the example of the 10 math students, a criterion-referenced test enables students, teachers, and parents to identify which math skills each student has mastered and which areas of knowledge and skill need additional attention. Typically, criterion-referenced tests report results as the percentage of correct items in a particular knowledge or skill area. In our example, a student might score 35 percent correct in arithmetic computation for addition and 80 percent correct for subtraction. If the criterion for mastery is 75 percent correct, then this student has mastered subtraction skills, but according to these results, has not mastered addition skills.

Norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests have purpose and benefit in student assessment. Criterion-referenced tests enable counselors and teachers to describe the performance of students in relation to some set of learning goals and objectives. This information is helpful in designing and restructuring instructional programs to meet the needs of all students. This is of particular benefit in curriculum development. By contrast, norm-referenced results allow schools to make comparisons within the school and among schools in a district, state, or region. These comparisons help schools look at student placement, grade assignments, broad instructional issues, and demographic concerns in schools and school systems. Both types of tests have value. The important issue for counselors, principals, and teachers is to know why they should select a particular test, and whether it is a reliable and valid measure of the trait they want to assess.

Selection of Tests

Because school counselors are professionals who are knowledgeable concerning tests and measurement, they often help their schools with the selection of instruments to use in testing programs. In addition, counselors select assessment instruments, including tests, to use in individual student appraisal. To give adequate assistance to their schools and to select appropriate instruments for individual appraisal, counselors need to be knowledgeable and prepared to give guidance in making the best selections.

Counselors use a variety of sources to learn about new tests and keep abreast of research on testing. One essential source of information is the *Mental Measurements Yearbook (MMY)*; see buros.org/mental-measurements-yearbook) published by the Buros Institute for Mental Measurements. Each yearbook contains descriptions of various tests, test reviews written by testing specialists, selections of test reviews published in other sources, bibliographies for specific tests, and reviews of books on tests and measurement. The Buros Institute also publishes *Tests in Print (TIP)*, a guide for locating information and descriptions about specific tests currently published. *TIP* is cross-referenced with past editions of the *MMY* to enable counselors to locate tests and research past reviews. The Institute, located at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, maintains an electronic database and search engine that counselors may use to purchase reviews of available tests and inventories.

Other sources for test information include the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation at the University of Maryland (ericae.net); the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (www.apa.org/science/programs/testing/standards.aspx), published by the American Psychological Association; the *Responsibilities of Users of Standardized Tests* (3rd ed.) (theaaceonline.com/rust.pdf), prepared by the Association for Assessment in Counseling (AAC); the *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational*

Measurement by the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME; www.natd.org/Code_of_Professional_Responsibilities.html); the *Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education* (www.theaaceonline.com/codedefair.pdf); and a number of professional journals. As an example, the Association for Assessment and Research in Counseling, a division of the American Counseling Association, publishes the journal *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*. Another source of information is test publishers' catalogues, which contain brief descriptions of tests, costs, and other facts useful in the selection process. After counselors have obtained sufficient resources about available tests, they are ready to start the selection process. They begin by identifying the purpose that underlies the need for gathering test information.

Identifying the Purpose of a Test. Why is a test needed? This is the first question that schools, counselors, administrators, and teachers answer when selecting appropriate assessment instruments. When tests are selected without a clear purpose, reports might be misused or underused, and time and the cost of administration are wasted. In making an appropriate selection or giving recommendations for particular tests, counselors identify the goals and objectives of the testing process. What is the school, teacher, student, or parent trying to find out? How will the results be used? Based on the research of existing tests, which ones appear to offer what we need?

If schools want to assess the reading level of students in third grade, do they want to know reading levels as defined by learning objectives, or as a comparison of students in the third grade? The answer to this question will narrow the decision between criterion-referenced and norm-referenced tests. In addition, a focus on students' reading levels enables counselors and teachers to eliminate full-battery achievement tests and limit their selection to reading tests. In sum, knowing the intended use of the test and the type of score reports desired helps schools initiate the screening and selection process.

Considering Administrative Conditions. After identifying the purpose of testing, schools consider administrative factors that influence the selection of particular tests. Several questions are deliberated. For example, will the school administer the test individually, or to groups of students? Do budgetary restrictions preclude the selection of particular tests? How much time will be required to administer the test? What preparation for teachers and students will create an appropriate testing environment? Are other conditions or materials required that would affect the selection of particular tests?

Selecting an appropriate test only to have it administered in a haphazard manner makes little sense; therefore, users weigh all factors carefully for administering the test correctly before making a decision. As discussed earlier, standardization requires strict adherence to published testing procedures and directions. Any deviation from these violates standardization and jeopardizes the testing results.

Acquiring Specimen Sets. When schools narrow their decision to a few possible choices, they usually order specimen sets of the tests from publishers. These sets can be purchased at nominal cost and include a copy of the manual, a sample test booklet, and information about scoring and score reports. Examination of these materials helps narrow the choices further. In particular, counselors and teachers want to examine the test manual to ascertain the uses for which the test is designed, the training and qualifications of test

administrators, the knowledge and qualifications needed for interpreting results, evidence of validity and reliability, directions for administering and scoring the test, and information about the normative sample. A thorough examination of the test manual and review of specific test items in the booklet provide valuable information to make an appropriate selection. At this stage, it is important to pay particular attention to the validity and reliability data presented by the publisher, and to reviewers' critiques, if such reviews are available.

Validity and Reliability

Test *validity* pertains to the degree to which an assessment instrument actually measures what it says it does (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997). For example, does a math achievement test measure math knowledge and skill, or does it measure a student's ability to read and respond to mathematical questions? Another example of validity is whether IQ tests actually measure the elusive construct called *intelligence*, or do they simply measure knowledge and skill based on experience, background, and education? Three sources of test validity are content validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity:

- *Content validity* indicates that the items on a test are a fair representation of the domain of knowledge or tasks the test claims to measure. Examiners commonly apply content validity when evaluating achievement tests that assess students' performance in particular subject areas.
- *Criterion-related validity* involves the effectiveness of a test in predicting a student's performance in certain situations. Specifically, an investigator compares the student's performance on a test to some external criterion that is an independent measure of what the test is intended to predict. Such a criterion may occur in either concurrent or future situations. For example, a typing test may give results to compare with the current average speed and performance of secretaries already hired by the firm. By contrast, the ETS presents the SAT as a predictor of future success in college based on research of college performance of past examinees.
- *Construct validity* is concerned with abstract psychological characteristics that a test claims to assess. In schools, counselors and teachers might use self-concept questionnaires and other scales to assess students' perceptions of themselves. An assumption of these instruments is that a construct—in this case, the self-concept—is measurable. Instruments that rely on construct validity are evaluated by comparing them to other reputable instruments that purport to measure the same construct. Comparable results indicate that the instruments may measure the same quality or characteristic.

Reliability is another important factor to consider in selecting standardized tests, and refers to the consistency of test results and outcomes from other assessment processes. If a teacher administers a reading achievement test to a student on two successive occasions within a short period, we would expect the results to be similar. In this way, *reliability* refers to the results obtained with particular instruments rather than to the instruments themselves.

Many different types of reliability exist, and each uses statistical procedures to quantify the relationship between different sets of test results. When quantified, this relationship

generates a statistic called a *correlation coefficient*, which counselors and teachers use to examine the reliability of tests. When applied specifically to reliability, this statistic is a *reliability coefficient*, and is expressed as a number ranging from 0 to 1. In theory, the higher the coefficient value, the more reliable the instrument, which means that the assessment generates consistent results over time and repeated administrations. Therefore, a reliability coefficient of .95 indicates that a particular test administered to the same students on different occasions could expect to produce similar results or scores. This would be a desirable finding if we were examining the reliability of reading or other types of achievement tests. A correlation coefficient of .30, however, illustrates a weak relationship between two sets of results, indicating a lack of consistency in the instrument. As noted earlier, higher reliability allows schools to have more confidence in the tests and other instruments they select to measure student progress. This confidence, of course, is contingent on adherence to standardized instructions when administering the assessment instruments.

The most important aspect of reliability is its relationship to validity. A test that does not offer reliable results cannot be valid, and a valid test, by definition, yields reliable results. At the same time, reliability is not a sufficient condition for test validity. It is possible to have a highly reliable instrument that produces very consistent scores without measuring what it intends to measure. For example, an intelligence test that produces consistent scores but is more an assessment of educational and cultural experiences than it is of cognitive functioning cannot be acceptable as a valid measure of innate intelligence.

Determining Test Usefulness

Another aspect to consider in test selection is the usefulness of the instruments under consideration. Once the school has determined the purpose of a test and assessed its empirical soundness, the staff needs to evaluate how useful this instrument will be in the overall educational program. The same is true for counselors who examine individual tests and inventories to use in school counseling programs. When establishing criteria to evaluate test usefulness, administrators, counselors, and teachers consider the following questions:

- 1.** Will the time devoted to planning, administering, and interpreting the tests be well spent? In schools where time is at a premium, it is a challenge to cover the entire curriculum and provide all the special services such as counseling. Consequently, will time be available for this particular assessment?
- 2.** Will the test produce usable results to develop an appropriate curriculum or to alter instruction to meet individual students' needs? Will it enable people to make important educational and career decisions? Tests given to satisfy local or state policy without generating usable results are a waste of time, resources, and money.
- 3.** Are the test results reported clearly, so that all persons who read them will understand them? Test results should be clear to students, parents, teachers, counselors, and others who will use the information to create beneficial learning programs and services in the school. Testing procedures that simply receive and file results in cumulative folders because no one understands them are not beneficial. Either the decision makers should eliminate the test, or users should receive adequate training to better understand and use the results appropriately.

Using Standardized Tests

Counselors and teachers who select appropriate tests and use the results for the benefit of individual student development and improved instruction for all students want to ensure the proper use of standardized tests. Whoever is responsible for coordinating testing services has the task of delineating testing procedures. In this section, we examine some steps to consider when coordinating the use of standardized tests in schools. These steps take up where the selection process ends, and begin with test security.

Test Security

Store all standardized assessment instruments in a secure location. Test information disclosed to students intentionally, or learned by students incidentally, jeopardizes the reliability and validity of the results. For this reason, professionals in charge of test coordination have access to a secure storage facility and caution teachers about using information or items from the test in their instruction.

When schools use certain tests frequently, particularly group achievement tests, there is the risk that some of the items will become familiar to teachers who administer the test. Consequently, they may unintentionally incorporate this test information into classroom lessons. To protect against this potential violation of test security, schools should review tests periodically and select new tests or new forms as the need arises.

Administration

Any deviation from required testing procedures threatens the standardization of norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests. Therefore, testing coordinators should take pains to help teachers who are administering these tests learn proper procedures and adhere to specific published directions. This is also true for counselors who administer individual tests to students for screening purposes in special education or placement in classroom instruction. Competent counselors follow test directions explicitly, even during individual assessment sessions. There are several relevant sources to guide counselors in proper testing procedures (Table 9.1).

In addition to following correct procedures and specific directions, test administrators want to create testing environments conducive to producing reliable and valid results. Locating a quiet room for individual testing and stopping all interruptions and extraneous noises (like school bells) during group testing contribute to proper testing environments. Having all the necessary materials at hand, providing accurate timepieces, checking the lighting, and making arrangements for emergencies (such as a student who becomes ill during testing) are other aspects to consider. The goal of adequate test coordination is to create a setting in which students achieve optimal results so that accurate decisions and appropriate educational plans are made.

Interpretation

When schools receive test scores, counselors, teachers, and administrators use the results in a variety of ways, and accurate analysis and interpretation of these results are necessary

TABLE 9.1 Sources of Proper Testing Procedures

Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (www.apa.org/science/programs/testing/standards.aspx) published by the American Psychological Association

Responsibilities of Users of Standardized Tests (3rd ed.)

theaaceonline.com/rust.pdf prepared by the Association for Assessment in Counseling (AAC)

Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education (www.theaaceonline.com/codedefair.pdf) prepared by the AAC

Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement (www.natd.org/Code_of_Professional_Responsibilities.html) prepared by the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME)

for the testing program to achieve its intended goals. School counselors are involved in the interpretation of test data with students, parents, and teachers, and they attempt to use test results with each of these groups to provide adequate instruction, proper placement, and assistance in educational and career decisions.

Students can learn about their test performance to identify strengths and weaknesses and use this information in making decisions about study habits, time management, tutoring, or other processes to help them learn. Some tests, such as aptitude tests, can disclose previously unknown abilities to students. Consequently, these data can help students look at career directions in which to apply these aptitudes toward lifelong goals. Other students might benefit from learning that their abilities compare favorably with their peers', and this knowledge may instill self-confidence to reach for higher goals. At the same time, test data enable students to accept realistic expectations from themselves and from the helping relationships they form with their school counselors. Of course, this is only the first step of a continuous assessment process that is essential to achieve successful helping relationships.

Interpretation of test results with students and parents is another responsibility of school counselors (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Drummond & Jones, 2010; Lyman, 1998). When students complete group achievement or aptitude tests, the score reports usually include a summary for the parents. Counselors assist the school and parents by explaining and interpreting these reports in group meetings or individual sessions. In group meetings, counselors distribute test reports and explain in general terms the meaning of scores and how parents can interpret their children's results. In most instances where test companies include a parent or home report, the report presents results in both numeric form and narrative explanation. Figure 9.2 shows an example of a parent report for a fictional School Achievement Test. In this example, the student's scores are reported in both national percentile ranks and confidence bands. A percentile band illustrates the range of scores in which the expected true score lies. Counselors usually reserve specific explanations of individual students' scores for private sessions with parents and the students.

In addition to group test results, counselors typically interpret scores on individual aptitude tests, achievement batteries, career interest inventories, and other instruments to parents and guardians in individual conferences. Sometimes counselors plan these

FIGURE 9.2 Parent Report for Fictional School Achievement Test

Parent Report																		
School Achievement Test																		
<i>Student:</i> Melissa Smith			<i>Grade:</i> Three			<i>School:</i> Hope Elementary												
On March 2, 2014, your child took the School Achievement Test for third-grade students. The results of your child's performance are printed on the chart below. The Total Battery Score shows that your child performed at the 75th percentile. This means that your child scored better than 75 percent of the third-graders who took this test when it was standardized. On the chart beside the Total Battery Score is a group of Xs to illustrate a percentile band. This band indicates that your child's score would fall within this range if she took the test several times.																		
Following the Total Battery Score are percentile scores for the different parts of the School Achievement Test. Your child's scores on these sections are: Reading, 94; Language Arts, 87; Mathematics, 55; Science, 67; and Social Studies, 70. As with the Total Battery Score, these scores are also reported as percentile ranks.																		
These scores show only how your child compares with other students in the third grade across the nation. To determine whether a score is good or not good, other information is needed. Teachers and counselors at the school can share additional information to help you better understand and evaluate your child's performance.																		
Tests		National Percentile	National Percentile Bands															
			1	2	5	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	95	98	99	
Total Battery		75	XXXX															
Reading		94	XXXX															
Language Arts		87	XXXX															
Mathematics		55	XXXX															
Science		67	XXXX															
Social Studies		70	XXXX															

conferences with other school specialists, such as a teacher of exceptional children or a school psychologist. This is particularly true in situations that address exceptionalities and involve placement in special education programs. Helping teachers understand test results and encouraging them to use the reports to improve instruction is another aspect of test interpretation. Professionals who coordinate testing programs in schools are responsible for assisting school administrators and teachers in using test reports properly. This responsibility means more than interpreting results to parents and preparing reports for the superintendent and local school board. It includes examining students' performance within the context of the school curriculum and the instructional program. In this way, test results not only contribute to student appraisal, they also affect program planning and evaluation. The process of using test results to examine the instructional program fits best with criterion-referenced or norm-referenced tests where publishers include item analyses categorized by learning objectives. With criterion-referenced information, counselors are able to assist administrators and teachers in examining specific strengths and weaknesses of students across learning objectives. Figure 9.3 illustrates a school summary

FIGURE 9.3 Partial School Summary of Fictional School Achievement Test, Third-Grade Reading Results

School Summary Report			
School Achievement Test			
<i>School:</i> Hope Elementary			
<i>Grade:</i> Third			
Reading	% below Standard	% at Standard	% above Standard
Total Score	35	45	20
Word Analysis	30	50	20
Consonants	45	35	20
Vowels	25	55	20
Vocabulary	45	35	20
Reading Comprehension	25	45	30

report for third-grade reading on the fictional School Achievement Test. The summary report is complemented by a sample worksheet (Figure 9.4) developed by the school counselor to assist teachers in reviewing test results for their classes and for planning instructional changes. Specifically, teachers want to identify learning objectives on which their students performed below the average student in the school, and determine what instructional methods need redirection or new emphasis. Appropriate use of test results and adequate interpretation to students, parents, and teachers are essential responsibilities of the testing program coordinator. Without proper use of these results, the school's testing program is meaningless. This is true for group testing of all students as well as for individual assessment for educational and career decision making. Schools use a variety

FIGURE 9.4 Teacher Worksheet for Reviewing and Analyzing Reading Test Results on the Fictional School Achievement Test Scores

Classroom Testing Results				
Teacher Worksheet				
Learning Objective	School % at or above Standard	Class % at or above Standard	% Difference	Priority Rank
Total Reading	65	57	- 8	N/A
Word Analysis	70	63	- 7	N/A
Consonants	55	45	- 10	1
Vowels	75	69	- 6	3
Vocabulary	55	58	+ 3	4
Reading Comprehension	75	66	- 9	2

Note: Figure 9.4 is an example of a teacher worksheet. In practice, a standardized achievement test reports results for many more learning objectives than are shown here. This sample is for illustration only.

of standardized tests, and if counselors are responsible for coordinating the testing program, they must be thoroughly familiar with different types of tests that contribute to student appraisal.

Types of Assessment Instruments

Tests and other assessment instruments available to counselors and teachers cover a wide range of devices developed as norm-referenced or criterion-referenced tests and administered to either groups or individuals (Drummond & Jones, 2010). In addition, tests and other assessment instruments differ in characteristics and structure. For example, some are timed precisely, such as group achievement and aptitude tests, whereas others allow students a generous amount of time to respond. Some tests require responses to objective multiple-choice or matching items, whereas others call for subjective answers and, subsequently, subjective scoring. Counselors consider all these factors as they help schools select assessment instruments and as they choose tests and inventories to use in student evaluation. The following sections offer brief descriptions of the major types of tests and inventories used by schools and school counselors.

Achievement Tests

Perhaps the most common standardized tests used in schools are achievement tests and batteries. These tests are similar to teacher-made classroom tests in that they attempt to measure what students know about particular subject areas such as reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. Achievement testing most commonly occurs in the elementary through the middle grades. Assessment of student progress and achievement of basic skills is critical in the early years of schooling.

Achievement batteries, surveys of a range of subject areas and learning objectives, are perhaps the most popular form of testing in schools. They are efficient and cost-effective assessments that provide a broad overview of student performance. One of the disadvantages of these batteries is that, because they cover such a wide range of areas, they are limited in what they assess for any given subject. For this reason, counselors and teachers sometimes use standardized tests that are specific to certain subject areas. As an example, some of the most common tests used at all levels of education are reading tests, which are used to assess the effectiveness of reading instruction, identify students who need special attention in reading, predict students' success in other subject areas, and screen for possible learning problems (Miller, Linn, & Gronlund, 2009).

Counselors also use individual achievement tests in the student assessment process. These types of tests are either survey batteries or separate subject tests administered to one student at a time, with questions usually answered orally or pointed to by the student. Individual achievement testing has increased as a result of special education services to students with handicaps and the need to screen all students referred for placement in these programs. School counselors also use individual achievement tests to gather data about students new to the school and for whom few records are available to help teachers with appropriate classroom placement and instruction. On occasion, counselors might use individual achievement tests to verify a student's performance on previously administered group batteries.



PERSPECTIVE 9-2

The debate about high-stakes testing and the use of test results to evaluate schools, teachers, and students continues in the United States. What are your opinions and perceptions about the use of testing and other assessments in schools? How will these views guide you as a counselor?

Examples of group achievement test batteries commonly used in schools include

California Achievement Tests

Iowa Tests of Basic Skills

Metropolitan Achievement Test

Stanford Achievement Test

TerraNova Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills

Examples of individual achievement tests used by school counselors and other professionals include

Wide Range Achievement Test, Fourth Edition (WRAT4)

Woodcock–Johnson III Tests of Achievement

Peabody Individual Achievement Test Revised/Normative Update

Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, Second Edition (WIAT-II)

Another type of achievement test is a diagnostic instrument used to identify a student's academic strength or weakness in a particular area, such as reading or mathematics (Drummond & Jones, 2010). In schools, such diagnostic tests are often part of the assessment for identifying learning problems that students may have. Examples of these types of diagnostic achievement tests include

Gates–Macginitie Reading Tests, 4th Edition

KeyMath–3 Diagnostic Assessment

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, 4th Edition

Slosson Oral Reading Test–Revised

Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests–Revised–Normative Update

Aptitude Tests

A second common test administered to students in schools is the aptitude test. *Aptitude* is a characteristic that reflects a student's ability to achieve in a given area or to acquire knowledge or skills necessary for performing in that area. Thus, aptitude assumes that an individual possesses an ability that, under the right conditions, can develop to its maximum potential. Traditionally, tests designed to measure a person's learning ability were *intelligence tests*. Although some tests of mental ability remain in use today, controversy

surrounding intelligence testing and the meaning of *intelligence* has contributed to the decline of these terms in favor of ability and aptitude tests.

Aptitude tests are sometimes in the form of multiple batteries of aptitudes, such as the *Differential Aptitude Test, 5th Edition (DAT)*; the *General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB)*, used by the U.S. Employment Service; and the *Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)*. Tests such as these provide scores for a range of aptitudes such as verbal reasoning, mechanical ability, clerical speed and accuracy, language ability, and numeric ability. Some group aptitude tests used in schools provide two or more scores on subareas as well as a total aptitude score, such as the *Cognitive Abilities Test (CGAT)*, which yields scores for verbal, nonverbal, and quantitative test batteries. Another example is the SAT, which gives verbal and nonverbal scores, and colleges and universities either total these scores or use them separately in their admissions' processes. Two common group ability tests used in schools are the *Otis-Lennon Ability Test (8th ed.)* and the *California Tests of Mental Maturity* (Nystul, 2011). Some group instruments allow individual administrations.

Interest Inventories

Because student assessment consists of more than testing, school counselors incorporate other types of standardized instruments into their evaluation processes, including interest inventories such as career questionnaires. By assessing students' interests and comparing these results with achievement and aptitude, counselors are in a better position to provide adequate assistance in educational and career counseling. With data from interest inventories, counselors and students can verify career and educational choices, identify previously unknown or unrecognized areas of interest, relate interests to educational and career choices, and stimulate exploration of educational and career opportunities.

In some instances, interest inventories are the vehicles that enable counselors and students to establish initial helping relationships. When administered to students in groups, these instruments yield profiles that counselors explain and interpret in groups and with individual students. During these sessions, students use their profiles to raise concerns with counselors, often leading to self-referrals for group or individual counseling.

Examples of interest inventories used in school counseling programs include the *Strong Interest Inventory (SII®)*, *Campbell Interest and Skill Survey (CISS)*, the *Self-Directed Search (4th ed.) (SDS)*, and *Career Key* (www.careerkey.org). The SII® assesses students' interests across a range of occupations, academic subjects, and work and leisure activities. Holland (1985) developed the SDS based on his theory of six personality and environmental themes related to career choice. It is self-administered, self-scored, and can be self-interpreted by the student. It is also available online (www.self-directed-search.com). After scoring, the student derives a three-letter code that reflects his or her interests, compares the code with a list of occupations, and matches the code from SDS with jobs having the same code. When the student identifies matches between the attained code and job codes, the student continues to follow instructions for further career planning. The Internet version (SDS from R) generates these comparisons and provides a printed report.

As with all instruments selected for student assessment, counselors want to be cognizant of research findings about theoretical underpinnings as well as validity of outcomes. As an example in this instance, Turner et al. (2008) noted gender differences in Holland's

vocational personality types, and suggested that school counselors help students explore a range of same-gender, cross-gender, and gender-neutral career options.

The *Kuder Career Planning System* (www.kuder.com) is another Internet-based program used by counselors. It provides an interest inventory, assessment of skills, and a work values inventory, and offers counselors and students career-development tools to help identify interests, examine career options, and establish career goals.

Personality Inventories and Tests

A number of instruments are available to assess students' characteristics and traits that may be aspects of personalities. Of course, the concept and construct of *personality* are vaguely defined and rarely agreed-on factors in the assessment field. Furthermore, if there is such a trait as personality, can we measure it? Researchers and developers of personality assessment instruments respond to this question affirmatively, as do many practicing counselors and therapists.

Two types of personality assessment include personality inventories and projective techniques. Personality inventories usually consist of a series of questions to which the student responds *Yes*, *No*, *Not sure*, or a similar range of choices. These inventories compare the student's score on one or more personality variables with scores of a sample population. Types of variables measured by these instruments include self-concept, social adjustment, problem-solving styles, sexual adjustment, and other traits.

Although personality assessment is intriguing to both laypersons and professionals, there are many hazards, particularly with self-reporting processes. First, students and others who take these instruments may deliberately fake their responses to put themselves in a better light. Some inventories contain items that attempt to control for this likelihood, but it is impossible to eliminate all false answers. As a result, self-reporting procedures inherently include the possibility of producing an inaccurate picture of the client and an invalid assessment of the personality variables under investigation. Second, some authorities question whether all clients have the personal insight to respond adequately to these instruments. With individuals who have personal problems or poor social-functioning skills, this lack of insight may further distort their self-image and responses to survey questionnaires. Finally, the nature of personality inventories and the questions involved allow for multiple interpretations by respondents. Questions that include modifiers such as *mostly* and *frequently* invite a range of interpretations that affect instrument consistency and reliability.

One example of personality inventories used by school counselors is the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)*. Based on Carl Jung's theory of personality types, the MBTI includes forms used with high school students (Form G is recommended to assess student learning style). Although not designed as a vocational assessment, the MBTI is widely used in career development counseling and planning.

Another instrument that could be used with high school students 16 years and older is the *Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire, 5th Edition (16PF)*. This instrument provides a comprehensive assessment of adult personality traits across 16 personality traits and 5 global factors.

A second type of personality assessment, the *projective technique*, is rarely used by school counselors and includes the *Thematic Apperception Test* and the *Draw-a-Person Test* (Drummond & Jones, 2010). Projective techniques and instruments are less structured

than inventories and more subjective in their scoring. These assessment instruments require special preparation, knowledge, and supervision.

All the preceding tests and instruments contribute significantly to student assessment in schools. They are, however, only part of a comprehensive assessment process. To develop adequate appraisals of students, school counselors and teachers incorporate a variety of other assessment procedures, which we review next.

Other Assessment Techniques

Student assessment consists of more than individual and group testing to measure achievement, aptitude, or some aspects of personality. School counselors use a variety of assessment procedures to gather data with which to make effective decisions in counseling students and to help teachers plan and implement appropriate instruction.

Adequate student evaluation occurs at the beginning of, during, and after the counseling relationship. Assessment is an ongoing process that is multidimensional in nature and helps to establish direction in the decision-making process. Through these varied assessment activities, school counselors gather data and information to establish goals, plan strategies, and evaluate the effectiveness of their helping relationships.

Ongoing student assessment involves different activities including observations, interviews, child study conferences, self-reports, and sociometric methods. Sometimes these activities are formal and include structured sessions and instruments such as rating scales; at other times, they occur informally and naturally as events happen. Two assessment activities that fit easily into school structure and student evaluation are observations and interviews.

Observations

Because observations fit so naturally into the school setting and can be enhanced by the reports of parents, it is understandable why counselors readily use and recommend them as an assessment technique. At the same time, however, caution is necessary. Observational techniques are limited due to the perceptual biases and resulting inaccuracies of the observers. Human perception is a mysterious and powerful phenomenon, but it is imperfect as an assessment procedure. Simply ask any police officer who has investigated a traffic accident in which more than one eyewitness has reported the event, and you will see how limited human observation can be in gathering accurate and consistent information.

With student assessment, observations occur in many settings, under different conditions, and for countless purposes. Teachers, parents, and counselors are constantly observing students' actions, interactions, and reactions, both individually and in groups. Parents observe children at home and in other settings, and summarize these perceptions in conferences with teachers and counselors. Teachers observe students in classrooms and other locations in the school, making mental and written notes or using rating scales to report on behavior and performance. Counselors also observe students in various settings within the school and as part of their counseling relationships. All these activities add to a comprehensive assessment of students' needs and performance, and enable counselors to recommend appropriate services and strategies to facilitate and enhance student development.

Observations of students in schools can be formal or informal, and occur in different settings at varied times and with distinctive structures. Sometimes observations occur naturally in classrooms, on playgrounds, and in other areas of school life. When teachers and counselors observe students doing class work or relating to peers, they may use observation instruments, such as rating scales or anecdotal notes. On other occasions, counselors might structure group activities in the counseling center to observe particular students and record their interactions and reactions. During such observations, counselors may impose specific conditions on the activity to see how students handle peer relationships, conflict resolution, rejection, or other situations. Other methods of observation include surveys to gather data on specific behaviors. For example, parents might complete a survey of their observations about how children interact and get along with siblings and friends at home and in the neighborhood.

School counselors rely on parents', teachers', and their own observations to add to the student assessment process and formulate decisions about services. In using observational techniques, counselors become familiar with different methods, locate recording processes and instruments, and learn about the advantages and limitations of the procedures used. Some of the methods and instruments used by school counselors include anecdotal records, checklists, rating scales, direct measurement of products, frequency counting, and interval recording and time sampling.

Anecdotal Records. Observations that enable teachers, parents, and counselors to record descriptions of particular student behaviors during a given situation are methods of anecdotal reporting. Since schools began, teachers have recorded notes about students' behaviors and academic progress. Often, these observations were haphazardly done, and the resulting records consisted more of biased perceptions and conclusions than of factual data. Today, largely as a result of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, students' records contain less of this type of biased information. Proper anecdotal procedures, however, remain useful as observational techniques.

We find two primary methods of anecdotal observations in schools and school counseling programs. One method asks teachers to record significant events and observations as they happen or as soon after as is reasonably possible. These observations gather data on the overall functioning of students or they track the occurrence of specifically identified behaviors. In training teachers to gather anecdotal information, counselors encourage objective reporting, free from interpretations and conclusions. The idea behind anecdotal records of this kind is to gather as many observations as possible to give a full picture of the trait or behavior of concern. After schools use the reports in making decisions about instruction or special services, they destroy them. The usefulness of such records is limited, and their long-term application questionable. Figure 9.5 illustrates a sample anecdotal record completed by a teacher.

A second method of anecdotal recording used by counselors observes particular students for given periods of time in class or other situations during school. This process is especially useful to counselors who have received referrals from teachers about students' behaviors in classes. School counselors observe students as part of their diagnostic procedures to determine what services would be most beneficial. In developing observation procedures and techniques, counselors may find the following steps useful:

1. Inform teachers at the beginning of each school year about the policy for accepting referrals and incorporating classroom observations. To gather the most accurate data to

FIGURE 9.5 Anecdotal Record of Observation Completed by Teacher

Observation Notes
Student: Melissa Smith
Date: April 4, 2014
Melissa was observed assisting a student who was standing alone on the playground. The teacher observed her approach another child without hints or encouragement, and she asked the student if he wanted to play on the swings. This is the second time this week that Melissa has approached another student in a positive manner.

make the best decisions about services, the counselor observes students where and when teachers believe it will be most informative and helpful.

2. Arrive on time when observing students in classrooms. Sit at a desk in an inconspicuous corner of the room and leave without fanfare after you have recorded sufficient observations. Generally, 40 to 50 minutes of class time allows ample observation.
3. Design an observation form to record the student's behavior or use a note pad with time intervals written in the margin. As with other anecdotal reports, counselors record only what they see during these observations and avoid all interpretations and judgments at this time.
4. Schedule a follow-up meeting with the teacher to share the observations and receive the teacher's reactions to what occurred in class. In this conference, the counselor finds out if the observed class, particularly the behaviors of the identified student, was typical. Often, when observers enter a classroom, students behave differently than usual. The teacher will verify whether the class session was typical during the observation.
5. Observe more than once when possible, or have another professional observe at the same time. Comparison of observations helps avoid bias and will lead to more accurate conclusions.

Rating Scales. When gathering observational data, counselors frequently find that a structured form, such as a rating scale, helps the observer—teacher, parent, or counselor—remain focused on the behaviors, characteristics, or traits evaluated. Generally, rating scales consist of lists of characteristics or behaviors to observe and an evaluative scale on which to indicate the degree to which they occur. Rating scales designed to gather data on students' attributes and behaviors typically have a numeric or descriptive format. With a numeric scale, each number indicates a degree to which the behavior is observed. For example, on a 5-point scale, the numbers might be assigned values accordingly: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat agree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree. Each item on a rating instrument that uses descriptive formats is followed by a separate scale of descriptive terms on a line that the observer checks. Figure 9.6 shows a sample descriptive scale.

Some commercially produced rating scales are used by schools. However, counselors and teachers often find that designing their own scales allows them to tailor instruments

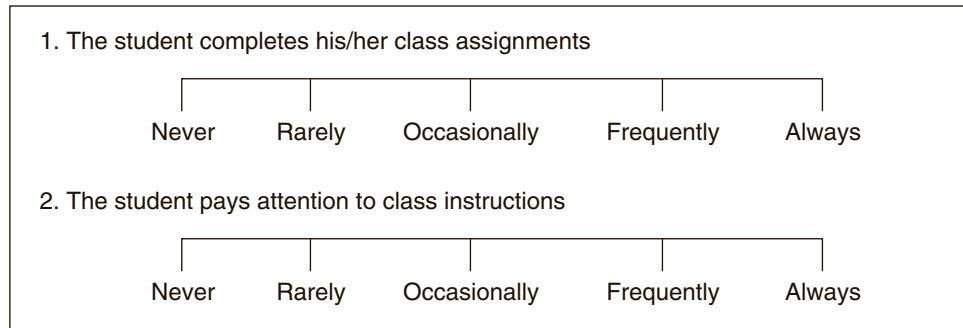


FIGURE 9.6 A Sample Descriptive Scale for a Behavioral Rating Form

to specific situations, and they can easily revise them as needed. In designing rating scales, counselors

1. Determine a clear purpose for the instruments
2. Choose characteristics and behaviors that are directly observable
3. Write items that relate clearly and directly to the attributes observed
4. Determine descriptors for the scale (usually a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 points)

When designing a new scale, it may be helpful to have a trial run using “practice observers” to check the clarity of items and directions. In addition, counselors should (1) determine who will rate the attributes, (2) train raters in the use of the instrument, (3) instruct raters to ignore items they feel unqualified to judge, and (4) use as many raters as reasonably possible. Gathering data from many different raters increases the reliability of the process. For example, when rating a student’s responsible behaviors, the counselor may desire ratings from parents and all the teachers who have this student in class.

Checklists. Observers’ checklists are similar to rating scales. One difference is the type of judgment required from the observer. As discussed earlier, rating scales ask evaluators to indicate a degree or frequency with which a behavior or attribute exists. By comparison, checklists ask the observer only to mark *Yes* or *No* to indicate whether he or she observed a trait. Although easier to develop and use, these instruments provide a basic and rudimentary assessment, and should always be combined with other procedures.

Counselors use rating scales and checklists to assess other types of student performance and information beyond observable behaviors, including direct measurement of products, such as students’ homework; frequency counting; and interval recording procedures.

Direct Measurement of Products. Students produce many items and products that are useful in the assessment process. In addition, school records include data that can be screened and incorporated into a comprehensive assessment of student development and needs. Examples of students’ products, which teachers and counselors can evaluate by using a rating scale, a checklist, or simple narrative form, include homework papers,

artwork, class projects, and journals. In many schools, these data and material make up student portfolios, which counselors and teachers use in the overall assessment of student performance and progress. Counselors and teachers can also evaluate school records, such as attendance reports, health cards, test records, and grade reports.

Frequency Counting. Sometimes parents and teachers can add to the assessment of particular problematic behaviors by keeping a record of the frequency with which these behaviors occur. Usually there is a specific time frame within which the identified behavior is monitored (such as between 9 and 10 a.m., during a class period, or during recess on the playground). Methods of counting the behavior include pencil and paper tally sheets and electronic or mechanical counters. Frequency counting is particularly useful with behaviors that people define clearly—that is, teachers, parents, or others are able to identify these behaviors by distinct beginnings and endings.

Interval Recording and Time Sampling. When behaviors and attributes are not clearly defined and observable, interval recording and time sampling are appropriate techniques for assessment. There are several different types of interval and time-sampling procedures. With most, the evaluator determines the length of the observation period and divides it into equal segments or intervals. An observer then records when the identified behavior occurs during the time allotted, counts the number of intervals when the behavior was observed, and computes the percentage of time the behavior occurred. Figure 9.7 illustrates an observation record using a time-sampling method.

In using interval and time-sampling procedures, counselors should be aware of different time-sampling observations. Some observations require that an identified behavior occur for an entire time interval. This is *whole-interval time sampling*, which observers use when it is imperative to know that the behavior is uninterrupted. Other observations use a *partial-interval time-sampling technique*, in which only a single occurrence of the behavior in a given time period is required. A third process, *momentary time sampling*, observes behaviors that occur at the moment a particular time interval ends.

FIGURE 9.7 An Observation Record Using a Time-Sampling Method

Student: <u>Melissa Smith</u>	Date: <u>September 17, 2014</u>
Location: <u>Mr. Juarez's Classroom</u>	Observer: <u>Karen Fox, Counselor</u>
Behavior Counted: <u>Off-task behavior</u>	
Time Frame: <u>9:00 A.M.–10:00 A.M.</u>	

Time	On-Task	Off-Task
9:00–9:20	X (20 minutes)	
9:20–9:30		X (10 minutes)
9:30–9:45	X (15 minutes)	
9:45–9:50		X (5 minutes)
9:50–9:55	X (5 minutes)	
9:55–10:00		X (5 minutes)
	Total Off-Task Behavior 30% of time Off-Task	20 minutes

Interviews

School counselors also use interviewing to gather data and information. In a comprehensive assessment of student developmental needs, interviews with students, parents, and teachers are essential. In addition, counselors interview teachers who have had students in former grades, social workers who have assisted students and families, physicians who have examined and treated students, and other professionals who might add to the profiles being developed.

Sociometric Methods

Sociometric methods help teachers and counselors evaluate student relationships and identify students most often chosen by their peers and others who are social isolates. Such methods include the identification of attitudes and preferences regarding social acceptance and rejection among students in a classroom, and result in a graph called a *sociogram* (Moreno, 1993). Although sociometric methods are easy to develop and administer, counselors and teachers should use them cautiously. Gibson and Mitchell (1999) suggested that counselors consider the following conditions when using sociometric methods:

1. The length of time the group of students has been together influences the results. The longer a class or group of students has interacted, the more meaningful is the outcome of a sociogram.
2. The age of the students affects the reliability of the students' responses. The older the students, the more reliable and valid are their responses.
3. Groups that are too small or too large may provide less useful information. There may be too few or too many selections with no distinct patterns emerging.
4. A meaningful group activity provides a logical and natural opportunity for students to select partners and give honest responses. In designing a sociometric method of assessment, counselors and teachers choose an activity familiar to students.
5. The group chosen for the sociogram should be appropriate for the particular appraisal process. If, for example, the assessment is investigating a particular student's comfort in social studies, then that class is where the teacher or counselor should use a sociogram.

Figure 9.8 is a sample sociogram for a fifth-grade class. In the activity, the students were asked to select one to five of their classmates with whom they would or would not want to work in a group. The students in the center circle of the diagram are those most often selected by their peers. Students in the outer circle are those chosen least often. They are the class loners and isolates. Six students in the class were rejected by classmates, and one student (19) was rejected by two students. By using the same questions over a period of time during the school year and watching for changes in the sociograms generated from these students' selections, counselors and teachers are able to assess the effects of strategies and services they implement to help individuals and groups of students with peer relationships and social skills.

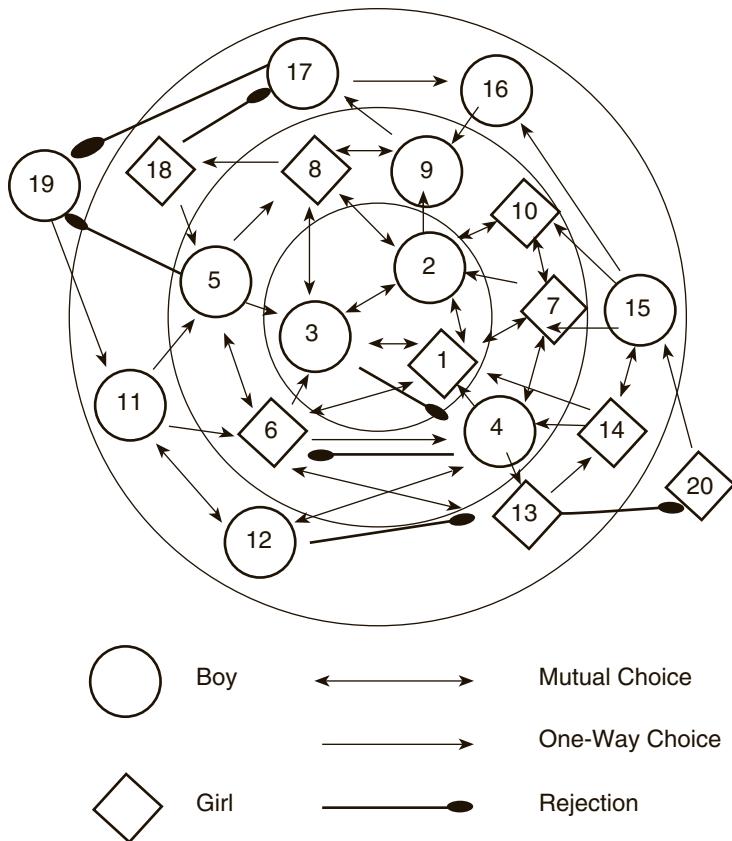


FIGURE 9.8 Sample Sociogram of Fifth-Grade Students Asked to Select One to Five Classmates They Would or Would Not Want to Work with in a Group



PERSPECTIVE 9-3

Review the sociogram (see Figure 9.8) and identify students you think would benefit from counseling services. What type of counseling do you think would be helpful to these students? How would you approach these students to offer services?

Child Study Conferences

An additional method used by counselors, particularly in the elementary and middle grades, is a *child study conference*, sometimes called *staffing* or *student services team*. At these meetings, counselors, teachers, psychologists, social workers, nurses, and other professionals pool their knowledge and assessment results to make decisions about services to offer students and families. Some schools hold these meetings regularly and, depending on cases being presented, invite community practitioners to participate. These practitioners might include mental-health counselors, physicians, protective services, caseworkers, and others.

The shared information discussed at these meetings enables counselors, administrators, and teachers to plan effective school services and refer to appropriate community services.

Counselors and other evaluators typically perform all the preceding student assessment procedures with or to students. In some cases, such as with checklists and rating forms, students may respond directly, giving opinions and observations about themselves; for example, counselors can develop checklists and self-rating scales to have students assess their attitudes about school, feelings of self-worth, or beliefs about their potential as learners. In addition, counselors use informal methods of having students self-report about themselves and their relationships with others. These informal techniques include the use of essays, journal writing, play, and artwork. As with any other type of assessment, effective counselors use the following examples only after sufficient preparation and understanding of the techniques and full awareness of the ethical responsibilities inherent in using the results for student appraisal.

Biographical and Self-Expression Techniques

Although self-report techniques tend to be suspect in terms of their reliability and validity, informal processes can assist counselors in gathering information and establishing rapport in the helping relationship. One method that counselors use with students in the intermediate and higher grades is writing exercises such as essays, biographies, and journals.

Writing. Students with at least limited writing skills can participate in the assessment process through sentences or essays about themselves, their families, friendships, and school. Students can share these products with their counselors, offering further description and explanation during counseling sessions. Writing experiences such as these are not for the purpose of evaluating literary and language skills, but are simply vehicles for students to express themselves. These self-expressions can be valuable to a counselor in getting to know the student and understanding how the student views him- or herself. Students can also share with counselors through writing in a journal, an activity that allows students to keep ongoing records of their thoughts and feelings, which gives the counselor a broader and more comprehensive view of the students' perspectives than any single assessment. Students' journals also provide one measure of growth and improvement that occurs during counseling relationships. The ups and downs of a student's life are illustrated in these writings, and students and counselors assess these trends against the overall goals and objectives of counseling.

Play and Drama. Other informal assessment procedures, either used individually or with groups of students, create various forms of play and drama. Elementary counselors frequently use play in establishing relationships with students who have limited language development so as to gather students' views on school, family, and friends. Toys, puppets, games, and other materials take on new meaning as assessment tools in these play activities.

Middle and high school students also participate in different types of play or drama, such as games, role-play, experiential exercises, and other activities in counseling relationships. These activities allow students to use childlike playfulness and dramatics to simulate real-life experiences in safe environments and explore concerns, express feelings, and learn coping skills. Sometimes, these activities take place outdoors with camping, rope climbing, and similar experiences that encourage social risk and cooperation.

Artwork. As with play, drama, and writing, artwork is another form by which counselors gather information and establish communication with students. Using clay, paints, and other media with young students frees them to express themselves in ways not bound by language skills and ability. Older students benefit from artwork as well, including photography, cinema, and cartoons (Gladding, 2011b).

The DSM-IV-TR and the School Counselor

For more than a century, the American Psychiatric Association has been categorizing and classifying mental disorders. In 1980, with its publication of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders–III*, the association began structuring its classification system around the following five categories:

- Axis I: Clinical disorders and other conditions that may be a focus of clinical attention (often called *V codes*)
- Axis II: Mental retardation and personality disorders; other personality traits may be noted
- Axis III: General medical conditions and relevant health information
- Axis IV: Psychosocial and environmental problems
- Axis V: Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF)

These five categories were guidelines to help clinicians organize information, symptoms, physical problems, and other issues presented by mental-health clients. Today, the *DSM-IV* continues to present these five axes as the most popular diagnostic system of mental disorders in the United States (Drummond & Jones, 2010). In 2000, the American Psychiatric Association published a text revision of the *DSM-IV*, which became the *DSM-IV-TR*. The goals of the text revision included the need to (1) correct factual errors identified in the *DSM-IV*, (2) ensure that all information was up to date, (3) improve the educational value of *DSM-IV*, and (4) update classification codes. There were no substantive changes made in criteria sets and no new disorders, subtypes, or appendix categories were proposed in this revision. More recently, the APA provided coding updates of the *DSM-IV-TR* to meet Health Insurance and Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA, 1996) requirements (www.psychiatry.org/practice/dsm/dsm-iv-tr-coding-updates-since-2000). As this edition of this text went in press, the American Psychiatric Association continued to review the *DSM* for another revision.

Because school counselors are often in the first line of professional helpers who work with children and adolescents, it may be useful for them to have a working understanding of the *DSM* system, particularly as they coordinate referrals to community mental-health counselors, clinical psychologists, and psychiatrists. Knowing the lexicon these professionals use in making diagnoses can help school counselors communicate their referrals more clearly, thereby coordinating cases more efficiently for students and their families (Erk, 2008; Geroski, Rodgers, & Breen, 1997; House, 2002).

Counselors who become familiar with the *DSM* system need special preparation and will want to understand the limitations and concerns surrounding this manual. Certainly, a

major concern is the potential for misuse. Among the criticisms and concerns voiced about the *DSM* is the classification of behavior problems for children and adolescents. School counselors who use the manual when consulting with community agencies and clinical practitioners should note this concern. Future editions of the *DSM-IV-TR* might address this and other issues adequately, which gives additional reason for users to stay abreast of these revisions.

All the techniques and activities described in this chapter add to comprehensive student assessment. In school counseling programs, counselors plan procedures that contribute to the development of a clear and usable student profile carefully. An important caveat for school counselors is that no single assessment instrument, process, or result should be used when making program decisions or planning intervention strategies. Proper assessment of student development and proper appraisal of the individual needs of students always include several measurements to design instructional programs adequately or choose appropriate counseling services.

Additional Readings

- Erk, R. R. (2008). *Counseling Treatment for Children and Adolescents with DSM-IV-TR Disorders*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
A comprehensive presentation of approaches and responsive services to help students identified through the *DSM* system.
- House, A. E. (2002). *DSM-IV Diagnosis in the Schools, Revised*. New York, NY: Guilford.
A usable guide and practical resource for counselors and other student services professionals.
- Lyman, H. B. (1998). *Test Scores and What They Mean* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Although published more than a decade ago, this remains a popular and easy reading guide to using test results. An excellent resource for counselors who interpret test results to parents and teachers.

- Morrison, J. (1995). *DSM-IV Made Easy: The Clinician's Guide to Diagnosis*. New York, NY: Guilford.
Another early publication, this book is a readable guide to help counselors learn the language of mental health diagnosis.

Websites

- American College Testing
www.act.org
- Buros Institute of Mental Measurement
www.unl.edu/buros

- Educational Testing Services
www.ets.org

Note: In addition to this list, several websites are mentioned throughout the chapter.

Exercises

1. In a small group, participants disclose an experience from a test-taking situation. As your group discusses these events, consider what factors or conditions would have made the experience different for you. Ask a group member to record these comments to share with the class.
2. With another student, visit a classroom in an elementary, middle, or high school and observe for an hour. Record your observations on a notepad, using the margin to record time intervals. After your observation, compare notes with the other student and check the consistency of your observations.
3. Design an assessment instrument to evaluate physical surroundings. Use the instrument to assess the building in which you hold class and discuss your findings. How will this type of assessment fit with your role as a school counselor?
4. In a small group, discuss the topic of high-stakes testing in schools. Make a list of positive features of this phenomenon, and share for an open discussion with the class.

CHAPTER 10

Educational and Career Development

A premise of this text is that a comprehensive school counseling program targets two major goals: (1) to assist students with educational planning and related academic success, and (2) to encourage students to explore a wide range of options and make appropriate decisions to satisfy their career development. Chapter 4 introduced these two goals and indicated that they were complemented by the additional goals of assisting students with their personal and social development. In practice, all four objectives are important and interrelated in the broad scope of student development.

Students have the opportunity to select from a wide range of career options when they attain basic skills and acquire sufficient knowledge of language, mathematics, science, social studies, and other academic areas. Likewise, students increase their potential to achieve academically when their personal lives are free of barriers and their social lives reflect appropriate, responsible, and accepting behaviors. As seen in Chapters 1 through 9, counselors offer direct and indirect services to help schools plan appropriate instruction, assist parents in removing obstacles to development and learning, and counsel students about a full range of issues. In this way, school counselors assist students with their educational, personal, and social development to achieve academic success and choose appropriate career direction. This is the primary purpose of professional counselors practicing in school settings.

Primary Purpose of School Counseling

All of the services described in this text come together in a comprehensive program of activities that encourages all students to develop their fullest potential, achieve educational success, and select appropriate career goals. This career development perspective includes four areas of student growth and development: (1) self-knowledge, self-efficacy, and relationship skills; (2) social roles, surroundings, and experiences; (3) career planning; and (4) academic achievement and preparation for work. Although our ever-changing world will continue to influence career choice and development, these four areas provide a schema by which counselors can create beneficial career activities within a comprehensive school counseling program.

Self-knowledge, self-efficacy, and relationship skills establish a foundation, belief system, and interpersonal framework for students to be successful. Students can achieve these through counseling and related services that increase their self-awareness, accurate understanding of their abilities, belief in themselves, and acceptance of others. With individual and small-group

counseling, in group-guidance activities, and through school-wide events, counselors and teachers introduce students to concepts and processes that encourage self-exploration and heighten awareness of their personal traits and characteristics. At the same time, counselors design programs and activities to help students learn appropriate communication skills and problem-solving strategies. The level of self-awareness achieved by students is vital in helping them make appropriate educational choices and plan careers. Everything that takes place in a school setting has as its ultimate goal the lifelong enhancement of education and the satisfaction of individual career interests. Counselors contribute significantly to this goal through comprehensive programs of response services.

Social roles, surroundings, and experiences emphasize the interconnection among various life roles; where students live, learn, and work; and experiences and other situations that will affect their development over a lifetime. One continuous challenge for schools has been to connect the learning objectives of daily instruction to the broader goals faced by students in their overall development. By creating activities and services to help students make this connection, counselors and teachers breathe life into the curriculum and give meaning to the educational process. This challenge is important in today's schools, where we want to ensure that students experience issues of diversity, gender, and other topics that affect educational and career development.

Students who are able to accept a relationship among society, school, and their future life goals progress through their developmental years and continue the educational process through a lifetime. They understand the interrelationship of social challenges, school life, and aspirations for future career success, and view their school years as a relatively short-term challenge when compared to their lifelong ambitions.

Career planning is another aspect of the overall educational process. A goal of school counselors is to help students to master decision-making skills with which to explore a wide range of career interests, match those interests with their own characteristics and abilities, and make decisions accordingly. Again, the array of services and activities initiated by counselors in comprehensive programs assists with this broad focus. For example, individual contacts in counseling and consulting relationships enable students to explore their personal traits and characteristics, receive appropriate up-to-date information, and begin exploring future goals. Form 10.1 is a sample educational and career planning form that students and counselors could use in secondary schools. In conferences with school counselors, students use this form to examine their goals and assess progress in light of their academic and extracurricular achievements. These conferences might take place during individual contacts with their counselors or in group sessions with other students.

In group experiences, such as small-group counseling and classroom guidance, students also have the opportunity to gather information, increase their self-awareness, and learn decision-making skills. Through group processes, students are more able to test the appropriateness of future goals by checking their perceptions with those of their peers. Group work of this kind, as shown earlier, allows students to test reality in safe environments with minimal risk of failure. Life career-planning activities, in groups or individually, help students make responsible choices, gather necessary information to make decisions, develop adequate interaction skills, and plan their futures.

Academic achievement and preparation for work encompass the fourth domain of career development, which consists of all the learning objectives found in a school's curriculum. The challenge for teachers and counselors in this arena is to design and implement

FORM 10.1 Sample Planning Form*Alexander High School*

Student Planning Form

Student: _____ Date: _____

My Career Interests:

1. _____
2. _____

My Long-Term Educational Goal: _____

Course Work Needed to

Realize My Goal:

	<i>Courses Taken</i>	<i>Year Completed</i>	<i>Final Grade</i>
Communication Skills	_____	_____	_____
Technical Reading	_____	_____	_____
Literature	_____	_____	_____
Foreign Language	_____	_____	_____
Mathematics	_____	_____	_____
Statistics and Logic	_____	_____	_____
Sciences	_____	_____	_____
Social Studies	_____	_____	_____
Art/Music/Drama	_____	_____	_____
Vocational Courses	_____	_____	_____
Computer Technology	_____	_____	_____
Other Courses	_____	_____	_____

Extracurricular Experience:

My Planning Conferences with Counselor(s) (or Teacher/Advisors):

<i>Date</i>	<i>Decisions/Plans</i>	<i>Counselor or Teacher</i>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Postsecondary Tasks I Need to Accomplish (college applications, scholarship applications, entrance exams, job interviews, Internet searches, résumé writing, etc.):

<i>Task</i>	<i>Date Completed</i>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

a meaningful curriculum by which students can connect educational development with career satisfaction. Students must have access to knowledge and skills that enable them to keep abreast of changing career patterns and opportunities. School counselors have a role in helping teachers, administrators, and curriculum supervisors stay ahead of career trends and the technological advances that influence these trends. The skills and knowledge base that schools teach today should be useful not only to current student development, but also to students' futures as contributing and productive members of society. This is true at all levels

of education, and for this reason, school curricula are living documents and processes that evolve and develop to meet the needs of all students.

The role of school counselors is clear in helping teachers and other educators create instructional programs with a focus on these four domains. The primary purpose for employing counselors in schools is to provide program leadership and delivery of services and activities that help all students to achieve academically, reach higher levels of functioning in basic skills, assess their strengths and weaknesses, and gather appropriate information about career development. Sometimes, before counselors provide these types of services and activities, they need to assist students with personal and social development. This is understandable because optimal learning and career development are less likely to occur if personal and social barriers remain in place. Therefore, personal adjustment counseling frequently is a bridge over which students travel in realizing their educational and career goals.

Although career planning and development are widely acclaimed as vital areas of focus for school counseling programs, educational planning has received less attention. Perhaps this is because schools are inherently involved in the education of students, so people assume specific planning happens simultaneously. In practice, however, most educational planning is the responsibility of adults who teach, guide, and supervise students. Parents, teachers, counselors, and others share information, assess students' abilities, set instructional goals, and place students in educational programs. Although most of these planning procedures are appropriate, students are sometimes left out of the process. As emphasized in this text, educational planning is a key ingredient in school success and career development. For this reason, we assign special importance to the school counselor's role in educational planning with all students. This position is consistent with the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Model and one part of its delivery system—individual student planning (ASCA, 2005, 2012).

Educational Planning for all Students

Throughout a lifetime, people make many decisions that affect their development and learning. In some instances, they make these decisions as part of a well-designed plan; at other times, these decisions are haphazard and accidental. People who have respect for learning and educational development make intentional plans regarding their educational and career goals, thereby demonstrating a high level of self-caring. They demonstrate this caring during years of schooling and throughout their adult lives.

In schools, teachers and counselors observe a wide range of commitment to education by students and parents. Some students enter school in the primary years with a keen thirst for knowledge and an enthusiastic curiosity for learning. They have benefited from healthy home environments in which parents communicate frequently with their children, read to children during preschool years, and generally encourage a wide range of educational pursuits. Sadly, not all children experience these types of relationships in their formative years. They come to school undirected and misguided in their educational goals, and they are unfamiliar with what other children have learned about the relationship between knowledge and successful living.

Schools face challenges presented by students at both ends of this spectrum and in between. Students who are enthusiastic, curious, and excited about learning continue to

feel invited to the celebration of their own development by an appropriate curriculum and instruction. When bright and talented students have the freedom to explore, learn at an accelerated pace, and choose educational plans that stretch their potential, they excel in schools and in life. At the same time, students who arrive at school from less-advantaged environments require special attention in designing plans and activities to incorporate educational aspirations into their life's goals. All these students, from the most advantaged and enthusiastic to the most underprivileged and disinterested, benefit from individual and group services to encourage educational planning, learn decision-making skills, and set goals for lifelong learning and achievement.

With academically talented students, schools sometimes overlook the need for appropriate educational planning because these scholars come prepared to learn. This stance may be an erroneous one. The error a school makes with these types of students is to assume that they do not need special attention because they are bright and that they will achieve regardless of the plans made to provide appropriate curriculum and instruction. On the contrary, when schools remain rigid in their curricular and instructional processes, these students become bored, unchallenged, and disruptive. Such behaviors negate the positive attributes they bring to school and contribute to antagonistic relationships between home and school.

At the other end of the continuum, schools sometimes spend so much effort designing and offering remedial instruction to students from disadvantaged homes that they neglect to inspire, encourage, and plan for future possibilities. Although basic education is important, it alone, without optimistic processes to examine and explore future goals, fails to lift less-fortunate students out of their status toward successful career development. The challenge presented by Shertzer and Stone (1966) more than a half century ago remains true today. Appropriate planning and placement services must be provided for

disadvantaged youth to remove some of the obstacles to their economic and social betterment . . . Education will have to be made realistic for them in new and more effective ways. Unless such youth are helped by planning and placement, many will continue to remain alienated from education and society. By engaging in planning, such youth learn to manage their problems, mobilize their resources, and gain the capacity to continue on their own. (Shertzer & Stone, 1966, pp. 327–328)

School counselors have an obligation to assist schools in developing and implementing activities that offer a meaningful educational focus for all students. The essential goal for all services of a comprehensive school counseling program is to help schools create appropriate learning activities, design individual educational plans, and incorporate adequate career exploration for all students throughout their school years. In essence, the role of the school counselor, whether in elementary, middle, or high schools, is to advocate for appropriate educational planning and programming for all students, regardless of their backgrounds and preparedness for school.

Student Advocacy

A major responsibility of all school counselors is to assist school administrators and teachers in designing and implementing policies, programs, and processes that equitably support the educational and career development of all students. This has always been a

fundamental purpose for employing counselors in schools (Studer, 2005). Accordingly, counselors have been viewed as student advocates. This is not to say that other school professionals do not advocate for the well-being of the pupils; quite the contrary, student advocacy is essential in all aspects of school life by all personnel employed to serve students. Foremost among this group are classroom teachers charged with the educational, social, and personal welfare of their students.

Unlike teachers, who are responsible for grading students' progress, school counselors are not typically involved in evaluative relationships with students and, therefore, may be viewed as more student oriented than school or curriculum oriented. In this sense, counselors in schools have special responsibility for student advocacy, and work closely with teachers and administrators to ensure the welfare and protect the rights of students.

School counselors contribute to this endeavor by monitoring the placement of students in instructional programs and special services; consulting with parents, teachers, and administrators about the educational progress of individual students; and helping schools avoid stereotypical and prejudicial procedures that discriminate against individuals and groups of students. The consulting role often taken by school counselors is particularly suited for student advocacy (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Parsons & Kahn, 2005). Through contacts with parents, teachers, and other professionals who serve students, counselors attempt to ensure that every child and adolescent receives adequate and appropriate attention in his or her educational planning, instructional activities, and other services to reach optimal learning and development. Sometimes, because teachers face many challenges and have many responsibilities beyond providing instruction, they need assistance from counselors to be sure students are not forgotten by the system.

There is no single service or activity by which counselors demonstrate their advocacy role. Every aspect of a comprehensive school counseling program has as its goal an improved learning environment and academic success on the part of the student. Counselors advocate by consulting on a regular basis with teachers about their instructional programs and the placement of students in classes. They also participate in special education placement processes, and in particular, they advocate for challenged students through their contacts with parents. For example, policies and procedures should be explained to parents in understandable language so they can make informed decisions about their children's placement in these programs. Counselors have the skills to assist with this process and, as noted earlier, can help parents in the preparation of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for these students.

Counselors also advocate for students when they assist school administrators in reviewing and revising policies. Some regulations or procedures may simply be outdated and, as a result, unintentionally discriminate against particular students. For example, an elementary school changed its tradition of having a fathers' luncheon once a year because so many students without fathers were unable to participate. Instead, the school sponsored a visitors' luncheon program, which enabled all students to invite an adult to share lunch with them at school. By slightly changing the focus of the event, more students were included, rather than excluded, from a worthwhile activity. There are limitless opportunities for counselors to examine school programs, such as athletics, extracurricular activities, and special services, with administrators and teachers to ensure that the rights and privileges of students are not abridged. Counselors use their observational skills to assess particular aspects of school life and offer suggestions to administrators and teachers on how to affect student development more positively.

Counselors, teachers, and other school personnel also advocate for students in the community by encouraging town governments, city officials, and business leaders to sponsor programs that benefit children and adolescents. Recreational opportunities, creative outlets, and educational experiences all contribute to the efforts begun by the school. By advocating for these types of programs, schools join their communities in a cooperative venture to improve the educational and social lives of children and adolescents. In this way, educational planning and development become community goals and responsibilities rather than the sole obligation of the school.

One way that school counselors use their positions to advocate for students and make connections with community professionals is through committees that focus on individual students' needs. Sometimes called *child study committees* or *student assistance teams*, these groups include counselors, teachers, nurses, psychologists, and social workers from the school, as well as health, social services, law enforcement, and other community professionals. The overriding purpose of these committees is to make certain that all avenues for helping a child or family are explored, while at the same time protecting the student from negligence by the educational system. Through the combined efforts of many concerned professionals, schools are more likely to examine situations, generate appropriate ideas for solving educational concerns, and focus on the needs of students being served.



PERSPECTIVE 10-1

Can you recall a time during childhood or adolescence when someone advocated for you? What were the circumstances, who was the advocate, and what happened? Do you remember specific feelings about this event? How might this recollection encourage you to be an advocate?

In addition to their consulting roles, school counselors advocate for students through their counseling services and guidance activities. In individual and group counseling, as well as through classroom guidance, counselors help students learn about themselves, acquire behavioral skills—such as study skills and relaxation techniques—to improve their educational performance, and understand their rights in school and society. Through all these responsive services, counselors help students achieve a sense of value and self-worth and develop assertive behaviors to seek appropriate educational programs and beneficial career directions. Implicit in this process is the aim of counselors to instill in students the notion that educational planning and career development do not end when they graduate from high school or college. Rather, these are lifelong processes that depend on a foundation established during years of schooling. As such, the goal for all students is one of lifelong learning.

Lifelong Learning

Formal education in the United States and other countries emerged as a need to educate the citizenry to govern themselves, become self-sufficient, and contribute to the overall productivity of the nation. Through historical and economic eras of past decades, the need for improved educational systems has been documented. As we continue in this twenty-first

century, the focus on improving education for all people in all communities continues to be a dominant political and social theme highlighted and debated in a variety of settings from living rooms to national conventions across the land.

In all this debate and with all of the restructuring, reforming, transforming, and redesigning of education, one element needs emphasis: Education is not an isolated, individual process, aimed at accomplishing finite goals; instead, it is a continuous endeavor beginning at birth and ending with death. It is a lifelong pursuit with limitless goals and divergent purposes. As we look at educational structures and policies in the United States, sometimes this idea of learning for a lifetime seems to escape the consciousness of educational planners, leaders, and decision makers.

Learning is an integral part of living. Education is not simply a means to an end; it is a fuel that ignites inspiration, desire, compassion, and a host of other human dimensions and emotions that enable us to live our lives fully. The pervasive attitude that any individual or group needs only so much learning is as misguided as the notion that people no longer need food and drink once they are full. No matter how many changes we implement, no matter how much money we allocate to improve our schools, we will continue to struggle in this endeavor unless we rethink the purpose of learning and its role in human development.

School counselors play a key role in this effort through the services of their comprehensive programs. The first step is to encourage schools to focus on the broad picture of school climate, parental involvement, mastery of learning, and other conditions noted in the effective schools' research. Purkey and Novak (2008) identified these elements as people, places, policies, programs, and processes. When schools pay attention to the elements that contribute to healthy educational environments and foster the desire for lifelong learning, they enhance student development and increase the likelihood of academic and personal success. A wide-angle perspective achieves this goal, and school counselors facilitate this process through all their services. In particular, counselors foster lifelong learning by encouraging schools to do the following:

1. Infuse affective education into daily instruction. As noted in Chapter 3, guidance does not occur in isolation, but rather as an integral part of the curriculum. Teachers who incorporate life skills into their daily instruction bring their subject areas to life, and demonstrate how all learning contributes to successful living.
2. Examine grading, promotion, and other policies that establish the structure by which students move through the educational process. Do school policies contribute to or detract from the notion of lifelong learning? By achieving academic milestones, such as grade promotion or diplomas, are students reaching out for knowledge, or simply going through the motions of academic achievement? Education should be more than "Learn it, bank it, and forget it," but to view it otherwise, students have to be included in decisions regarding their participation and movement through school.
3. Invite parental participation. Research demonstrates the vital roles parents and the home play in student development. Findings show consistently that parental involvement with schools and their children's learning makes a difference in the quality of education and student success (Dahir & Stone, 2012; Erford, 2011b). School counselors assist in this effort by establishing parent volunteer programs, designing and leading parent education

groups, consulting with parents about student development and progress, and helping teachers with consulting skills and processes to facilitate relationships with parents. Many of the counselor-led services and activities described in this text contribute to this effort.

4. Recognize the value of learning by demonstrating how adults continue to develop throughout their lives. School counselors plan appropriate in-service programs for staff members throughout the school year, seek scholarships to enable teachers and others to return to school, and celebrate learning by announcing staff participation in a variety of educational pursuits. For example, a list of professional and personal development activities, including a host of adventures, from graduate school studies to piano lessons, attended by staff members could be posted in the school for students and others to see. This reinforces the idea that no learning experience is insignificant; all activities are valuable.

5. Focus on career development and its relationship to lifelong learning for all students. Educational planning and lifelong learning are interconnected with career and vocational choices that people make, beginning with their school careers and continuing throughout their lives. In all the responsive services designed and implemented by school counselors, career planning and decision-making skills are critical elements.

Career Planning and Decision Making

Throughout its development, the school counseling profession has been closely associated with vocational guidance and career development. The industrialism of the late 1800s altered working conditions and vocational needs of society rapidly and immensely (Zunker, 2012). As noted in Chapter 1, these changes influenced the early vocational guidance movement initiated by Jesse B. Davis, Frank Parsons, and others. In the decades since, the focus of vocational guidance on the selection of an occupation broadened to include all aspects of career development, and the interaction among educational planning, personal development, career choices, and successful living has become clearer. These relationships are affected by a number of technological, industrial, social, and political changes that continue to sweep the globe (Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004).

The Changing World of Work

Several aspects of the changing nature of the world of work continue to have meaning for counselors in a variety of professional settings, particularly school counseling. These aspects include the diversity of career opportunities; cultural, gender, and racial stereotyping; the relationship between educational success and career advancement; and the future of occupational prospects in a global economy. A comprehensive school counseling program in cooperation with the school's curriculum and instructional programs addresses these facets of career education and development.

Career Development Is a Process of Examining and Experiencing Opportunities and Possibilities Throughout the Lifespan. The future holds a multitude of vocational possibilities for most people. Gone are the times when a person selected a career early in youth and followed that choice for a lifetime. Students who enter schools in

this twenty-first century and beyond will be bombarded with ever-changing and rapidly advancing discoveries that alter the workplace, the global market, and the range of services required of the workforce. It is already common for people to change careers several times, sometimes within the scope of a broad vocational area, but also more drastically from one occupational pursuit to a dissimilar one.

School counselors assist students with these future decisions by presenting a wide range of career possibilities and encouraging long-term educational planning. It is difficult to forecast exactly where technological advances will lead us; educational preparation and academic skills are essential to increase vocational flexibility and career success (Brown, 2012).

Cultural, Gender, and Racial Stereotyping in Career Selection. Stereotyping of any sort is detrimental to the realization of democratic principles; stereotypes in culture, gender, or race are even more so. Some progress in the United States is apparent compared to a few decades ago, but the struggle continues. Women and men in the United States are becoming equal participants and partners in career development, yet some bastions of resistance toward gender equality remain, and women continue to receive unequal pay for the same work, but current trends indicate that the process is irreversible. In recent decades women have moved into careers and leadership roles formerly believed to be for men only, such as construction work, truck driving, airplane piloting, politics, and engineering. At the same time, men have entered career tracks once considered exclusively for women—nursing, elementary school teaching, and secretarial assistance. The twenty-first century term *stay-at-home dad* is indicative of changing attitudes and values regarding this phenomenon.

As the world continues to shrink in light of expanded communications systems and rapid transportation, cultural integration is inevitable. Yet, stereotypical thinking with regard to diverse groups and divergent cultures continues to be an impediment to the career development of many. Counselors and teachers have significant responsibility in helping students from diverse cultures remove these barriers from their own thought processes and belief systems, as well as educating majority groups about their prejudicial and stereotypical views and behaviors that are destructive to the welfare of society as a whole. A student's ability to work collaboratively in a multicultural workforce seems necessary for his and her future career success (Brown, 2012).

Schools make a major contribution to the continued integration of the sexes and multicultural groups within society. Textbooks and multimedia avenues chosen to illustrate career choices that depict a variety of nontraditional occupational opportunities for women and men, as well as the career integration of people from all cultures are imperative. School counselors support this process by consulting with administrators and teachers about the texts and materials selected for the curriculum, and by planning career awareness, exploration, and decision-making activities that allow students to experience the full scope of career possibilities.

A College Education May Not Equal Greater Career Satisfaction. Although a college education may be necessary for many future careers, some technical occupations might require educational studies somewhere between a secondary school and a college education. If this is true, students will want to plan educational careers to

match their vocational interests without closing doors on future possibilities. Technical training at all levels of education may be appropriate for a large percentage of students, but, as noted earlier, this decision should be tied to lifelong educational pursuits that encompass not only career goals, but also personal objectives for successful living. Although a 4-year college education might not be necessary for all workers in the twenty-first century, this does not mean that college graduates will find their education unfulfilling; on the contrary, it may mean that their lives consist of balanced goals, satisfied through a wide range of occupational, vocational, and leisure activities. The object in educating people encompasses goals for personal satisfaction as well as career objectives.

The Future Is Uncertain. It has always been a dangerous posture for counselors and other helping professionals to predict what the future holds for individuals. Today and in years to come, this may not only be dangerous, it may also be impossible. As seen during the recent economic recession in the United States and across the globe, technology affecting how we do business, changes and disruptions in world markets, and fluctuation in the needs of employers make predictions tenuous at best. One aspect of the future we can be sure of is that, in light of all the technological, scientific, and medical advances made, it will be different from the present, and this includes occupational needs and opportunities.

Because career forecasting is risky, counselors assist students best by offering communication and decision-making skills to set career goals based on today's knowledge with an eye toward the future. This means acquiring the ability to know oneself, having access to information about career possibilities, and developing interaction skills to connect with diverse populations in positive ways and increase opportunities for career choices. This reliance on others as well as oneself is a final aspect of career development.

Career Development Is an Intentionally Collaborative Process. In the past, individuals could set their own course and create their own fate. Today, because of the complex interaction of so many variables and forces in the world, the likelihood of this happening is remote. Striking out on one's own today, without support from others, is the purest sense of the term *risky business*. For this reason, successful students learn how to seek support, establish collaborative relationships, gain access to accurate information, and build a foundation for career development. In this process, they learn human relationship skills and coping mechanisms for overcoming barriers to success. In most instances, people are more likely to reach personal and professional goals because of their ability to form collaborative relationships, maintain healthy attitudes toward diverse cultures, and acquire coping behaviors than because of their formal education and preparation. It is through these types of relationships that people learn to handle with life's difficulties and nurture the resolve to overcome career obstacles. Comprehensive school counseling programs and appropriate school curricula address the preceding aspects and other facets of career development. The ASCA National Model recommends standards to encourage this to happen in schools with leadership from school counselors. Table 10.1 lists the three fundamental standards for students' career development. In the full document, each of these standards is supported by specific competencies (ASCA, 2004).

TABLE 10.1 Summary of ASCA Standards for Career Development

Standard A expects that students will achieve skills to examine, explore, and evaluate information about the world of work in association with awareness and understanding of their abilities and interests. Competencies attained through this standard help students learn how to plan, develop positive attitudes about work, understand the changing world of work, and make informed career choices among other achievements.

Standard B expects that students will learn and use strategies to obtain accurate career information and thereby achieve career success and personal satisfaction. Competencies included in this standard address decision-making skills, career-planning processes, career choices, and selection of relevant coursework.

Standard C expects that students will understand the relationship that exists among personal attributes and characteristics, formal education and preparation, and lifelong career opportunities and choices. Competencies in this standard focus on how educational achievement affects career success, appreciation of the changing workplace, acceptance of diversity in ensuring access and equity in the job market, knowledge of conflict-management skills, and career satisfaction.

Source: American School Counselor Association (2004). *ASCA National Standards for Students*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Through appropriate curricula and comprehensive counseling services, students learn about themselves, career opportunities, and educational requirements that fit their life's goals. School counselors in elementary, middle, and high schools contribute to this learning process by designing services that focus on specific needs of students. In addition, they base these services on particular theories of career development. Most texts on career counseling and development highlight and differentiate between various theories of career development (Brown, 2012; Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004; Zunker, 2012). Readers who are unfamiliar with the broad field of career counseling and development will want to locate these and other sources to learn about the different theories associated with career awareness and decision making. For our purposes, this chapter focuses on how school counselors incorporate counseling and guidance activities into comprehensive programs to enhance student awareness, invite career exploration, and encourage appropriate decision making at all levels of education.

School counselors have a wide range of responsibilities, including career counseling and developmental activities for all students. Consequently, counselors in collaboration with their teaching colleagues set priorities, develop learning objectives, plan activities, and deliver services to address the areas of student awareness, career exploration, and decision-making skills.

Student Awareness

Typically, the school counseling literature has used aspects of career development, such as awareness, exploration, and decision making to structure career activities and design a career focus for programs at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. This structure and focus generally emphasize awareness of the world of work in the elementary grades, exploration of occupational choices in middle school and junior high programs, and job

placement and career decision making during the high school years. As Zunker (2012) and others have noted, however, these areas of career focus are not limited to any single level of education or development. True, elementary children may need assistance with self-awareness and introduction to the world of work, but the need for increased familiarity with and understanding of one's personal interests and goals within the context of career opportunities is a continuous process that affects learning objectives and activities at all levels of schooling. It is through exploratory experiences that children in elementary schools become aware of themselves, others, and the world around them, including the world of work. Therefore, exploratory activities in the curriculum and school counseling program are appropriate at all levels. Likewise, decision-making skills are continuously acquired and perfected throughout life, and therefore their acquisition should not be limited to one developmental stage of learning.

One difference regarding various career development approaches is in how counselors and teachers at different educational levels assist students in increasing awareness of themselves and their career interests. In elementary schools, for example, self-awareness and career-awareness goals and objectives are incorporated into the curriculum rather than isolated as separate entities focused on by one specialist, such as a school counselor. This incorporation of guidance objectives is important at all levels—elementary, middle, and senior high school. School counselors use these types of objectives to assist classroom teachers in developing curriculum goals and designing instructional strategies to address career awareness for students. Knowledge of school curriculum and student development is necessary for counselors to provide adequate support for teachers in this endeavor.

In middle and high schools, the incorporation of career guidance into the curriculum continues and complements individual counseling and small-group work with students facilitated by the school counselor. As learned in Chapters 5 and 7, counselors use individual and small-group counseling sessions to enable students—in private, confidential relationships—to discover their inner selves and acquire a deeper and more personal level of understanding. Through this process of self-discovery, students become more able to benefit from classroom and small-group guidance that addresses various aspects of career awareness and development.

To facilitate students' self-awareness, school counselors use assessment processes as part of their helping relationships. As discussed in Chapter 9 on student assessment, these procedures include aptitude testing, career interest inventories, and a host of other measures that assist students in learning about their academic strengths, personal characteristics, and traits related to career interests and decision making. Several computerized and Internet career-assessment programs are available to help students acquire pertinent information and guide them toward appropriate decision making. Computer-assisted career information systems provide students with a structure to search for specific occupations and offer background information, such as educational requirements, for the occupations selected in a search. With some of these systems, assessment data such as test scores are the starting point for the computer search of appropriate occupations.

In the past, the development of computer-assisted career-information systems gained momentum by the availability of grants from the Department of Labor and the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC). These funds gave impetus to the development of career-information systems in a number of states. Federal funding for NOICC ended in 2006, but many states continue to offer career information online

systems, as well as local and regional information and links to sources beyond the states' databases (Brown, 2012). The Internet includes countless other career-information websites. As with most areas of computer technology and software development, the availability of career-information systems is ever-changing. As a result, counselors need to stay informed through their professional associations, journals, and other media.

Other types of computer-assessment programs, including computer-assisted career guidance systems, have a broader purpose than simply the dissemination of information. These systems take students beyond the search of occupational possibilities and into areas including self-assessment processes, instructional modules, planning activities, and decision-making steps. Research on computer-assisted career guidance systems has generally indicated positive effects on students (Brown, 2012). One widely used computer guidance program is the *System of Interactive Guidance and Information* (SIGI3) (www.valparint.com) produced by Educational Testing Service (ETS). The SIGI3 program helps students develop career plans that integrate self-assessment with current and relevant career information. The program is easy to use and has realistic educational and career options. SIGI3 helps students examine their own significant motivators and match their work values, interests, and other attributes to educational goals and career plans. Students are able to explore a range of options based on their personal choices.

Another popular computer assessment system is *DISCOVER*, published by the American College Testing Service (ACT). *DISCOVER* offers several systems for the middle grades through adults. One system is for high school students; another, called *VISIONS*, is for middle grades. Both are interactive, computer-assisted systems designed to provide self-assessment, exploration of the world of work, strategies to identify occupations of interest, information about hundreds of occupations, and educational requirements to assist in career planning.

Other computer-based systems being applied in schools include *Bridges* (access.bridges.com), *Career Cruising* (www.careercruising.com), and *Naviance* (www.naviance.com). In addition, video series, such as *Tour Your Tomorrow* (3rd ed.) (www.pearsonassessment.com) are available. In this technological age, computer-assisted systems and video programs are ever more prevalent as a method of informing students about career choices.

Increasing popularity of computer and other technology in school-counseling programs raises important issues, including the question of the effectiveness of computer-assisted career guidance programs. As noted earlier, research on the effectiveness of some systems is promising, but additional research would strengthen the validity of these programs for use with students. Computer technology will be an integral part of student learning in the future; therefore, school counselors want to stay up-to-date with available systems, plan how they will incorporate them into the counseling program, be informed about their cost-effectiveness, and keep up with research regarding the use of computer-assisted career guidance systems with students.

Another avenue to use to enhance student awareness, particularly about career opportunities, is special events during the school year, such as career fairs in middle and high schools; job shadowing; field trips to businesses, industries, colleges, and other locations; and guest speakers for classroom guidance presentations. In elementary schools, for example, a simple program is to invite parents into classes to talk about how they spend their days at work. Two primary school counselors organized "Truck Day" at their school to introduce children to firefighting, medical assistance, trash removal, and a host of other

occupations. As with high-tech programs, the effectiveness and relevancy of these traditional types of hands-on and experiential activities should be evaluated by schools.

School counselors help their teaching colleagues focus on student awareness through a variety of instructional activities, computer-assisted programs, counseling services, and special events during the year. These services and activities help students learn about themselves, their interests and abilities, and the career choices available to them or those that may be available in the future. Related to this process of developing self-awareness and an understanding of career opportunities is the necessity for students to explore the world of work and the countless possibilities that exist for each of them.

Exploration

Career exploration begins at the elementary school level as an expansion of guidance activities in the classroom and as special events such as field trips to local points of interest. Appropriate career exploration is reflected in the careful selection of books, films, and other media that schools select for their curricula. Media that are void of sexual and cultural stereotyping and encourage all students to seek a wide range of career possibilities are imperative to student development and learning. As young students become aware of themselves and the opportunities that surround them, they are more ready to explore available career options during their adolescent years.

At the middle-grade and high school levels, career exploration becomes more clearly defined and focused for students. Now, their interests, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses begin to take form and gain clarity. During these years, schools can design activities for students to examine careers that fit their personal and professional interests and abilities. In middle schools, it is common for the curriculum to include career classes to assist with this exploration process. At the high school level, career exploration most likely occurs as a result of special events or individual and small-group counseling. Ideally, high school curricula, as in elementary and middle schools, include classroom career guidance so teachers incorporate career aspects of their subject areas into daily instruction. In this way, while studying poetry in English classes, for example, students might discuss the career of a poet or other types of writers. At the same time, the teacher and students could explore the impact of future technology on these literary professions. How will voice-activated printing or voice-activated videotaping change the artistic and creative worlds of poetry and literature? Likewise, in chemistry and other science classes, teachers might discuss future career opportunities and offer them for consideration. By incorporating career exploration in their lessons, secondary school teachers bring subject areas to life with real meaning and purpose for their students.

In individual and small-group counseling, as well as in classroom presentations, school counselors use computer-assisted programs to encourage career exploration. They also use other media and resources to facilitate this learning process. The *Dictionary of Occupation Titles* (DOT), last published by the U.S. Department of Labor in 1991, is now available online through the *Occupational Information Network* (O*NET) and other sources (online.onetcenter.org). The *Occupation Outlook Handbook*, also published by the U.S. Department of Labor, is online at www.bls.gov/oco. These examples illustrate the power of the Internet and how technology will influence the way students will access information in the future.

At the high school level, college counseling is an important function and includes financial aid information. Some research indicates that school counselors serve as a vital source of information for students and that the frequency of contacts between counselors and students regarding college information may be a predictor of college application rates (Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, & Holcomb-McCoy, 2011). In addition to the plethora of published information and Internet websites about college opportunities, financial aid information is available through a number of sources:

- College Admissions Partners (www.collegeadmissionspartners.com) provides information about financial aid—grants, scholarships, and loans
- College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) has a service program called CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE® to help families simplify the application process (www.collegeboard.com)
- FastWEB (www.fastweb.com) offers information about scholarships and grants
- The U.S. government (www.studentaid.ed.gov) lists information about choosing a college, applying for admission, and ways to pay for higher education

Research has not yet identified one single method of career exploration that is significantly better than others. The rapidly changing world of work and technological advances anticipated in the future make the likelihood that any single method or approach will emerge as a dominant theme unrealistic. For this reason, school counselors at all levels want to ensure that the curriculum, their direct services, and special programs allow a variety of opportunities through which students can learn about present and future trends and directions in a broad spectrum of occupations. Only through adequate assessment and a wide range of exploratory activities are students able to make clear plans and appropriate decisions about their future careers.

Decision Making

Children and adolescents at all levels of education benefit from guidance in their educational planning, because it is through this developmental process that students increase their likelihood of making appropriate decisions and, consequently, successful career choices. Zunker (2012) explained that decision making is a learned skill that should be a component of every student's educational program. Brown (2012) summarized several decision-making theories and noted that the role of the counselor is to help students by choosing models or a combination of models that have the best chance of fitting the student's characteristics and are the most practicable in counseling toward a decision.

Career counseling and decision-making skills go hand in hand. As noted, many decision-making theories and models have been presented, and these are important for counselors to understand in choosing or designing their approaches. Simple steps can be designed to instruct students in decision-making skills, but the complexity of the decision-making process is revealed when individuals begin to use the steps learned and add their own values and unique characteristics to the choices made (Zunker, 2012).

In assisting students with decision-making skills and processes, school counselors find that group sessions facilitate learning and skill development. This may be particularly true for career decision making, in which students in groups share information, reflect on

each member's individual assessment, give helpful feedback, and support individual group members in their decisions. As noted in Chapter 7, when personal attributes and other private information are part of the sharing process, group counseling is an appropriate setting because it offers a safe, nonthreatening, confidential relationship. However, when students need to acquire career information or learn new skills, instructional activities, such as guidance classes, are legitimate helping processes. For example, when a counselor is going to teach a decision-making model to students, group guidance is an appropriate process to use. To guarantee appropriate procedures and media for teaching decision-making skills, counselors want to be aware of current research and literature on the most promising approaches (Brown, 2012; Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004; Zunker, 2012).

The approaches chosen by school counselors and teachers to facilitate decision making and planning for career development ideally offer a wide range of options to students and at the same time encourage future flexibility in the planning process. Because future career trends are unpredictable with any certainty, all students benefit from information and skills that identify many career options and paths for reaching identified goals and attaining satisfying life experiences. Methods and approaches that limit options and restrict career choices are detrimental to student development, and raise questions about ethical practice on the part of the school counselor. In sum, the methods and models of teaching decision-making skills should open doors for students, not close them. Responsive services of comprehensive school counseling programs require a range of counseling and consulting approaches, technical skills, philosophical beliefs, leadership abilities, and professional characteristics that counselors bring to their helping relationships. The following case studies offer brief illustrations of how these approaches, skills, and beliefs merge in an expanded view of a school counselor's role.

Case Illustrations of Comprehensive Programs of Responsive Services

Case Study of Johnny

Johnny was a third-grader in an elementary school that served a wide socioeconomic student population. He started at the school 2 years previously in first grade, and during that time had gained a reputation as a *behavior problem*. Johnny's behavior problems according to anecdotal records by his first- and second-grade teachers included being out of his seat, excessive talking, not completing his assignments, picking fights with other students, and simply being a "pest."

At the start of third grade, Johnny met a new counselor at his school. The counselor had heard about Johnny from his former teachers and the school principal, and the third-grade teacher made a referral to the counselor early in the year based on the previous year's academic performance. The counselor met with Johnny individually to get acquainted, and for Johnny to learn about the counselor's role in the school.

The counselor learned from Johnny that he lived with his maternal grandmother and came from a neighborhood across town. Children from that neighborhood were bused to the school on a 45-minute ride. Johnny's father was in prison for burglary, and his mother lived in another city. He saw his mother occasionally when she came home to visit. He did

not remember his father, and knew him only from pictures he had seen. At the end of this first session, the counselor told Johnny about the availability of counseling services in the school and indicated that, if he wanted, they could talk about other things in the future.

Following this initial session, the counselor arranged with Johnny's teacher to observe him in the classroom. During that observation, the counselor noted that Johnny was quite active in the room, although he seemed attentive to what the teacher was doing and what was taking place in the lesson. He seemed most distracted when the teacher was using the writing easel, charts, SMART board, or PowerPoint presentation in front of the class. The counselor also noticed that Johnny seemed to have a good sense of humor, which unfortunately got him in trouble when he made jokes about things some of the students or the teacher said in class.

After the observation, the counselor and teacher met to discuss the case and review Johnny's records. One finding recommended Johnny for an eye exam in second grade, but there was no indication of follow-up on that recommendation. The counselor also noticed that there were no standardized assessment data to indicate a level of aptitude. The counselor asked his teacher what she thought about Johnny's abilities, and she responded, "He is much brighter than people think." The counselor shared the observation about his sense of humor, and the teacher concurred. "He is very quick with his wit, and that sometimes gets him in trouble with students and teachers." Together they agreed to initiate a referral for educational assessment and screening.

The counselor also contacted the grandmother and asked about any eye examinations Johnny had in the previous year. Evidently, no one had followed up on that earlier recommendation, so the counselor asked the grandmother if she would do that. The grandmother agreed, but was concerned about the cost. The counselor offered to contact the school social worker and nurse to see what financial aid or other support might be available. An eye exam was eventually scheduled and found that Johnny's eyesight needed correction. Eyeglasses were prescribed.

The educational assessment, administered by the school counselor and psychologist on two separate occasions, found that Johnny was indeed quite intelligent, and might qualify for gifted and talented services of the special education program. The grandmother was contacted about these results and a conference was held with her and the teachers to develop an IEP.

The counselor began seeing Johnny individually to discuss all this new information and how he was feeling about the changes in his life—starting third grade, having new eyeglasses, and being in the gifted and talented program. Johnny seemed quite pleased with being in the gifted and talented program, although some of the other students in the resource class intimidated him. He liked his new glasses and did not mind wearing them. He proudly exclaimed, "I can read what the teacher writes on the board."

Eventually, the counselor asked Johnny about forming a group of students from his gifted and talented class, and he welcomed the idea. They chose a few students (with the special education teacher's recommendation and approval) and invited them to join a group. The purpose of the group was to help Johnny learn more about himself and gain support for his relationships with other students in the program. During one group session, Johnny expressed interest in working with animals. Consequently, the counselor and teacher planned a field trip to the animal husbandry division of the agricultural program at the nearby university.

As the year progressed, Johnny became more successful in school and got in less trouble with teachers. He remained an active boy with a quick wit, but had a clearer direction and was more satisfied with himself and with school. Third grade proved to be a successful year.

Case Studies of Latisha, Rhonda, and Rebecca

Early in the school year, teachers referred three girls to the middle school counselor because of behavior problems ranging from being withdrawn and unproductive to being aggressive and disruptive in class. The counselor met individually with each of the students to establish a relationship and determine each girl's perception of the situation. Latisha was a quiet seventh-grader with few friends and an unremarkable school career. In reviewing her records, the counselor learned Latisha had progressed through elementary school without significant incident, and teachers consistently cited her shy and quiet disposition. Her academic achievement, however, did not reflect the high aptitude scores from her third- and sixth-grade assessments. Latisha lived with her mother and older sister. Through initial individual sessions, the counselor learned that Latisha's mother and father divorced when she was 3 years old, and since then the mother had relationships with two live-in boyfriends.

Rhonda and Rebecca were eighth-grade students, but Rhonda was retained in fifth grade. Rhonda's records illustrated a student with above-average ability but less than stellar grades, particularly from fourth grade on. In addition, she had been suspended at various times in seventh and eighth grades for fighting or being disrespectful to teachers. Rebecca's academic profile was similar, but she had no record of suspensions. Rhonda lived with her mother, stepfather, and an older stepbrother. Rebecca lived with her mother, father, and two younger brothers.

During initial counseling sessions with each student, the counselor learned that they all had experienced sexual abuse during their childhood years, and in Rhonda's case, the abuse was continuing. The counselor was the first person Rhonda ever told about the abuse by her older stepbrother, which began during her fourth grade. According to state and federal law and professional ethics for counselors, the counselor informed Rhonda that this information could not be kept confidential, but that she would stand by Rhonda and offer as much protection and comfort as possible. With Rhonda's consent, the counselor called the mother and scheduled a conference with her and Rhonda. The counselor also contacted Child Protective Services to report the suspected abuse.

Latisha's abuse was by one of her mother's boyfriends when she was about 5 years old. The mother learned of the abuse, never reported it, and ended the relationship with the man. Latisha did not have any counseling following the abuse and had never spoken about it until disclosing to the school counselor. The counselor told Latisha that she would have to contact her mother about the abuse because the law required it. The counselor involved the school social worker in a conference with the mother, and together they provided her with information about the law and guidance about calling the authorities. Because the boyfriend was not a caretaker for Latisha and the abuse happened several years earlier, the counselor and social worker suggested that information from Child Protective Services would be appropriate. CPS was in position to determine if the case was abuse or sexual assault, and whether to involve the police in its investigation now.

Rebecca's abuse was by an uncle who babysat for the family when she was in elementary school. When her mother and father found out, they called the police who arrested the uncle and charged him with sexual abuse. Subsequently, the court convicted him and he served time in prison. Rebecca has had no contact with him since then and does not know where he is. She participated in brief therapy with a psychologist, but did not recall much about that relationship. Since entering middle school, Rebecca had not talked with anyone, including her parents, about her experiences.

In each of these cases, the counselor received permission from the girls to meet with their parents. The purpose of these conferences was to encourage the parents to seek additional counseling if the girls wanted it. The counselor also contacted a therapist at a local nonprofit agency, The Hope Center, which specialized in counseling victims of sexual abuse or assault. That contact produced information about the center, services available, and any applicable fees. As a result, each of the parents decided to take their daughter to the center.

The school counselor also asked the girls if they would be willing to meet each other in a small group and share their goals about school, careers, and life expectations. The girls agreed and began meeting regularly with the counselor to help each other with school, career, and friendship issues. The school counselor kept in touch with the therapist at The Hope Center to keep her informed of the group's progress. Eventually, the therapist asked the girls if they wanted to form a group at the center.

One of the many challenges facing these students, as is the case for most victims of abuse, was strengthening their self-worth and gaining confidence in their ability to form healthy, intimate relationships. At the same time, they want to be able to empathize with other victims of abuse and mistreatment. The school counselor contacted a couple who had a farm of rescued animals and asked if the girls could visit the farm. The couple was delighted to have the girls and an informal program, in collaboration with The Hope Center, was eventually established to offer young girls and women who had experienced abuse in their lives an opportunity to take care of animals that had been abused and neglected. For Latisha, Rhonda, and Rebecca, the combination of group counseling in school, group work through The Hope Center, and hands-on activities with animals at the farm proved to be successful interventions to encourage higher school achievement, healthy friendships, and overall brighter disposition about life.

Case Study of Gertrude

Gertrude was an 18-year-old student in her junior year of high school when she and the new counselor first met. She was standing in the middle of the counselor's office, sullen and unkempt, and when the counselor entered, she said, "I'm Gertrude, you're my counselor, and if people don't stop picking on me, someone is going to get it." The counselor had learned about Gertrude from the school principal and the chair of the counseling department, both of whom indicated, "Something has to be done about her this year. We cannot allow the fighting and hostility to continue."

Gertrude's file, examined by the counselor after their first encounter, was extensive. In brief, she was identified as educable handicapped, had spent over a year in an adult sheltered workshop prior to coming back to high school, had a history of epileptic seizures for which she was prescribed medication, had repeated two grades in school, and lived

with her mother, stepfather, and brother. Her stepfather worked for the city sanitation department and her mother was unemployed. As an African American female with all these challenges, Gertrude's future seemed bleak.

After reviewing the folder and interviewing Gertrude, the counselor made tentative plans to do the following:

1. Establish a relationship with Gertrude in which she would make a commitment to stop fighting and select some attainable goals to achieve during the year
2. Check with her neurologist about the medication she was taking
3. Evaluate her academic record, including the year spent in the sheltered workshop
4. Contact her parents to assess their involvement in this relationship
5. Collaborate with the principal and teachers to determine an appropriate educational program
6. Contact the vocational rehabilitation counselor assigned to her case to ensure appropriate career services

In the initial stages of their relationship, Gertrude and the school counselor met once or twice a week. The counselor used a person-centered approach to establish rapport and develop trust. Early in the relationship, Gertrude stated that she wanted to graduate from high school. Because the requirement for graduation included a state competency test, this would be a tremendous accomplishment for Gertrude. Given her exceptionality, the counselor wondered if it were a realistic goal. Together, they decided to work toward completing all requirements, taking the state exam, and achieving either a diploma or certificate of attendance.

After several sessions, Gertrude brought the counselor a poem she had written about their counseling relationship. The counselor was intrigued with the idea that an educable handicapped person wrote poetry. He put the poem up on his bulletin board, and Gertrude beamed with delight. The next session she brought a large loose-leaf notebook filled with poems she had written over the years. These lyrics, primitive in form but rich in spirit, were a strong indication that Gertrude had a willingness and desire to learn and improve her life.

In their individual sessions, the counselor learned that Gertrude was unsure how much medication she was taking. The counselor called the mother, but she added little information. The counselor scheduled a meeting with the neurologist for Gertrude and her mother. Medical records indicated no evaluation in more than 2 years, and Gertrude had not had a seizure since elementary school. After the evaluation, the physician decided to lower the dosage of medication by half. The counselor agreed to keep the physician informed of any changes noticed at school. Within the first few weeks, everyone noticed a change. Gertrude became less sullen, and, although she was still quick-tempered, she was much more congenial and affable at school.

The counselor and principal reviewed the coursework Gertrude completed at the sheltered workshop to determine if they could award any high school credit. After the review, the principal granted six credits for the work completed and promoted Gertrude to a senior-class homeroom. This change in status made a world of difference in her attitude, because Gertrude could now dream of finishing high school with reasonable chance of it becoming a reality. Now she wanted a diploma more than anything. To receive a diploma, she would have to pass the state competency test.

The counselor and classroom teachers met with the competency skills teachers to design a plan of action. Because Gertrude had made noteworthy strides in her behavior at the beginning of the year, the teachers were enthusiastic about helping. The competency skills teachers agreed to take her in one of their remedial groups, and the counselor scheduled time to work with all the students in the class on their peer relationships. In this way, the competency skills class was a support group for Gertrude and the other students.

The counselor continued individual sessions with Gertrude and made contact with her parents by phone and in meetings at home and in school. In these sessions, the counselor outlined the goals Gertrude had chosen and reported on the progress she had made during the year. No specific requests were made of the family except to support Gertrude in her efforts to finish school. Unexpectedly, when Gertrude returned to school after Christmas break, she was a different person. She wore fine dresses that her mother bought at a local thrift shop and gave to her as presents. She was clean and attractive, so much so that her appearance drew favorable comments from the same boys with whom she used to fight in school!

An appointment was made with her vocational rehabilitation counselor, who began sessions with Gertrude at school to discuss future plans and options. Teachers in her classes also offered her guidance about what to do after high school. At the end of the year, Gertrude graduated with a state diploma. She had completed all requirements and passed the state competency test in reading and mathematics.



PERSPECTIVE 10-2

Think about your decision to study and join the counseling profession. List factors or experiences that led to this decision. What were the most important factors, and what were some differences and similarities among them?

These three case illustrations demonstrate the wide range of services that school counselors deliver in helping students, parents, and teachers address a variety of issues. In the case of Johnny, the counselor collaborated with teachers, his grandmother, the psychologist, the social worker, and the nurse to arrange services. She also used individual and group counseling to assist Johnny with changes in his life and cooperated with the local university to encourage career exploration. Similarly, the counselor of Latisha, Rhonda, and Rebecca used individual and group processes with the students, and collaborated with parents, the school social worker, Child Protective Services, and the sexual abuse counselor. In addition, the school counselor contacted the couple who ran the farm for neglected and abused animals. Likewise, in the case of Gertrude, individual counseling enabled the student and the counselor to establish a trusting relationship in which Gertrude identified specific goals and made commitments to achieve them. Collaborative relationships with teachers, the principal, Gertrude's parents and physician, and others moved this case forward. Group processes were established with teachers and students in the competency skills class, and school policies were used to review the educational record and award credit for work completed in the sheltered workshop. In this way, comprehensive services, orchestrated to focus on specific goals, resulted in a successful outcome.

In this chapter and in Chapters 4 and 5, we surveyed the components of a comprehensive school counseling program and described the responsive services provided by professional counselors. These chapters emphasized that educational planning and career development are the ultimate goals of a comprehensive school counseling program. Because the range of services provided by counselors in a comprehensive program is so extensive, evaluation of the program is a legitimate concern. How do counselors know that the services provided are the most needed, and how do counselors demonstrate the effectiveness of these services? In Chapter 11, we examine the role of evaluation and accountability in school counseling programs.

Additional Readings

- Bolles, R. N., & Christen, C. (2010). *What Color Is Your Parachute? For Teens Discovering Yourself, Defining Your Future* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Ten Speed Press.
An interactive book with exercises and worksheets, this book helps students focus on their interests and assets to get the most out of school.
- Brown, D. (2012). *Career Information, Career Counseling, and Career Development* (10th ed., Revised). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Herr, E. L., Cramer, S. H., & Niles, S. G. (2004). *Career Guidance and Counseling through the Lifespan:*

Systemic Approaches (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Zunker, V. G. (2012). *Career Counseling: A Holistic Approach* (8th ed.). Florence, KY: Cengage.
Combined, these last three popular texts offer a comprehensive view of career counseling and development for school counselors. They also provide an overview of important theories that have created this field of counseling and student development.

Websites

- National Career Development Association
www.ncda.org
- Occupational Information Network (O*NET)
www.onetonline.org

Welcome to Mapping Your Future
mappingyourfuture.org

Note: Several websites are mentioned throughout the chapter.

Exercises

1. Interview a worker in any profession or line of work. Through your questions, discover how the individual came to choose his or her career track. Assess the person's satisfaction with the choice and inquire what he or she would change about that career choice, if anything. In class discussions, compare findings of these interviews.
2. In a small group, list career changes that have been brought about by technological advances in the

previous 10 years. After making this list, have your group predict which of these changes will be significantly altered again in the next decade.

3. Review the case studies in this chapter. In a small group, discuss the way each counselor approached the case. What challenges were faced, risks taken, and decisions made that played a significant role in each situation?

CHAPTER 11

Evaluation of School Counseling Programs

Beginning with the 1960s and continuing to the present day, the issue of accountability has emerged as a requisite to the role and function of school counselors (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Erford, 2011d; Schmidt, 2010; Stone & Dahir, 2011). Specifically, attempts to define and describe the role of counselors in schools have included an urgency to demonstrate effective practices. In some respects, historical events that fueled the expansion of school counseling also contributed to calls for program evaluation and counselor accountability. The national alarms that resulted from *Sputnik I* in 1957, the *A Nation at Risk* report of 1983, and the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 are examples of the profession reaping the benefits of governmental action while experiencing pressure to demonstrate what they do and how well they do it.

Over the years, some authors have noted that counselors as a group are reluctant participants in this movement toward accountability (Baker & Gerler, 2008). A typical response has been that counseling is such a personal relationship and counselors do so many interrelated activities that it is impossible to measure a counselor's effectiveness or evaluate a program of services. Such avoidance of program evaluation and professional accountability continues as an obstacle to public recognition and acceptance of school counselors as essential contributors to effective educational programs. The future credibility and efficacy of the profession depend on counselors taking the lead and demonstrating their value to the school community and to the educational process.

In 1985, Lombana listed several explanations as to why some counselors resist being accountable, among them (1) the lack of time counselors have to plan and assess their programs; (2) reluctance to measure what counselors do in helping relationships; (3) confusion about the difference between research and accountability; and (4) fear of what the outcomes might be should counselors gather data to assess their effectiveness, each of which has some validity and remains relevant today (Baker & Gerler, 2008).

Time is a critical and precious commodity for everyone. Because school counselors have responsibility for program leadership and delivery of so many services, it is understandable, if not acceptable, that they spend little time measuring their effectiveness. It is indeed difficult, and at best imprecise, to measure the effects of counseling and consulting services. This imprecision, the difficulty of demonstrating cause-and-effect relationships, understandably contributes to anxiety about the results that evaluations might produce. In part, this lack of confidence is an outcome of school counselors not receiving sufficient preparation in research and evaluation methods (Sheperis, Young, & Daniels, 2010). These perceptions and feelings are understandable, but they should not deter counselors from

acquiring the necessary skills to demonstrate their value and worth to the public who use their services and to the decision makers who employ them.

In this twenty-first century, the literature lacks evidence to indicate that accountability methods are being widely applied by professional school counselors. The educational reform movement in the United States has done little to encourage counselors to embrace comprehensive programs of services or to establish methods of accountability. Quite the contrary—the focus on testing of students as a primary reform initiative frequently distracts counselors from efforts to design, deliver, and evaluate comprehensive programs. This dilemma contributes to questions about the professionalism and identity of school counselors. However, the transformation movement of the school counseling profession has encouraged accountability processes (Erford, 2011d; Stone & Dahir, 2011), and this encouragement has resulted in an emphasis on program evaluation and other accountability processes in comprehensive models of school counseling programs (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2005, 2012; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

Comprehensive program evaluation and counselor accountability consist of a variety of activities, beginning with the needs assessments described in Chapter 6. In addition, activity evaluations; surveys of students, parents, and teachers; self-rating scales; and performance appraisal processes are all part of a comprehensive process to evaluate a school counseling program and assess the counselor's effectiveness in delivering services. Furthermore, gathering, reviewing, and analyzing various forms of data using available accountability models (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012) help validate design and direction of a program.

In this chapter, we examine two aspects of counselor accountability: program evaluation and counselor effectiveness. The purpose of preparing counselors in these evaluation processes is threefold: (1) to help counselors gather data with which to plan their own professional development; (2) to enable counselors to make a case for their value and worth to the decision makers who plan school programs and services; and (3) to invite counselors to participate in research efforts that lend credibility and validity to accepted practices and the future development of their profession.

Several models and methods of accountability are in the school counseling literature (Gilchrist, 2006; Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2001; Stone & Dahir, 2011). In general, contemporary models of accountability suggest the following principles and guidelines:

1. The goals of a school counseling program are best defined and agreed on by all who will participate in the evaluation process. Counselors who seek input from students, parents, and teachers, and who are evaluated by supervisors and school principals usually describe their program goals. In addition, people involved in the program understand and accept these goals. Regrettably, some school systems evaluate counselors according to standards and practices applied to classroom teachers. These evaluations are likely to be invalid if the schools employ counselors to provide comprehensive counseling and consulting services to students, parents, and teachers. Services of a comprehensive school counseling program and leadership provided by the counselor differentiate this role from classroom instruction.

2. All persons who participate in, or receive services from, the school counseling program are involved in the evaluation process. Counselors serve students, parents, and

teachers. At the same time, teachers assume an active role in the school counseling program through classroom guidance activities and as advisors to students. Assessment of program goals and evaluation of effective services include comments from these groups as well as from the counselor, the supervisor, and the principal.

3. Instruments and processes used for gathering evaluation data should be valid measures of services and goals of the school counseling program. For example, survey instruments reflect the goals and objectives of the program. At the same time, functions and competencies of school counselors are assessed by valid instruments related to counselor preparation and employment expectations.

4. Program evaluation is a continuous process aimed at identifying beneficial services and effective methods of service delivery. In school counseling, strategies for performing ongoing evaluation are developed and assessed as an integral part of a comprehensive program. As such, evaluation procedures are not implemented simply to appease decision makers or placate the public during crucial times; rather, they are vital components in the process of designing, developing, and delivering services to students, parents, and teachers in schools.

5. Strong state and local leadership is essential. School counselors who have support from local directors/coordinators and clear state initiatives that encourage comprehensive programs, responsive services, and reasonable methods of accountability readily face the challenge to overcome pressure to perform administrative, clerical, and other unrelated functions.

6. The central purpose of school counselors' performance appraisal is to assist them in helping the school achieve its mission. Evaluation of school counselors, by definition, enables supervisors and principals to demonstrate that services provided in a comprehensive counseling program contribute to the school's ability to educate all students.

7. Equally important to helping the school reach its goals is the related purpose of enhancing the counselor's professional development and encouraging skillful improvement. Evaluations that enlighten and educate counselors about their strengths and weaknesses and involve these counselors in making decisions about their professional development far surpass methods that simply identify weaknesses and call for personnel action to remove or reassign counselors.

8. Program evaluation and counselors' performance appraisal both imply that action will be taken based on the findings gathered in the assessment process. When school counselors assess their programs of services by asking students, parents, and teachers to comment, they commit to review the results of this study and make changes in the program that, based on their findings, are professionally sound and ethically appropriate. Likewise, when supervisors and principals use reliable and valid methods to evaluate counselors, there is follow-through on recommendations generated by these evaluations. To accomplish these goals, school systems offer professional and financial support to counselors to help them further their education, attend workshops, and pursue other avenues to develop and strengthen their knowledge and skills.

9. Evaluations are most helpful and effective when they emphasize positive goals. Program evaluation focuses on the benefits of services and leadership provided by school counselors while identifying unmet goals of the program. Likewise, counselor

performance appraisal identifies weaknesses for which counselors may need assistance, but also highlights strengths for which counselors can receive recognition; for example, a counselor could be invited to share particular knowledge and skill with colleagues through in-service activities. By focusing on positive as well as negative aspects, evaluation methods offer a balanced perspective and encourage both program improvement and personnel development.

10. If the purpose of hiring counselors for schools is to help students be successful in their academic achievement, then measures related to student success are appropriate variables to use in accountability procedures (Stone & Dahir, 2011). Schools gather and maintain many pieces of data related to school attendance, academic progress, discipline action, and other factors related to school success. These data are available to counselors in searching for appropriate measures to evaluate comprehensive programs of services.

Over the years and as noted earlier, authorities have offered several models for evaluating school counseling programs. Table 11.1 presents one such model by Stone and Dahir (2011) known by the acronym MEASURE, a six-step accountability process that counselors can use to demonstrate program success, whether they adopt the ASCA National Model or another design for comprehensive school counseling programs. Dollarhide and Saginak (2012) presented several accountability models that are available in the school counseling literature. Readers will want to explore various models with the caveat that research about the efficacy of specific models is limited at this time.

TABLE 11.1 MEASURE: A Six-Step Counselor Accountability Model

Mission: In this step (*M*), the counselor makes the connection between the comprehensive counseling program and the overall mission of the school.

Element: In this second step (*E*), the counselor with the school's leadership team (possibly the Advisory Council) identifies and reviews significant elements, particularly important data, in the school improvement plan.

Analyze: In this next step (*A*), the counselor and team analyze identified data elements using various techniques, and determine those that pose the greatest threat to student success.

Stakeholders—Unite: In this fourth step (*SU*), the counselor and team select stakeholders from the school system and greater community to include on the leadership team and involve them in the accountability process.

Results: In this step (*R*), the leadership team and counselor examine results of the activities and services used to address targeted elements. Based on this assessment, the school and counselor determine changes or adjustments to make in the comprehensive program of services.

Educate: In this last step (*E*), publication and dissemination of findings occur to educate stakeholders about the impact of the school counseling program. This is a vital step in helping partners attain clear understanding of the role of counselors in schools and how comprehensive programs make a positive difference in student achievement.

Source: Adapted from C. B. Stone & C. A. Dahir (2011), *School Counselor Accountability: A MEASURE of Student Success* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Note: This is a brief summary of one accountability model from the school counseling literature. Readers will want to review the full description of this six-step approach as well as other program evaluation models.

Types of Program Evaluation

Program evaluation consists of a variety of procedures that focus on different aspects of a comprehensive school counseling program. Several terms define and describe various types of evaluation, and school counselors want to be familiar with the language of program evaluation when planning and selecting processes to use. The following list offers a starting point:

Informal and Formal Evaluations: Informal evaluation occurs every day by everyone. They use processes and judgments that do not require any structure or formality, and as such, they are unsystematic by nature. Formal evaluations, however, are more structured and systematic. Both forms of evaluation have value, depending on how they are applied and how their results are used.

Formative and Summative Evaluations: Formative evaluations are ongoing processes to gather information and collect data for the primary purpose of improving a program of services. Summative evaluations provide information with which to make decisions about adopting, continuing, or expanding a program (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011).

Process Evaluation: Process evaluation indicates whether the counselor or other professionals completed assigned services and strategies planned for a program, and answers questions, such as: “How many people were served?” “How much time was spent on service delivery?” “How many sessions were held?”

Needs Assessment Evaluation: As noted in Chapter 6, needs assessments are an important component in program planning. They help counselors and schools understand the concerns of various populations, enable counselor and teams to set program priorities, and provide direction for the program (Erford, 2011d).

Outcome Evaluation: As the name implies, outcome evaluation is an assessment of outcomes of the services that counselors and others provide in comprehensive programs. As seen throughout this text, a comprehensive school counseling program consists of a variety of interrelated services. The overall purpose of these services is to assist students in their educational, social, personal, and career development; therefore, outcome evaluation investigates the degree to which specific services assist students in reaching these intended goals. Accordingly, counselors and others perform outcome evaluations during the intervention process to assess progress toward the intended goals, as well as at the end of the service to determine whether they reached the goals.



PERSPECTIVE 11-1

As shown in this section, several types of evaluations are available to counselors, including informal and formal evaluations. Informal processes exist in everyday life and everyone participates. Think of ways that you continually evaluate yourself, the behavior of others, and events that occur daily. How positive are the thought processes you use in these informal and continuous evaluations?

The following sections review four general methods of program evaluation. These methods cover the scope of evaluations mentioned earlier, especially process and outcome procedures, that are available to evaluate school counseling programs. The first of these, goal attainment, focuses on the implementation of strategies and services to meet stated program goals.

Program Outcomes

Inherent in every school counseling service or activity is the belief that it has a meaningful purpose that ultimately contributes to the broader educational mission of the school. This ultimate purpose is in the goals and objectives chosen for a school counseling program. Usually these goals and objectives, as noted earlier, are chosen based on the results of needs assessments performed by the counselor with students, parents, and teachers. We evaluate program goals as one of two types: (1) learning-related goals, or (2) service-related goals, presented in Chapter 6.

Learning-Related Goals. Evaluating this type of goal requires the development of assessment instruments and processes to measure particular learning expected of the population served. For example, for students who participate in career awareness activities, a counselor might create a questionnaire to assess students' knowledge before and after participation in the program. In some instances, the trait measured might be assessed through commercially produced tests or other types of instruments. Form 11.1 is a sample questionnaire for students who have participated in a career awareness program.

FORM 11.1 Student Career Awareness Questionnaire

Students: Please respond to the following statements to indicate your feelings and thoughts about the Career Awareness Group in which you have participated. Circle one response for each statement. Thank you.

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|--------|
| 1. This group helped me learn things about myself that I did not know before. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 2. This group helped me learn about different careers. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 3. I have a better understanding of what education I need for the job I want to have. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 4. The counselor listened and understood my concerns. | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 5. I would recommend this group to other students. | YES | NO | UNSURE |

Students: Please write down some of the careers that interest you and the educational goal you would achieve to pursue the careers on your list. (Educational Goals are: High School, Technical School, Two-Year College, Four-Year College, Graduate School, Beyond Graduate School).

Careers of Interest:

Educational Goals:

FORM 11.2 *Sample Report of Counselor's Group Work*

Month: _____

1. Number of small-group counseling sessions held during the month _____
2. Total number of students who participated in group counseling this month _____
3. Number of group guidance sessions led this month (small groups and classroom guidance) _____
4. Total number of students who participated in group guidance _____

Group Counseling Issues and Topics:

_____Group Guidance Topics:

Service-Related Goals. There are three ways to evaluate service-related goals. The first is simply to report the number of occasions on which a service is provided. A second is to count the number of people who participate in a given service. The third method is to survey people to obtain their observations about a particular service. This last method is a measure of consumer satisfaction.

Form 11.2 is a sample report about group counseling in an elementary school that uses the combined method of counting sessions and participants. On this form, the counselor reports the number of groups led and the number of students who participated during the month. As noted earlier, such “process evaluations” quantify how counselors spend their time and show the amount of services provided and the number of people served. A quantitative analysis is important when counselors want to show how their time is used, the caseloads they are serving, and the expenditure of their time across varied services and activities that make up a comprehensive school counseling program.

Form 11.3 is an example of a survey that asks teachers to report their observations about group counseling services. Results from this survey indicate how the counselor is spending time and the level of teacher satisfaction. Forms 11.2 and 11.3 address the same counseling service—group counseling—but examine its implementation from different perspectives. The type of evaluation procedures chosen by counselors, therefore, depends on what questions need answering.

Measuring the number of participants receiving services or the amount of time devoted to a particular activity ensures that counselors offer a broad spectrum of services to meet the needs of a wide population. If school counselors provide only a few services or meet only the needs of narrowly defined populations, they do not design comprehensive programs to deliver a wide range of responsive services. By quantifying their services, counselors begin to make decisions about how to adjust their programs and where to place emphasis to meet

FORM 11.3 Teacher's Evaluation of Group Counseling

Teachers: Please complete the following questionnaire to help us evaluate the counseling groups that have been part of the school counseling program this semester. Indicate your response to each item by circling the appropriate number, 1–5, where 1 means you strongly disagree and 5 means you strongly agree. Thank you.

	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		
1. The students who have participated in group counseling have benefited from the service.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I have observed behavior changes in some students who have participated in groups.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The counselor has given me appropriate feedback about students who have participated in groups.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I would like more students to have the opportunity to be in group counseling.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The counselor had a sufficient number of groups available this semester.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The focus of the group counseling sessions seems to be appropriate, based on information received from the counselor.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The feedback from students about their participation in group counseling has been mostly positive.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The group schedule has not interfered with student class work.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Parents have expressed concern about their children participating in these groups.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I need more information about what goes on in these groups.	1	2	3	4	5

the needs of more students, parents, and teachers. What follows is an example of how counselors can use process evaluation to assess and refocus program services:

A new director of counseling services was concerned about how counselors were spending their time. The counselors and the director developed a monthly reporting form and found that although the elementary and middle school counselors used group processes frequently, senior high counselors did virtually no group counseling. In discussing these results with the counselors, the director learned that most of the secondary counselors were uncomfortable with group processes and uncertain of their group leadership skills. As a result, a consultant was hired to lead group workshops for all the counselors. Follow-up surveys the next year showed that some secondary counselors began implementing group counseling in their programs. One experienced counselor who had never led groups before enthusiastically reported success in starting groups at his high school.

Reports that enable counselors and supervisors to examine where time is being spent and the number of students, parents, and teachers being served are important for program evaluation. However, these reports do not address the effectiveness of services adequately—especially as related to outcomes of student progress in school. To do this, counselors must examine identified measures and the effect of responsive services on particular student outcomes.

Student Outcomes

School counseling services help students obtain information, develop coping skills, adjust behaviors, and achieve other objectives. In all cases, the leadership and services that counselors provide to reach these goals hopefully produce some measurable or observable result. In other words, if counseling services complement the learning process, we should be able to assess their impact through student outcomes. Sometimes, outcomes generalize across populations. For example, a school might focus on one outcome that covers the entire student body, such as: “We will decrease the student absentee rate by 10 percent.” We can measure this goal simply by measuring the student absentee rate before the service begins and comparing that finding with the student absentee rate after the service is complete.

One problem with this type of outcome evaluation is that it fails to identify how individual students have functioned; it simply looks at whether the broad goal has been achieved. In our student absentee example, we might find that the school absentee rate has improved because students who had relatively good attendance improved their rate even more. However, students who had high absentee rates might continue to be absent. Yet, because the overall school rate improved, these students might receive little, if any, notice.

To address the needs of individual students, counselors review outcome data for individual counseling as well as collaborative activities. Say, for example, an elementary counselor is seeing a child who is mildly school phobic. The counselor helps the child by using individual play therapy, consults with the teacher about classroom strategies, and confers with the parents about how to handle “getting ready for school” in the mornings. The outcome of all these services is measured by asking parents to report instances of high anxiety at home, receiving feedback from the teacher about the student’s frequency of remaining in class without crying, interviewing the child about progress made, and observing the child’s adjustment to the school schedule and classroom environment.

Program evaluation methods to assess student outcomes can take several different forms. For example, evaluation can be based on predetermined or prearranged standards, such as: “At least 85 percent of the eighth-grade students will be able to complete the course preregistration card correctly.” This type of outcome is generally based on some minimally acceptable level that teachers and counselors believe can be attained.

Another type of outcome procedure compares students in a specific program with students who have not yet participated. This type of research or evaluation design uses a control-group format to demonstrate that the service was possibly a causal factor in bringing about a desired change. For example, at the beginning of the school year, a counselor plans a study-skills group of middle-graders who participate for 9 weeks. After this period, students show higher grade-point averages in comparison to their grade reports for the previous year. A second group of students, called the *waiting group*, begins the study-

skills program after the first 9 weeks of school are over and the first report cards released. This second group, a matched sample of students, shows no significant difference in grades from the previous year's report to the first 9 weeks' report. After the first 9 weeks of school, this matched group is placed in the study-skills program, and the experiment is replicated during the second grading period. In this replication, significant changes in grades for the second group of students occur between the two grading periods similar to the findings with the first group of students. Given these results, the counselor can be reasonably certain that the study-skills program had a positive effect on helping groups of students improve their grades.

A third outcome procedure asks students about their reactions and involvement in a particular service or asks parents and teachers to observe and record their findings regarding changes in students' behavior and learning. This type of assessment might examine students' attitudes, knowledge, and behavioral changes as measured through surveys, behavioral checklists, rating scales, or case study reports. As noted earlier, the reliability and validity of these assessment instruments are vital to the appropriate development of evaluation procedures and the subsequent interpretation of findings.

A fourth outcome assessment uses a pretest and a posttest comparison. In this procedure, the counselor gathers data to show the student's current standing. The counselor then includes the student in a specific service, such as group counseling. After a period of time, the same instrument or process used in the pretest is repeated and results are compared with the earlier findings. As an example, an elementary counselor who assists a school-phobic child might use a pretest and posttest procedure that involves observing and recording behaviors when the child is referred, and then note the changes after counseling and consulting services are offered. Another example is a group counseling program with middle-graders who have high absentee rates. Students' absences could be monitored for a few weeks before beginning the group counseling program and then again, when the students have concluded the group sessions. Positive differences between these absentee rates demonstrate that the group experience encouraged students to attend school on a regular basis.

Another form of student outcome is to examine specific measures of student achievement. For example, a comprehensive schools counseling program might target achievement in a specific area such as mathematics. Several interventions by teachers, counselors, and volunteer tutors happen throughout the year, with the counselor leading the design and implementation. At the end of the year, math scores are compared with scores of the same students from the year before indicating a measure of progress in math achievement.

All these methods of evaluating student outcomes are available to school counselors. Measuring student outcomes is important, but it is also necessary to satisfy the clients who seek school counseling services. Counselors realize that the end does not always justify the means, so consumer satisfaction is another method of demonstrating counselor accountability.

Consumer Satisfaction

Collecting data to measure individual student outcomes for all students receiving services may be an impossible task given all the responsibilities of a school counselor in a comprehensive program. Some outcome research is essential to demonstrate the efficacy

of counseling services, but if this is all that counselors did, they would have little time to deliver the services they were attempting to evaluate. In evaluating school counseling services, programs can use empirical measures or perceptual measures. It is the latter, perceptual measures, that fall into the realm of consumer satisfaction.

School counselors use different methods to gather data from students, parents, and teachers in assessing the overall level of satisfaction with program services. Informally, counselors may have follow-up conversations with students and teachers, or send emails or make phone calls to parents. More formally, counselors design questionnaires for students, parents, and teachers to complete, expressing their views and opinions about school counseling services. In evaluating programs, it is advisable to ask students, parents, and teachers—the consumers of counseling services—what was important from their perspective. For this reason, school counselors use methods to gather information about how these consumers perceive the services of a school counseling program. Figure 11.1 is an example of a high school student survey.

Based on the results shown in Figure 11.1, we can conclude that most students believe the counselor is available, listens to students' concerns, and maintains confidential relationships. The counselor might be concerned that 33 percent of the students did not feel, or were unsure, that the counseling sessions helped them make decisions (question 3). Nevertheless, a strong percentage said they would recommend the counselor to other students who needed services.

One way in which school counselors use consumer feedback to influence decisions about their counseling programs and services is to compile results from all the counselors in the school system and summarize these findings for the district administration and school board to review. Comments from students, parents, and teachers are important in demonstrating the value of comprehensive counseling services and in illustrating what role and functions are vital for counselors to fulfill in schools. Sometimes, administrators and board

FIGURE 11.1 High School Student Survey of Counseling Services

Summary Report

Instructions: Please indicate your satisfaction with the counseling services you received this year by circling your responses to each statement. Thank you for your assistance.

	YES	NO	UNSURE
1. The counselor was available to see me when I needed assistance this year.	77%	15%	8%
2. The counselor listened to my concerns and seemed to understand me.	70%	20%	10%
3. The counseling sessions helped me focus on my concerns and make decisions.	67%	25%	8%
4. The counselor kept information I shared in counseling confidential.	98%	1%	1%
5. I would recommend the counselor to other students who need services.	85%	5%	10%

members are unaware of all the services that counselors provide. By distributing an annual summary of their program evaluation, counselors take control of who they are and what services they offer in helping students reach their educational, personal, and career goals.

An annual evaluation also enables supervisors of counseling services, school principals, and counselors to make decisions about which services to expand and which to deemphasize. Adequate assessment of all counseling programs across the school system places administrators and supervisors in a better position to make decisions about personnel, budget, staff development, and program changes. In contrast, without adequate evaluation, such decisions are arbitrary or intuitive with little or no basis in research evidence. Program and personnel decisions made in this manner reflect a serendipitous management style and, likewise, assume that counseling is a fortuitous process without foundation in specific knowledge bases, helping skills, or efficacious models of professional practice. In contrast, decisions based on evidence elevate school counseling as a profession and inform students, parents, and teachers who expect reliable and dependable services.

By gathering data from the consumers of school counseling services, counselors and their supervisors are in a stronger position to make purposeful and meaningful decisions about future directions for the program. It demonstrates a counselor's intentionality regarding evaluation. This counselor characteristic refers to an awareness and willingness to receive feedback from others and use that feedback to alter behaviors, develop plans, and change direction to meet the needs of those served by the program. Although this kind of internal feedback from students, parents, and teachers is valuable to school counselors, sometimes an external review of programs is also beneficial.

Expert Assessment

Perceptions of local supervisors, including school principals, and from students, parents, and teachers offer counselors an opportunity to broaden their assessment of what services are effective and which new services may be needed. However, if only these types of internal perspectives are used, counselors and their supervisors will limit annual evaluations to restricted and repetitious views of what should be. In addition, they risk neglecting broader visions that reflect national and international trends and issues in the school counseling profession. To guard against this kind of parochial stance, counselors and supervisors occasionally seek assistance from outside experts in school counseling who offer an external perspective to the evaluation process (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011).

Expert assessment of school counseling services includes a range of evaluation processes, from observing a single counselor in an individual activity to gathering data about all the services of a comprehensive program across an entire school system or state (Gysbers, Lapan, & Blair, 1999). By using outside experts to gather information, counselors and supervisors increase the objectivity of the evaluation process, thereby ensuring results that are more reliable. Because of the expense of hiring outside consultants to perform this type of evaluation, schools do not use this method often. For this reason, schools use internal evaluations in conjunction with the external reviews for comparison purposes and to keep expenses down.

In designing an external evaluation of school counseling programs, counselors and supervisors formulate several questions. By asking appropriate questions and giving serious thought to their responses, counselors and supervisors ascertain the potential value of an external review and determine whether the time and cost will produce results to

strengthen their program of services. Some questions that counselors and supervisors might entertain are as follows:

- 1.** *What do we want to know?* A proper evaluation begins by asking clear questions about what counselors and counseling supervisors want to learn about the program of services. These questions can be generated in meetings with counselors, administrators, and teachers. Generally, the questions focus on specific areas of concern, such as: "Are responsive services being provided by counselors an efficient way of addressing the needs of students in our school?" Given the personnel available, are school assignments and ratios of counselors to students appropriate at all levels? Are there more effective and efficient methods of providing services than are currently being done?
- 2.** *Who is involved in designing the evaluation?* Because school counseling services are an integral part of the educational program, a wide representation of school populations should be included in planning an external review. Therefore, school counselors join with supervisors, principals, teachers, other student services specialists, and parents to ensure that a broad area of concerns is considered. In secondary schools, student representatives are also included.
- 3.** *Who are the outside experts to conduct the evaluation?* Depending on the location of the school system and the availability of external resources and internal funds, an evaluation committee will recommend to the superintendent the evaluators to include on the review team. By using questions formulated during the planning phase, the committee can narrow the field of reviewers needed. Examples of possible external reviewers include counselor educators from local and state colleges and universities, consultants from state departments of education, counselors and counseling supervisors from neighboring school systems, renowned professionals in counseling, and officials in state and national school counselor associations. Credentials of potential reviewers and cost factors are important in making this recommendation to the superintendent and the local school board.
- 4.** *What instruments and processes will be developed as part of this evaluation?* In most instances when an external consultant is hired to perform an evaluation, the design of the study, including the instruments to be used, is part of the contract. The evaluation committee presents the major questions and issues for the review, and the consultant designs the instruments and the processes for gathering data. In some instances, the evaluation committee might ask consultants to design a study and sample instruments as part of the process of selecting an external reviewer.
- 5.** *Who will receive the results of the study and how will they be used?* As with other types of assessment processes, such as testing and observing students, program evaluation requires careful and appropriate use of data. The evaluation committee is responsible for determining how results will be reported and for whom the report is intended. These decisions are guided by the overall purpose of the external review and the specific questions included in the design of the study. In most cases, the report of an external review is shared with the local school board through the superintendent's office.

In most instances, superintendents who want an outside evaluation initiate external reviews of school counseling programs. These requests are often a prelude to

making decisions about whether to add new counseling positions to the system. Typically, these external reviews consist of surveys designed cooperatively with the school system and administered to students, parents, and teachers and onsite visits to schools to interview the principal and counselors. Form 11.4 illustrates a typical student survey used in these reviews. Similar parent and teacher questionnaires gather observations across matching items. In the onsite interviews, a structured interview is usually desired. Form 11.5 shows sample questions that evaluators could use with principals during an onsite visit.

The preceding evaluation processes, from service-related accounting methods to external reviews, aim at helping counselors, supervisors, and school principals assess the direction and benefits of a comprehensive school counseling program. Evaluation methods, such as those suggested in this section, provide an overview of programs and assess the value of specific counseling and consulting services. As you might ascertain from the

FORM 11.4 Student Survey Form for External Review

School Counseling Program Review
Student Evaluation of a School Counseling Program

Dear Student: This questionnaire is part of a review of the counseling program in your school. We appreciate your help and ask that you answer these questions about the counseling program. Thank you for assisting us with this review.

School: _____ What grade are you in this year? _____

Check One: Male _____ Female _____

Circle your responses for each of the following questions.

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|--------|
| 1. Do you know who your school counselor is? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 2. a. Did you meet with your counselor individually this year? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| (If "No," skip item 2b. If "Yes," about how many times did you meet with the counselor? _____) | | | |
| b. If you met with the counselor individually this year, was the counselor helpful to you? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 3. Would you recommend the counselor to your friends if they needed to talk to someone? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 4. Did the counselor meet with your parents this year? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 5. Did the counselor talk with your class or do an activity in your class this year? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 6. Were you in a small group led by your counselor this year? | YES | NO | UNSURE |

If you participated in a small group with the counselor this year, please answer questions 7 and 8. If you were *not* in a group with the counselor, *skip these two questions*.

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|--------|
| 7. Was the group helpful to you? | YES | NO | UNSURE |
| 8. Do you believe the group was helpful to other students? | YES | NO | UNSURE |

(continued)

FORM 11.4 (Continued)

School counselors do many things. What do you think should be the *three most important* services the counselor does in your school? Please check [✓] the three (3) most important items.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help students with personal problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Help students make decisions about school | <input type="checkbox"/> Information about summer programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help students and teachers get along | <input type="checkbox"/> Give information about the community | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with referrals for school and agencies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work with groups of students | <input type="checkbox"/> Do classroom presentations | <input type="checkbox"/> Help parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help students get along | <input type="checkbox"/> Help teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with class schedule |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Career (job) information | <input type="checkbox"/> College information | <input type="checkbox"/> Do paperwork (forms, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help families with problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship and financial aid | <input type="checkbox"/> Supervise or give tests |

Is there anything the counselor *does not* do in your school that you would like to see done? If so, what is it?

Is there anything the counselor does that you think takes too much time away from more important services? If so, what?

description of these methods, collection and use of data is an integral part of the process. In order to make informed decisions about services to provide in comprehensive programs and to evaluate effectiveness of such services, counselors want to be competent in how to gather and analyze data.

Data and Evaluation

Strong emphasis on school counselor accountability found in professional literature and current research encourages counselors to use available data that schools collect, as well as data that counselors gather to measure effectiveness of responsive services (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Erford, 2011d; Schmidt, 2010; Stone & Dahir, 2011; Young & Kaffenberger, 2009). With the adoption and promotion of the ASCA National Model (2005, 2012), a fresh phrase—*data-driven programs*—has emerged in the literature to correspond with this emphasis on accountability. For some counselors, *data-driven* might be an intimidating phrase because of apprehension about their knowledge and ability to collect and use data. Other counselors might be averse to the phrase because it appears to lack humanistic qualities of caring and compassion associated with the counseling profession. On its own, the term may overemphasize objectivity in helping relationships. For both groups of counselors, two conditions may help in accepting it into their role:

FORM 11.5 Structured Interview Form for External Review

School Counseling Program Review
Structured Interview

Principal: _____
School: _____

1. Overall satisfaction with the school counseling program. What are some strengths and weaknesses of the program?
 2. What is the MOST IMPORTANT service the counselor(s) performs in the school? What is the LEAST IMPORTANT activity of the counselor(s)? Is there anything the counselor(s) does that you believe SHOULD NOT be done? If so, who should be doing this?
 3. How does the counseling program tie into the school goals? (Is the program an integral part of the school? Is the counselor on the school improvement team? How do the teachers integrate guidance into their classes?)
 4. Are *all* students' needs being met by the program? If not, what are the barriers that the counselor(s) has to overcome? (What about exceptional children, at-risk, vocational students, etc.?)
 5. How is the counselor supervised? (What about counselor evaluation? Methods of data collection? How are summary ratings reached?)
 6. How does the school counselor(s) interface with other student services professionals, e.g., psychologists, social workers, nurses? (Look for team approaches, collaborative efforts, etc.)
 7. As the school leader, what is your involvement in the counseling program?
 8. How is the program perceived by students, parents, and teachers?
 9. Anything else you want to share about the program?
-

1. School counselors will need basic knowledge and application about how to use, collect, and analyze data in their programs. They attain such competency through appropriate counselor preparation programs. If you feel more preparation would be helpful in this regard, use textbooks, attend professional conferences, enroll in graduate courses, and read journals to keep up to date.
2. Successful counselors will develop an understanding and appreciation of the balance necessary between humanistic qualities expected in the profession and appropriate use of data. Monitor your belief system and use data gently, always cognizant of the people in the process.

In learning to collect and use data to evaluate comprehensive programs, counselors may find the following descriptions and explanations helpful:

Data exist everywhere. When you think about it, data are everywhere you look around a school and in your life. From the specific time that you set an alarm to wake up to in the morning to data found in the school improvement plan, you will find countless examples of data. In schools, useful data are in student records, report-card grades, absentee summaries, discipline reports, free-lunch lists, special education

screenings, and many others. Knowing that data exist in all aspects of your day helps ease anxiety about how to use them.

Descriptive data. Technically referred to as *descriptive statistics*, these data help summarize certain phenomena in the school and among students. Examples of terms used with descriptive data are the following:

- *central tendency* (e.g., mean, mode, median) is a way of expressing average scores or results
- *variability* (e.g., frequency, range, variance, standard deviation) helps understand the spread of scores or results
- *reliability* and *validity* (see Chapter 9)

Aggregated and disaggregated data. All data collected on a particular subject across an entire student group are aggregated data. Once you begin to sort and analyze these data by subgroups, such as girls and boys, grade placement, family income, or other category, they become disaggregated.

Longitudinal data. It is helpful for schools and counselors to examine data over a period of time. For example, it might be helpful to track reading scores of a particular group of students from year to year to make curriculum and instructional decisions about reading content and pedagogy.

How you collect and use data in comprehensive school counseling programs is an important decision that will define your accountability measures and also demonstrate to people how you balance program effectiveness with caring and compassionate qualities of a school counselor. This section does not prepare you adequately for that professional stance, so we encourage you to refer to sources cited throughout this chapter. In addition to the collection and use of data for program evaluation, an equally important aspect of the evaluation process is performance appraisal of school counselors (Erford, 2011d).

School Counselor Evaluation

With increased attention on the performance of our schools, the educational community has placed greater emphasis on evaluation and accountability of professional personnel. For the most part, this emphasis has been on evaluating classroom teachers, but in recent years, schools have given more attention to other professionals and specialists. Overall, adequate evaluation of school counselors has been rare because of the complexity of the task. In the past when counselor performance appraisal occurred, little written documentation justified the evaluation processes used, or, worse, the performance of counselors was assessed on instruments and with processes designed for teacher evaluation.

The importance of counselor evaluation was highlighted by Wiggins (1993) in his 10-year follow-up study of counselor effectiveness. More than 230 counselors who participated in the original study 10 years earlier completed demographic surveys and gave permission for their supervisors to complete a “Satisfaction with Performance Blank” (SWPB). A total of 193 surveys were usable and results showed that only 12 counselors improved their ratings since the original study. More distressing, 33 counselors received lower ratings than they did 10 years earlier, and 81 percent of the counselors who rated low

in the first study remained in that category 10 years later. This latter finding not only emphasizes the consistency of ratings for low-performing counselors, but more tragically stresses that little is done to help these counselors improve.

In the 1990s, evaluation of school counselors received more serious attention. Some states and local school systems developed specific criteria and designed processes particularly suited for school counseling practice (Breckenridge, 1987; Housley, McDaniel, & Underwood, 1990; Schmidt, 1990). Generally, the standards for assessing school counselors included criteria related to program planning and organization; group and individual counseling skills and processes; and consulting skills and processes including group guidance presentations, coordination of services, ethical practice, and professional development.

Objectives used in counselor performance appraisal parallel the process and outcome goals used in program evaluation described earlier. Individual school systems across the country and school counselor performance standards included in the ASCA National Model (2005, 2012) have advanced the profession in this matter. Yet, specific procedures for gathering data related to these standards and goals have not been systematically developed. Furthermore, when processes have been developed, it remains unclear who are the most suitable observers and evaluators to gather data and make judgments about school counselors' performance (Erford, 2011d). These issues help outline some of the major concerns surrounding the evaluation of school counselors. The first is to determine what needs to be evaluated.

What Will Be Evaluated?

Despite an extensive range of literature and research explaining the role of school counselors, developing models of practice, and creating theories of counseling, uncertainty remains about the counselor's role and purpose in schools. As Dollarhide and Saginak (2012) pointed out, "evaluating school counselors continues to engender uncertainty and confusion because, generally speaking, we are still not quite sure about what it is that school counselors do" (p. 118). Answering this question is not only critical for determining the overall role and major services of school counselors, but it is also necessary in identifying the practices that illustrate effective functioning.

The first step in developing appropriate evaluation procedures for school counselors is to determine their major functions and identify specific activities that define these functions. In this text, the functions that make up a comprehensive school counseling program have been identified as planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating. Aligned with these functions are many activities and responsive services to help all students be successful in school. Broad categories of responsive services include (1) counseling individuals and groups; (2) consulting with students, parents, and teachers, individually and in groups; (3) assessing students' interests, abilities, behaviors, and overall educational progress; and (4) coordinating student services in the school. In addition, counselor evaluation examines the extent to which a counselor ethically and legally performs these practices and the attention the counselor pays to his or her own professional development.

Once we have described the major functions and practices of school counselors, the next step in the evaluation process is to determine the nature of measurement used to assess performance. Here, we consider three possible approaches. One, as we saw earlier in program evaluation, is to assess the outcomes of particular practices and activities selected by a counselor to address identified concerns. For example, a counselor who uses

group guidance activities with middle-graders to help them develop friendships might be evaluated, in part, by a questionnaire on which students indicate what they have learned in the group and how many new friendships they have attempted as a result of the group. A second way to assess counselor success, as with program evaluation, is to examine performance in relation to an agreed standard. An example of this is when a counselor chooses individual counseling to assist students in decreasing their absentee rates, with the goal that all students who participate will decrease unexcused absences by at least 50 percent. In this approach, the counselor is evaluated not by the outcome itself, but by the level at which the outcome is observed. For example, if a majority of students who received counseling for absenteeism decrease their absences by 50 percent or more, the services would be considered highly successful. A third way to measure counselor performance is by combining the first two procedures—that is, by stating what outcomes should be observed and at what level of performance these outcomes are expected.

Identifying major functions and responsive services and determining the standards of performance provide the overarching framework for an evaluation process. The next step is to design and create specific methods to gather data with which judgments about whether services have been rendered and the level of performance at which they have been delivered are possible.

How Will Evaluation Be Done?

Because school counselors assume a leadership role and provide a wide range of services and activities, it is difficult to narrow or limit the methods of evaluating their performance. Unlike teacher evaluation, which depends heavily on classroom observations, school counselor appraisal relies on diverse methods of data collection and documentation. It is one thing to create a performance appraisal form and another to select appropriate methods to gather data as evidence to use when applying ratings on such forms, such as observations, interviews, simulated activities, self-assessments, product development, video- and audiotapes, schedules, consumer feedback, records of services, and memos of personnel action.

The variety of activities expected of a school counselor and the confidential nature of some services in a school counseling program raise questions about methods of gathering data for performance appraisal. For this reason, it is important that counselors and supervisors plan and agree jointly on the methods to use. Ideally, this planning process takes place at the beginning of the school year, with the supervisor and counselor determining which major functions are going to receive attention and how to collect data to assess their performance.

Observations. Although some counseling services are not directly observable due to their confidential nature, other activities by school counselors are. Large- and small-group guidance, parent education programs, and teacher in-service presentations are examples of activities that supervisors can observe to assess a counselor's instructional and communication skills. These activities usually have an instructional or informational purpose without the element of confidentiality. Sometimes observations can occur during helping relationships, such as in parent or teacher consultations, but these are carefully planned, and permission of all participants is recommended.

One type of observation used to gather data includes structured, planned observations that usually occur with specific activities and focus on a particular skill or practice

agreed on by the supervisor and counselor before the observation. Another type of observation is less structured and informal. Such incidental observations might include a counselor's interactions with students and staff in the office, conversations in hallways, participation at faculty meetings, and exchanges with administrators. The focus on these types of observations should be factual data and information that has some bearing on the counselor's performance of one or more of the major functions. When incidental information has little or no relationship to vital practices, cannot be documented by formal observation, and cannot be altered through additional training or other assistance, it should not be part of a school counselor's evaluation.

Audio- and Videotaping. When an observation would be an intrusion to the helping relationship, other methods of evaluation are preferable. An alternative method of collecting information is by using audio- or videotaping. Students of school counseling use audio- and videotaping to demonstrate basic helping skills, and these same methods are available to supervisors and counselors in assessing performance on the job. When tapes are part of the evaluation process, clients grant permission and understand how evaluators will use these tapes. Elementary school counselors also seek parental permission because of the uncertainty, in a legal sense, of a young child's ability to give permission.

Supervisors who listen to or watch tapes to assess performance and assist counselors with their professional development are knowledgeable of the skills they attempt to evaluate. Supervisors who are not prepared in counseling, such as school principals, are unable to offer much assistance and guidance in helping counselors identify specific goals for further development. Because a major purpose of performance appraisal is to help individuals identify areas for professional growth and development, supervisors who are unable to provide this information offer little assistance. Such an assessment is, at best, incomplete.

Interviews. Another method of gathering information about a counselor's performance is to interview the counselor about program plans, specific services, and student outcomes. The most effective use of interviews is with a structured format that focuses on specific issues, skills, or other aspects of the school counseling program. General interviews that have no specific focus do not generate clear information with which to assess strengths and weaknesses. In addition, a single interview may not be sufficient. Ideally, a series of structured interviews about the same topic may be the most desirable format.

Self-Assessments and Portfolios. An evaluation is incomplete if it does not consider the counselor's perspective, and one way to do this is with a self-assessment. An honest self-assessment can assist the supervisor and counselor in identifying initial areas of focus for annual performance appraisal. One way for counselors to do self-assessment is to keep a portfolio of data, products, and material about their performance during the year. Figure 11.2 illustrates categories and evidence that school counselors could collect to place in their portfolios. With the technology available today, counselors can compile and manage their portfolios with computer programs that include PowerPoint presentations, video and audio segments, scanned photos, and other material to depict their performance of different services.

Self-assessment processes enable counselors to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and recognize these aspects of their professional practice. By identifying areas for further development, counselors are in a stronger position to seek assistance, both

FIGURE 11.2 Sample Evidences for a School Counselor's Portfolio/Counselor Functions and Sample Evidence**Program Planning**

- Needs assessments (e.g., instruments and results)
- Written annual plans (with goals, strategies, assignments, and time line)
- Evidence of work with advisory committee
- Weekly/monthly schedules
- Evaluation instruments and procedures

Counseling

- Case studies (anonymous)
- Sample interventions used with students
- Outcome data (e.g., teacher and parent feedback, survey of students)
- Structured interview summary
- Evidence of follow-up
- Group counseling topics and schedule

Consulting

- Summary of consultations with teachers and parents
- Audience feedback of presentations (e.g., teacher workshops)
- Evidence of using assessment data
- Schedule of group presentations (e.g., classroom guidance and parent education)
- Summary of meetings with student services team members

Coordinating

- Samples of written communication (e.g., program brochure and newsletter)
- Documentation of coordination of student services (e.g., meeting agendas)
- Assisting teachers with guidance integration (e.g., notes from faculty meetings)
- Outcome data from referrals made to agencies (e.g., mental health)

Student Assessment

- Evidence of using assessment results with students, parents, and teachers
- Written instructions to assist teachers with schoolwide testing
- Summary of individual student assessments (anonymous)
- Meetings with parents and students to explain testing results

Professional Performance and Development

- Involvement in school activities (e.g., faculty sponsor of club or activity)
- Professional workshops and conferences attended
- Presentations at professional conferences
- Publication in professional journals/newsletters
- Membership and activity in professional counseling associations
- Awards and recognition received as a professional counselor

supervisory and financial, and to develop plans of action to improve their performance. In addition, self-assessment procedures allow counselors to gather evidence of appropriate and adequate practice to share with supervisors and evaluators during performance appraisal conferences throughout the evaluation cycle. Form 11.6 shows a brief self-assessment questionnaire for school counselors.

FORM 11.6 School Counselor's Self-Assessment Sheet

	Mostly True	Partially True	Not True
1. The school counseling program included a range of services this year—individual counseling, group counseling, parent and teacher consultation, referrals, large-group guidance, and student appraisals.	—	—	—
2. I spent an adequate amount of time this year in individual helping relationships with students.	—	—	—
3. I led several group sessions with students each week.	—	—	—
4. I collaborated with teachers to plan classroom guidance lessons during the year.	—	—	—
5. I developed a written plan for the program this year.	—	—	—
6. The advisory committee assisted in developing the plan, designing needs assessments, and evaluating the program.	—	—	—
7. The school's testing program, clerical tasks, and administrative functions did not detract from my services to students, parents, and teachers.	—	—	—
8. I successfully facilitated large groups of students, parents, and teachers this year.	—	—	—
9. The time I spent in crisis intervention this year was sufficient.	—	—	—
10. I used appropriate assessment procedures and data to make decisions about professional services for students.	—	—	—
11. I attended workshops, conferences, or classes this year for my own professional development.	—	—	—
12. I was active in professional counseling associations this year.	—	—	—

Products. School counselors create many products and reports for their schools and programs, and these items can be assessed as part of the overall performance appraisal process. Specific competencies that might be addressed by examining these materials and reports include writing, program planning, and public relations. Examples of products that counselors and supervisors might review are the annual plan for the school counseling program, brochures developed to advertise specific services, evaluation forms designed to assess program functions, sample memos to teachers, and letters to parents.

Counselors also develop instructional and informational materials to use in classroom guidance, group counseling, and other services with students, parents, and teachers. These materials demonstrate a counselor's knowledge of developmental stages, understanding of how to use various media in different activities, and creativity in designing useful materials for presentations. Such materials could be included in the assessment process.

Consumer Feedback. Asking students, parents, and teachers for feedback in evaluating specific functions and activities is important in the overall evaluation of the school counseling program. These perceptions are also valuable in helping counselors assess their performance. Figure 11.1 is an example of how student feedback can help assess a specific program function as well as a counselor's performance.

Sometimes consumer feedback is received incidentally by counseling supervisors, school principals, and counselors. These informal and often unsolicited comments and suggestions about a school counselor's performance are useful when they provide reliable information, are consistent with documented evidence, and can generate realistic actions to bring about appropriate change. In contrast, comments heard infrequently or that contradict other overwhelming evidence to the contrary are less useful. If supervisors and principals cannot validate and support incidental feedback with their own observations or other data, it is unwise to use such information in the performance appraisal process. Finally, if incidental feedback is used in counselor evaluation, the implication is that some action to remedy a negative situation or reward a positive report will be taken. If no action is possible, then incidental feedback is not germane to the evaluation process.

Schedules and Records. The school counselor's role in a planned program consists of varied activities to assist specific populations in achieving identified goals. Therefore, part of an evaluation includes the plans that counselors write, the goals they set, the schedules they make, and the records they keep. Of all these evidences, records are ones that may be most difficult to include in the performance appraisal process. Because many of the relationships counselors form with clients are confidential, opening records to a supervisor or principal is inappropriate unless specific constraints are set and guidelines followed.

Two types of records counselors can share as part of their performance appraisal process, if they take the necessary precautions, are records of decisions made regarding the type of services that they provided and records of outcomes. In all cases when counselors share these types of records, the client's identification is private and the anonymity of the client maintained. The purpose of sharing these types of data is not to find out who has received services, but rather to assess what concerns have been addressed by the counselor, why the counselor chose certain services and techniques in assisting with these concerns, and what were the results of the services provided. By reviewing these kinds of records, a supervisor can advise and support the school counselor about clinical and program decisions he or she has made. It is through these evaluations that the counselor and supervisor are able to assess diagnostic skills and decision-making processes used to determine services for students, parents, and teachers.

Personnel Memos. Finally, other documents to include in a performance appraisal are memoranda used to cite specific instances where a counselor has not met a performance standard. Memoranda such as these are used when counselors perform in unsatisfactory ways and a plan for improvement is established and carried out. In cases where a plan for improvement does not ultimately result in satisfactory performance, personnel action to terminate or reassign a counselor may be necessary. Memos of visits, conferences, and plans of action, as well as other documents filed during this phase of the performance appraisal process, are essential to protect the rights of the individual counselor, ensure the

integrity of the school counseling program, and verify support offered by the supervisor and school system to remedy the situation.



PERSPECTIVE 11-2

Reading about performance appraisal is easy compared to actually experiencing it. Being evaluated generates emotion even when you expect positive feedback. What experiences do you recall about being evaluated for your work? What emotions do you remember, and how might this reflection assist you in receiving evaluative feedback as a professional counselor in the future?

Who Will Evaluate?

The final question to consider in designing a performance appraisal process for school counselors is, who will do the evaluation? In most instances, school counselors report directly to building principals, who are ultimately responsible for the counselor's evaluation. This is a dilemma for both the counselor and principal, who want to create reliable and valid performance appraisal processes. Generally, school principals have little or no knowledge or preparation in the practices and competencies that have been identified as major functions of professional school counselors. The validity of counselor performance appraisals is threatened when major functions are not evaluated adequately to recognize strengths and remedy weaknesses. Given this caveat, the challenge is to find ways in which counselors can receive appropriate supervision and accurate evaluation for the leadership and services they provide in schools.

Among all the responsive services that counselors offer in school settings, most are assessable by competent observers and evaluators who have little or no preparation in counseling processes and skills. A qualified principal who understands the broad purpose of student services, including counseling, is able to assess a counselor's ability to plan and lead a comprehensive program. At the same time, an effective administrator should be able to assess general employee behaviors such as punctuality, staff relationships, and communication skills, all of which are vital to effective programs.

A school principal or other noncounselor may have difficulty assessing skills and competencies unique to the counseling profession. These skills include student assessment competencies particularly in the area of tests and measurement, counseling theory and techniques, and consulting processes. Occasionally, principals may have adequate preparation in some of these areas, but most graduate programs in educational administration are not oriented toward theories of human development and basic helping skills. For this reason, effective models of counselor performance appraisal include observations, interviews, and other methods of collecting and analyzing data by appropriate supervisors of school counseling programs.

One way to create adequate and appropriate performance appraisal procedures is for principals and counseling supervisors to cooperate in the evaluation of school counselors. In such cooperative models, principals and supervisors jointly assess the counselor and combine their talents in offering sufficient program supervision. Schools that design a collaborative model of counselor evaluation ensure that administrative supervision by principals is

adequate, and at the same time, they encourage appropriate clinical and technical supervision and support from qualified counseling supervisors.

In many school systems, the luxury of having a supervisor of counselors is unrealistic because of fiscal constraints. In such cases, other models of supervision could be explored. These models might include peer supervision approaches where lead counselors in a school district assume supervisory duties to help their peers assess clinical and technical performance. Other models include the use of counselor educators from neighboring colleges and universities to assist with counselor supervision or contracts with counselors in private practice who consult with school counselors and principals and help them design adequate performance appraisal processes. The goal in all these alternative approaches is to design evaluation processes that help counselors strengthen their program leadership and improve delivery of effective services.

All methods of gathering data to assess counselor performance have value when used for professional improvement and when collected and analyzed by competent evaluators. In part, the competency of the evaluator is either enhanced or diminished by the validity of the procedures and instruments used in the assessment process.

Performance Appraisal Processes and Instruments

School counselors not only assist in the development of appropriate procedures for their performance appraisal, but they also participate in designing adequate tools with which to do an accurate assessment. Specifically, the instruments designed to gather data for school counselor performance appraisal relate to particular areas of counselor preparation and practice as well as job expectations. For example, an instrument created to evaluate a counselor's skill in group counseling is beneficial if the school understands and supports group procedures. In contrast, an instrument usually used to observe teachers in classroom instruction is useless in assessing individual counseling sessions. Instruments designed to evaluate counseling programs and responsive services related to specific approaches and behavior are generally accepted as indicators of a particular professional practice.

The first step in designing adequate and appropriate instruments is to identify the functions and services expected of a school counselor. After this is done, the counselor, supervisor, principal, and other appropriate people list specific practices to observe in judging overall satisfactory performance. Earlier, you learned about surveys and other methods to gather data for program evaluation. Similar instruments can be designed or adapted to gather information about a counselor's performance. Form 11.7 is one example of an observation instrument designed to assess a counselor's group presentation skills in classroom guidance, parent education programs, or teacher in-service training. Implicit in this instrument is the understanding that the observer/evaluator who uses the instrument is knowledgeable and skilled in these instructional methods and facilitative practices.

Although some counseling functions are more difficult to assess by observation, with client permission, it is possible to do so and appropriate instruments can be designed. The interview method described earlier is one way to avoid the difficulties of observing confidential relationships. A knowledgeable supervisor of counseling programs, for example, could plan a structured interview with a counselor about individual counseling services in the program. By using a series of short, structured interviews, the supervisor gives

FORM 11.7 Counselor Observation Form for Large-Group Presentations*Large-Group Observation Form*

Instructions: Use this form to observe the school counselor when presenting group instructional or informational sessions. Record the counselor's leadership behaviors during the presentation by using the observation code below and any additional comments you have.

Observation Code: ✓ = Appropriate use of practice
+ = Strong indication of practice
- = Weak or negative use of practice
N/O = Not Observed

COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICES**1. USE OF TIME**

- 1.1** Has all materials ready for presentation
- 1.2** Begins the presentation on time
- 1.3** Uses presentation time efficiently
- 1.4** Ends the presentation on schedule

Comments: _____

2. PRESENTATION AND RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

- 2.1** States purpose and makes goals clear to group
- 2.2** Gives clear instructions and directions
- 2.3** Speaks clearly
- 2.4** Listens fully to group members' comments and opinions
- 2.5** Uses appropriate communication skills (e.g., questioning, structuring, linking)
- 2.6** Remains open to comments and suggestions from group members
- 2.7** Uses appropriate media and instructional methods
- 2.8** Summarizes main points of presentation

Comments: _____

3. GROUP MANAGEMENT

- 3.1** Encourages participation of all group members
- 3.2** Maintains participants' attention
- 3.3** Demonstrates appropriate group management skills
- 3.4** Respects the individuality of participants

Comments: _____

4. LEADER RESPONSES

- 4.1** Affirms group members
- 4.2** Reinforces participants' willingness to share
- 4.3** Answers questions clearly and concisely
- 4.4** Provides feedback to all participants when appropriate

Comments: _____

5. OUTCOMES

- 5.1** Asks participants for feedback during presentation
- 5.2** Uses evaluation measures and methods to assess outcomes

Comments: _____

FORM 11.8 Structured Interview of Counseling Relationship*Interview with Counselor*

Instructions: This structured interview form may be used to ask the counselor about specific individual counseling relationships. Ideally, the questionnaire is used in a series of interviews about the same case.

1. Understanding of client's concerns and appropriate use of diagnostic methods and procedures.

Question: Tell me about the concerns of the student you are seeing. How does the student perceive the main issues, problems, and areas of concern?

Question: Describe the assessment procedures you have used, and how the results of these methods led you to choose the intervention(s) you selected for this student.

2. Understanding of the helping process and the stages of a counseling relationship.

Question: Where are you and the student in your relationship at this point? Relate the progress you have made to the phases of a helping relationship.

Question: Given the nature of the student's concerns, are you satisfied with progress of the helping relationship at this point?

3. Knowledge of counseling approaches and techniques.

Question: Tell me about specific techniques, strategies, and interventions that you have used in this counseling relationship.

Question: What was the rationale for choosing these approaches?

4. Use of evaluation methods to assess progress.

Question: How much longer do you expect to be seeing this student?

Question: What are your goals for the remainder of the counseling relationship?

Question: What methods do you plan to use to evaluate the overall success of this intervention?

constructive feedback about the counselor's use of assessment and diagnostic procedures, knowledge of counseling approaches, and understanding of the helping process. Although such interviews do not assess specific counseling skills and techniques, they provide information about the counselor's knowledge and use of specific approaches to counseling. From such an assessment, a supervisor may decide whether specific counseling skills need more thorough evaluation. Form 11.8 is a sample questionnaire designed to assess a counselor's use of individual counseling.

When counselors in schools evaluate comprehensive programs and services, many methods are available to formulate goals, plan new strategies, and refocus their programs. No single method of assessment is adequate to gather data for making these critical decisions. In performance appraisal of school counselors, this caution is even more critical. Because the instruments and processes to evaluate counselor performance are primitive at best, successful supervisors take great care to avoid forming firm conclusions without ample evidence. School counselor performance appraisal, ethically and legally, must provide the best reasonable processes and instruments to judge a counselor's effectiveness. The school counselor who is being evaluated shares this responsibility with the building principal, the counseling supervisor, and any other person involved in the process. By ensuring adequate evaluation of school counseling programs and of the competencies demonstrated, school counselors and those responsible for their supervision behave in professionally ethical and responsible ways. Ethical behaviors and legal issues surrounding the practice of counseling in school settings are the topics addressed in Chapter 12.

Additional Readings

- Erford, B. T. (2011d). Accountability: Evaluating programs, assessing needs, and determining outcomes. In B. T. Erford (Ed.), *Transforming the School Counseling Profession* (3rd ed., pp. 245–287). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
A readable chapter on accountability that includes several samples of performance appraisal instruments for school counselors.
- Fitzpatrick, J. L., Sanders, J. R., & Worthen, B. R. (2011). *Program Evaluation: Alternative Approaches and Practical Guidelines* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
A general text on program evaluation, this book provides an excellent overview of the topic.
- Stone, C. B., & Dahir, C. A. (2011). *School Counselor Accountability: A Measure of Student Success* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
A practical guide to accountability that reflects the changing role of school counselors as emphasized by the transformation movement and the ASCA National Model.
- Young, A., & Kaffenberger, C. (2009). *Making DATA Work* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: American School Counselor Association.
This workbook helps counselors become comfortable and proficient with data in their schools and for their programs.

Websites

CAREI Research and Evaluation
www.cehd.umn.edu/carei

Center for Collaborative Action Research
cadres.pepperdine.edu/ccar/define.html

Exercises

1. In a small group, discuss a time when you were evaluated for your performance. Share your feelings about this experience and talk about aspects of the evaluation that could have been changed to make it a more positive event. What aspects did you control that could have been adjusted to make the evaluation more helpful?
2. Pretend you are a school counselor. Your principal has indicated that he or she wants you to document the effectiveness of your counseling relationships. What would you do in planning such documentation? Create the documents you would use and share them in class.
3. Visit and interview a school counselor about evaluation methods he or she uses in assessing program

effectiveness. If the counselor has any forms to share, bring them back to class, and compare them with other forms your classmates obtain in their visits. Use these visits to stimulate discussion about what counselors are—or are not—doing to be accountable in their schools.

4. As a way of comparing what counselors in non-school settings do for accountability, visit a counselor in an agency or higher education setting and ask the same questions you used for exercise 3.
5. In a small group, brainstorm with classmates and list measures that already exist in most schools that could be used as outcomes of a comprehensive school counseling program.

CHAPTER 12

Professional Ethics and Legal Issues

Professional school counselors practice according to standards, regulations, laws, and codes established by counseling and educational associations, state and federal governmental bodies, the courts, and other institutions. They make decisions about correct services and proper conduct based on current literature, research findings, preparation standards, certification and licensing criteria, federal and state laws, local school board policies, administrative regulations, and professional ethics. The ethical guidelines followed by most school counselors are the *Ethical Standards for School Counselors* adopted by the American School Counselor Association (2010b) and the *Ethical Standards of the American Counseling Association* (ACA, 2005). You can download these ethical codes from each organization from their respective websites.

By themselves, ethical standards do not always provide clear choices for counselors to avoid conflict, to make the best decisions for all involved, and to maintain freedom from legal entanglement. They are, as their names imply, guides to professional practice that counselors apply to individual situations using their own personal and professional judgment. Ethical standards serve as a broad framework within which counselors interpret situations, understand legal and professional implications, and make reasonably sound judgments in assisting clients. As Dollarhide and Saginak (2012) metaphorically noted, ethical codes “function like curbs on the road; they define limits of our practice, but within these limits, there is room to express individual preferences in how we practice the art and science of counseling” (p. 33). For this reason, it is imperative that school counselors have a clear understanding of their professional standards; acquire knowledge of local, state, and federal policies; and stay abreast of legislation that governs schools and counseling practices.

In this chapter, we examine the ethical standards developed by the American School Counselor Association (2010b) and consider legal issues related to the ethical practice of school counseling. In some respects, counselors today face ethical dilemmas similar to those of their predecessors years ago. Confidentiality, testing procedures, use of school records, and appropriate referral processes remain important issues for counselors today, just as they were decades ago. For example, contemporary school counselors struggle to maintain helpful and trusting relationships with students who exhibit antisocial behaviors, while at the same time serving their school and society. They balance the goal of helping students with the understandable need for parents to be involved in educational decisions regarding their children. Counselors in schools are also concerned about maintaining professional relationships with community agencies, classroom teachers, and others who have a stake in the education of children and adolescents.

Today's ethical issues are complicated by ever-changing social structures and a technologically advancing society. So, although broad topics are similar to those of years past, contemporary school counselors experience increasingly complex issues when dealing with ethical and legal questions. As one illustration, changing family structures make parents' rights difficult to ascertain. In a blended family, for example, where stepparents have custodial responsibilities and natural parents share legal custody, decisions about who has access to school records, who can see a child at school, and what permissions schools need to talk to family members about a child's progress are not easily defined.

The explosion of computer technology has also added a new dimension to ethical practice (Remley & Herlihy, 2010; Wheeler & Bertram, 2012). Increased accessibility to students' records, use of computer-assisted instructional programs, and the need for adequate preparation of counselors in the use of computer technology are a few areas of concern. Counselors who use computers to maintain records, present computer-assisted instruction, administer computer-scored inventories, correspond by e-mail, use social media in providing services, and manage data for a comprehensive school counseling program are knowledgeable about ethical guidelines and aware of legal parameters within which to use this expanding technology. There is no end to computer applications envisioned for the future. As a result, knowledge of ethical standards and legal precedent will continue to be a necessary condition of professional practice. School counselors want to keep abreast of ethical standards for online counseling developed by the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC), the American Counseling Association (ACA), the Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW), and others. They also follow standards developed by professional organizations such as the National Career Development Association (NCDA) for using the Internet as a resource for counseling students (Brown, 2012).

With these present and future considerations, the first step for school counselors is to understand their ethical responsibilities and learn about how these obligations influence daily practice. As mentioned earlier, school counselors generally are guided by the ethical standards of the American Counseling Association (ACA, 2005) and, specifically, by the standards of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2010b). For the purposes of this text, the ASCA standards are presented as the foundation and framework for the ethical practice of school counseling.

Ethical Standards for School Counselors

Ethical standards provide the framework for professional practice and responsible behavior, and at the same time contribute to the identity of the profession governed by these measures of conduct. The standards for school counselors are not absolute guides for every decision counselors must make in their daily practice. Instead, they are guidelines that enable counselors to establish a foundation of ethical behavior. In serving clients, assessing needs, sharing information, and performing the wide array of responsive services expected of them, counselors search for additional guidance to complement their knowledge and understanding of ethical guides and legal restraints.

Although an ethical code of conduct plays a central role in defining a professional's responsibilities, it is not a sufficient guide. Part of a school counselor's responsibilities is to understand the limits of the profession's standards and supplement one's knowledge of

sound ethical and legal practices with information from many resources and learning activities. Counselors have a responsibility to use sources available to assist them in acquiring this understanding, including workshops, conferences, and publications.

In addition to serving the three major populations of students, parents, and teachers, school counselors are responsible for carrying out assignments delegated to them by school principals and counseling supervisors. In performing these functions, school counselors work with other professionals, such as school social workers, nurses, and psychologists, as well as professionals in the community. The responsibilities associated with such a wide range of clients and professionals make it necessary to delineate ethical guidelines according to different areas of accountability and service. For this reason, the ethical standards put forth by ASCA are divided according to the counselor's responsibilities with students, parents/guardians, other professionals, the school and community, the counseling profession; and maintenance of the standards. By aligning these different responsibilities enumerated in the ASCA code with guidelines from the ethical standards of the American Counseling Association, school counselors develop a broader understanding of how their profession views ethical behavior and professional practice.

In the following sections, the responsibilities outlined by the ASCA ethical standards help to define and explain the ethical practice of school counselors. It would be helpful to download a copy of the 2010 ASCA code and have it available while reading these sections. In addition, you may want to locate other professional codes of ethical conduct, such as those for school social workers and school psychologists, and compare them with the standards for school counselors.

The ASCA ethical standards begin with a preamble that defines the profession and summarizes ethical responsibilities of school counselors. It also enumerates five broad principles of the profession, which state that all people are entitled to the following:

- respect and dignity, and to be treated accordingly. As such, school counselors should provide access to comprehensive school counseling programs that advocate for all students across diverse categories that include ability/disability, age, appearance, socioeconomic status, ethnic and racial identity, family structure, immigration status, language, religious and spiritual beliefs, and sexual orientation/gender expression.
- receive resource information and support in helping them achieve self-direction and progress toward self-development. Counselors should provide special attention and care to students who, for whatever reason, have not received adequate educational services in the past.
- understand the impact and meaning of educational choices available and how such decisions can influence future career, educational, and other life opportunities.
- privacy, and therefore can expect school counselors' relationships with students to observe the laws, policies, and ethical standards regarding confidential proceedings in schools.
- a safe school environment that counselors help create, where students are free from verbal and physical mistreatment, bullying, negligence, or other types of hostile behavior.

Following the code's preamble, specific areas of responsibility are described. The first area of ethical behavior for school counselors addresses their responsibilities to students.

Responsibilities to Students

Section A of the ASCA ethical standards covers 11 areas pertinent to a counselor's responsibilities to students. They are as follows:

- Responsibilities to Students
- Confidentiality
- Academic, Career/College/Post-Secondary Access and Personal/Social Counseling Plans
- Dual Relationships
- Appropriate Referrals
- Group Work
- Danger to Self or Others
- Student Records
- Evaluation, Assessment, and Interpretation
- Technology
- Student Peer Support Program

School counselors have primary responsibility to ensure that their counseling services and the educational program of the school consider the total development of every student, including educational, vocational, personal, and social development. Counselors accept responsibility for informing students about the purposes and procedures involved in counseling relationships and use appropriate assessment and diagnostic techniques, including interpretation of results, to determine which services to provide.

Ethical school counselors avoid imposing their values on students. Such counselors encourage students to explore their own values and beliefs in making decisions about educational plans and life goals. This responsibility is not an easy task. Counselors, too, have strong values, and in dealing with young people, particularly minors in a school setting, they may not easily ignore or disguise these convictions. Figure 12.1 summarizes an important court case involving a counselor education graduate student dismissed by her university from the program of study because she refused to counsel gay students. Although this case was appealed and the university eventually settled with the student out of court, the facts and current ruling highlight the ethical standard that addresses counselors' values.

Even if a counselor is successful in concealing his or her beliefs, such behavior may threaten the trust one would expect in a counseling relationship. The challenge for school counselors is to balance their views with the goals and purposes of the helping relationship as understood by the student. In this way, counselors may find it appropriate to express their views and allow students to consider these opinions while broadening their available options. There is a distinct difference between expressing one's views and imposing one's values. When a counselor's values and views are so strongly opposed to those of the student's that a healthy and helpful relationship is impossible, the counselor is obliged to assist the student in finding another professional with whom to establish a beneficial relationship. Ethically, the counselor assists with this referral.

Ethical standards stipulate that school counselors protect the confidentiality of students' records and information received from students in counseling relationships. In practice, the concept of *confidentiality* and its limitations are explained to students at the

FIGURE 12.1 *Ward v. Wilbanks et al.****Case Summary**

A graduate student in counselor education at Eastern Michigan State University refused to work with a gay client during her field experiences. She was subsequently dismissed from the program for failing to adhere to ethical standards of the American Counseling Association followed by the university's counseling program. A graduate student in the school counseling program, she maintained that her religious beliefs gave her the right not to counsel clients who wanted guidance regarding gay or unmarried sexual relationships, even if such refusal might harm clients who asked for assistance.

The ACA ethical standards (2005) hold that counselors should not impose their values on clients or discriminate against clients based on sexual orientation. Similarly, the ASCA standards (2010b) expect school counselors to respect students' values, beliefs, and cultural upbringing and experience while not imposing the counselor's personal values on students or their families.

The university saw the student's refusal to work with gay clients as a violation of ethical standards, which could be a serious problem for gay students who are frequently bullied or otherwise harassed, and are susceptible to depression as well as suicidal thoughts and behaviors. The reality of being shunned by a school counselor rather than receiving appropriate care and support might be devastating to a student trying to cope with his or her sexual orientation and sexual development.

A lower court upheld the student's dismissal from the program. During 2012, the case was on appeal in the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the court reopened Ward's suit. According to a news report from ASCA, on December 10, 2012 Eastern Michigan University and Ward settled the case out of court.

Sources: Adapted from the American Civil Liberties Union (www.aclu.org/lgbt-rights/ward-v-wilbanks-et-al-case-profile) 11/3/11. ASCA electronic message to membership, December 11, 2012.

**Note:* Other court decisions support the use of the *ACA Code of Ethics* by university counselor education programs. See *News & Notes* (2012, February).

beginning of a helping relationship. Because of the ages of students they serve, school counselors are in a unique position regarding confidentiality. Courts have not always recognized that minors have the capacity to understand and establish confidential helping relationships. For this reason, school counselors not only need to be aware of their professional code of ethics, they also need to know their legal responsibilities regarding confidentiality. First, counselors need to know the difference between *confidentiality* and *privileged communication*.

The term *confidentiality* refers to an individual's right to privacy inherent in professional counseling relationships. The necessity for and appropriateness of confidentiality are explicit in ethical standards of conduct. By contrast, *privileged communication* is a legal term used to indicate that a person is protected from having confidential information revealed in a public hearing or court of law. As such, confidentiality is an agreement between the school counselor and student through the informed consent process when starting a helping relationship. Privileged communication, however, is granted to students by states that have laws protecting the confidences students share in relationships with their school counselors.

Several states grant some form of privileged communication rights to clients in counseling relationships (Remley & Herlihy, 2010). In addition, some states have specific statutes that grant privilege to school students in counseling relationships. However, these

statutes are not uniform, which makes it challenging to determine what rights clients and students have from state to state. Where statutes exist, school counselors want to know the limitations of these laws, and that it is the student, not the counselor, who is protected by the law. For example, some statutes grant privileged communication to students, except when a judge in court requires disclosure. At the same time, students may waive their right to privileged communication, in which case a counselor has no basis for withholding information requested by the court. Some states provide for parental involvement in decisions of whether to waive privileged communication, so school counselors should be aware of what state law stipulates regarding parental permission. The Guttmacher Institute (www.guttmacher.org) follows research and reviews state policies regarding counseling minors about health care and sexual development. Figure 12.2 presents main features in 2011 from the institute's website about various services and state policies.

FIGURE 12.2 *Minors' Consent Laws (as of 2011)*

Abortion. In 2011, six states had no statute or case law pertaining to abortion consent for minors. Two states and the District of Columbia allowed all minors to consent to abortion services. Twenty-two states required that at least one parent's consent to a minor's abortion, and ten states required prior notification of at least one parent. Four states required notification of, and consent from, a parent before a minor had an abortion, and six more states had parental involvement laws that were temporarily or permanently enjoined by courts.

Adoption. Twelve states had no applicable policy or law regarding the rights of minor parents to place children for adoption. Twenty-eight states and the District of Columbia allowed all minor parents to choose to place their children for adoption. Five states required the involvement of a parent and five more states require legal counsel.

Contraceptive Services. At the time, four states had no pertinent statute or case law regarding contraceptive services for minors. Twenty-six states and the District of Columbia allowed all minors who are 12 years of age or older to consent to contraceptive services. Twenty states permitted only certain categories of minors to consent to contraceptive services.

Medical Care for a Child. Twenty states had no policy, statute, or case law in 2011 regarding a minor's parental right to seek medical care for her or his child. Thirty states and the District of Columbia gave all minor parents the right to consent to medical care for their children.

Prenatal Care. At the time, thirteen states had no statute or case law about minors' consent to prenatal care. Thirty-two states and the District of Columbia allowed all minors to consent to prenatal care. One state allowed a minor to consent to prenatal care during the first trimester, but required parental consent for most care during the second and third trimesters. Thirteen states permitted, but did not require, physicians to inform parents when a minor daughter sought or received prenatal care if it was in the child's best interests. Four state laws permitted minors who seem mature for their age to consent to services.

Sexually Transmitted Infection Services. All states and the District of Columbia permitted all minors to consent to sexually transmitted infection (STI) services. Eighteen statutes allowed, but do not require, physicians to notify a minor's parents that the child sought or received STI services when considered in the best interest of the minor.

An additional note regarding confidentiality and privileged communication pertains to consulting relationships and group processes. Generally, courts have not recognized privileged communications beyond two people; therefore, when a counselor shares information with a third party or students self-disclose in group counseling, these confidences may or may not be protected by state statutes. When doubt exists, this issue will likely be resolved by a judge's ruling in a court of law.

A final consideration about confidential counseling relationships relates to situations that indicate a clear and imminent danger to a student or to others. When students share information indicating their intentions to harm themselves or others, or when they, themselves, are being abused, counselors cannot keep this information confidential. It is important to consult with other professionals in these cases.

Sadly, sometimes children and adolescents are forced into abusive situations that include physical harm, sexual assault, emotional or physical neglect, or psychological harassment. Counselors are obligated to learn about laws and procedures governing the reporting of child abuse and neglect, and to fulfill their responsibilities as outlined by such statutes and regulations. In cases of abuse and neglect and instances of imminent danger to students, school counselors must break confidence and report to appropriate authorities. Protection of the student is imperative, so timely reports are essential, and, in cases of potential suicide, the security of students is paramount.

Other areas of ethical responsibility covered under this section of the ASCA standards are the development of appropriate comprehensive school counseling plans; the use of referrals when necessary; maintaining secure records in providing services; understanding the limits and uses of sole possession records; proper use of evaluation, assessment, and interpretation; screening prospective members for group counseling; notifying parents of child's involvement in group work; and protection of group members from physical and psychological harm. In addition, school counselors avoid dual relationships that might diminish their objectivity. If a dual relationship is unavoidable (e.g., counseling a family relative in your school when you are the only counselor available), each counselor has a responsibility to take action that would address the potential for harm to the client.

Two additional areas of responsibility mentioned by the ethical standards are the appropriate use of technology and appropriate protection of students who participate in peer-helper programs. As computer technology is used increasingly in schools, counselors have a responsibility to ensure that (1) students' individual needs are met by various programs, (2) counselors have adequate understanding of programs being used, (3) counselors provide follow-up assistance to students, (4) counselors implement adequate measures to ensure confidentiality and use technology in accordance with federal and state mandates, and (5) students have equitable access to computer technology and applications. In peer-helper programs, counselors have a responsibility to protect the welfare of all students selected as helpers as well as those who seek services, because counselors are ultimately responsible for the preparation of peer helpers and supervision of peer-support programs.

Responsibilities to Parents/Guardians

On rare occasion, school counselors may form helping relationships with parents or guardians in either counseling or consulting roles. Many of the guidelines in Section A, Responsibilities to Students, of the ASCA ethical standards can apply to these helping relationships.

For example, informing parents of the purposes and procedures followed and maintaining confidences are practices that relate to helping relationships established with parents as well as with students.

Section B of the ASCA standards (2010b) pertains to

- Parent Rights and Responsibilities
- Parents/Guardians and Confidentiality

Specifically, Section B addresses counselors' responsibilities to inform parents about services available to students and involve parents when appropriate. Although ethical responsibility for maintaining confidentiality between a counselor and student may be apparent, the legal responsibility of counselors to involve parents in helping relationships with students is not as clear. These differences between ethical practice and legal requirements sometimes are confusing and place counselors in the precarious position of deciding whether to protect children's rights or parents' rights. Generally, school counselors can avoid some of these entanglements by being respectful of parent's rights and keeping them informed of the services provided in school counseling programs, making program brochures available to parents, and using other media to advertise services and develop an open dialogue with parents. Counselors who open communications with parents and speak freely about the types of services they offer to students in schools are in a stronger position to win the confidence of parents and protect the privacy of students at the same time.

In school counseling, particularly at the primary and elementary school grades, parental involvement is paramount. For this reason, counselors encourage students in counseling relationships to give permission to involve their parents or guardians at an appropriate time. The success of child and adolescent counseling depends on the degree to which parents become involved, are able to alter their own behaviors, and assist their children in achieving educational, career, personal, and social goals. Typically, very young children do not have sufficient control of their lives to make decisions and take the necessary steps toward changing problematic situations. In these cases, parental support is imperative.

Encouraging parental involvement and seeking a student's permission to release information and facilitate this involvement is a delicate matter. Ethical counselors use caution to protect the welfare of students while respecting the rights of parents and guardians. Again, counselors search for a balance between their legal obligations and ethical responsibilities. There is no single guideline to direct counselors toward the correct path on every occasion. Each situation is unique. A key element that assists in making sense of counseling relationships and choosing a course of action that protects the student while facilitating communication between the home and school is for school counselors to weigh all aspects, including social and cultural influences, and make a decision. The counselor who most often falters is not the one who takes reasonable, responsible action and justifies his or her behavior based on ethical standards and legal precedent. Rather, the counselor who most likely errs is one who chooses to do nothing out of fear of making a mistake.

Finally, responsibilities to parents include the practice of providing accurate and objective information while following the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1973 and amendments to this legislation. By doing so, counselors share assessment data, school policies, and other information in an equitable and objective manner to strengthen

parents' understanding of their children's needs and the services available to help students progress in school. Accordingly, counselors are obliged to share information about services in the school and community accurately and fairly without bias or discrimination.

Responsibilities to Colleagues and Professional Associates

Section C of the standards covers three areas:

- Professional Relationships
- Sharing Information with Other Professionals
- Collaborating and Educating around the Role of the School Counselor

Earlier chapters presented information about the counselor's responsibilities in collaborating with other professionals in the school system and community. The ethical code of professional conduct addresses this area of school counseling by promoting the qualities of cooperation, fairness, respect, and objectivity. School counselors who function at a high level of ethical practice demonstrate regard and respect for the education profession and their teaching colleagues. A successful and effective school counseling program exists because of cooperative relationships between and among teachers, administrators, and counselors.

In addition to the teachers and principals who assist in developing and delivering beneficial services for students and parents, other educational specialists also cooperate with school counselors, including school nurses, social workers, psychologists, and special education teachers. The services offered by these specialists are further expanded and complemented by services provided in community agencies and by private practitioners. School counselors function in an ethical fashion when they are aware of the availability of these services, judge the effectiveness of these services accurately, and use appropriate resources for the benefit of students, parents, and teachers who need assistance beyond what the counselor is able to offer. By establishing collaborative relationships with a wide range of school and community specialists, school counselors avoid the possibility of overextending themselves and reduce the risk of delivering services beyond their level of competency.

Consultation and collaboration with outside professionals and experts does not have to break confidentiality (Remley & Herlihy, 2010). School counselors can seek guidance from other professionals while keeping a student's identity private.

Implied in this section of the ethical standards is the counselor's responsibility to stay informed about the effectiveness of these additional sources of information and assistance. To achieve an informed level of practice, school counselors follow up the referrals they make to professionals in the school, as well as to agencies in the community. Determining the level of effectiveness another professional has had with a student, parent, or teacher, and assessing the client's degree of satisfaction are vital follow-up processes. They provide counselors with information to decide which professionals and agencies to use in the future.

Ethical counselors keep appropriate records and within the limits set by confidentiality and privileged communication guidelines, they share and receive information to assess services provided to students and families. Through this continuous process of referral and

evaluation, counselors locate referral sources, professionals, and agencies that are knowledgeable, competent, and effective with the cases they accept from the school.

Counselors and their supervisors work together to ensure that they use appropriate data to select program services to address academic, career/college, and personal/social competencies for all students. Implicit in this goal is to measure the benefits of the program for students and make stakeholders aware of these results.

Responsibilities to the School, Communities, and Families

Section D of the ASCA ethical standards addresses

- Responsibilities to the School
- Responsibility to Community

Because school counselors focus primarily on the educational development of students, they also have the responsibility of protecting the integrity of the curriculum and instructional program. Part of being a spokesperson for the welfare of students is accepting the role as an advocate for the educational mission of the school. When outside forces and special interests take students away from their primary purpose in school, counselors are among those who speak out against such infringement. Partly, they fulfill this responsibility when counselors assess school climate and keep administrators and teachers informed of potential dangers to students' welfare, the instructional program, or the school environment. For example, a special program designed to offer remedial services to needy students might unintentionally isolate these students from the mainstream of school activity. Differentiating students to this degree may detract from the broader goal of assisting students with their total development. School counselors who are visible in the school, participate in supervisory duties when appropriate, offer services to all students, and communicate regularly with their principals and supervisors are in a position to make assessments and share pertinent information about the school environment and the impact of special programs.

This section of the school counselor's ethical standards also addresses the importance of defining and describing the counselor's role and functions in the school and performing systematic evaluation of these services. An additional note is that school counselors should notify principals and supervisors when conditions in the school inhibit their effectiveness in providing services. This standard addresses a problem that many school counselors encounter in attempting to develop comprehensive programs of services. Frequently, schools ask counselors to perform tasks that take time away from direct services to students, parents, and teachers.

Because schools handle numerous tasks and expectations from the central office, state government, federal regulators, and other outside forces, school principals search for personnel to perform a variety of functions. Often these requests have little to do with the major roles for which these professionals were employed. For example, it is common to find classroom teachers collecting money, filing forms, or performing other duties that have nothing to do with their instructional role in the school. Likewise, principals occasionally assign counselors to clerical and administrative tasks that take them away from their primary functions of program leadership, counseling, and collaborating with students, parents,

and teachers. According to the ASCA ethical code (2010b), the counselor is responsible for raising these issues with appropriate school officials.

This section of the ethical standards also gives counselors responsibility for program development and evaluation, two areas addressed throughout this text. It also cautions counselors about accepting employment in positions for which they are not fully qualified.

The last guideline in this section is about responsibilities to the community and pertains to the counselor's motives for cooperating with other professionals and agencies on behalf of students. School counselors establish relationships with other professionals and agencies for the benefit of students, parents, and teachers without regard for their own interests. Hence, counselors do not accept reward or payment beyond the contracts negotiated with their school systems for services, direct or indirect, provided to school populations.

Responsibilities to Self

Section E of the code covers

- Professional Competence
- Multicultural and Social Justice Advocacy and Leadership

When reviewing ethical standards, we sometimes forget the person who we expect to behave ethically. The school counselor's ethical guidelines address the need for counselors to behave within the boundary of their professional competencies and accept responsibility for the outcomes of their services. The standards oblige counselors to choose approaches and use techniques for which they have adequate knowledge, preparation, and skill, including an understanding of cultural diversity. Professional school counselors also comprehend how their own cultural and social identity affects the counseling relationship. To ensure this level of ethical practice, counselors keep abreast of issues and trends in counseling, attend conferences and workshops, return to graduate school, read professional journals, and choose other avenues to improve their performance and elevate their effectiveness.

A common dilemma for school counselors that relates to this section of the standards is deciding when to stop seeing a student in a counseling relationship and refer the student to another professional or agency. Implicitly, the ethical standards address this issue. Although no simple and clear answers to this question are apparent, in setting their own guidelines, counselors might ask themselves a few questions, such as those found in Table 12.1.

Some students in schools need regular contact with a person in whom they can confide. In most of these instances, students do not require intensive counseling or therapy; they simply need a reliable relationship with someone who will listen and guide them toward appropriate decisions. School counselors who establish these relationships are careful to monitor students' progress in school. Similarly, counselors evaluate the time they allow for these services in comparison to other functions they perform.

Section E speaks to a counselor's awareness, knowledge, and skills regarding multiculturalism and social justice. As such, counselors continually increase their competency to deal with various forms of oppression and work with diverse populations. In addition, they act as advocates and school leaders to establish equity-based programs to close achievement and attainment gaps that deny any students the opportunity to pursue educational goals.

TABLE 12.1 Questions to Ask When Continuing a Counseling Relationship

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1. Do I have the knowledge, preparation, and skills to help this student (or other person) explore concerns, examine alternatives, make decisions, and act accordingly?
 2. Is another professional more capable, available, and accessible to help the student (or other person) than I am?
 3. Do I want to involve parents/guardians in this helping relationship?
 4. By seeing this student (or other person) on a regular basis, am I denying others services or neglecting other vital functions as a school counselor?
 5. Am I making progress with this student (or other person), and can I demonstrate evidence of this improvement?
-

Source: Adapted from Schmidt, J. J. (2010). *The Elementary/Middle School Counselor's Survival Guide*, 3rd ed., p. 252. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Responsibilities to the Profession

Section F considers the following standards:

- Professionalism
- Contribution to the Profession
- Supervision of School Counseling Candidates Pursuing Practicum and Internship Experiences
- Collaboration and Education about School Counselors and School Counseling Programs with Other Professionals

School counselors who are members of the American School Counselor Association and follow the ASCA ethical standards accept responsibility for behaving in an exemplary fashion on behalf of their colleagues and the profession they represent. These exemplary behaviors include the research that counselors perform; their participation in professional associations; their adherence to local, state, and federal regulations; and the distinction they make between privately held views and views they espouse as school counseling representatives.

Counselors are responsible for conducting research and reporting their results in an appropriate manner that conforms to acceptable practice in educational and psychological research. In Chapter 11, you learned about program evaluation. The research counselors perform as part of program evaluation, or through attempts to publish significant findings in professional journals, is according to sound practices, and results are reported accurately.

Another area of professional responsibility is participation in counseling and educational associations. It is difficult for practicing school counselors to keep abreast of issues and trends in the profession without belonging to educational and counseling organizations. By belonging to and participating in these associations, counselors have access to current information through conferences, workshops, and professional publications. Counselors who participate in professional organizations, network with colleagues across the

state or country, read current research about counseling practices, and assume leadership roles in counseling associations are in a stronger position to promote their profession and perform at a high level of ethical practice.

As mentioned earlier, school counselors sometimes confront legal regulations that make ethical practice more difficult. On the one hand, ethical standards require adherence to local, state, and federal laws; on the other hand, counselors are expected to protect the best interests of their clients. This dilemma is most apparent when schools establish policies without the best interests of students in mind. For example, when the convenience of a few faculty members or the importance of school maintenance takes priority over student welfare, counselors intervene. Although legal statutes and ethical guidelines share some common ground, they are not equivalent terms. Sometimes there may be conflicts between the two, and when this happens, the beliefs and judgments of the counselor become deciding factors.

One part of this section of the code addresses how counselors behave publicly, particularly when expressing their own personal and professional views. The standards require that counselors make a clear distinction between their own opinions and those expressed as representatives of the school counseling profession. Counselors never make statements that portray their own views as if embraced by the profession of school counselors.

Section F encourages school counselors to provide support and experiences to school counseling interns. The experiences should help school counseling candidates develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive programs; maintain appropriate liability insurance; and have supervision and site visits from a faculty member of the counselor education program. In addition, this section reiterates the importance of collaborating with other educators and student services professionals in the school.

Maintenance of Standards

Section G lists behaviors for professional counselors to follow that ensure the standards are maintained and followed. These include:

- When there are serious doubts as to the ethical behavior of a colleague(s), follow a clear procedure.
- When school counselors are forced to work in situations or abide by policies that do not reflect the ethics of the profession, the school counselor works responsibly through the correct channels to try to remedy the condition.
- When faced with any ethical dilemma, school counselors, school counseling program directors/supervisors, and school counselor educators use an ethical decision-making model.

As members of a profession that adheres to a code of ethical standards, school counselors are responsible for seeing that the standards are followed, not only by themselves but also by their professional colleagues, their supervisors, and the institutions that hire them. For this reason, when school counselors work under conditions that clearly violate these standards, they take necessary action to educate their superiors about this conflict, and make alterations as deemed appropriate. When no changes are forthcoming, school counselors face the difficult decision of whether to remain in their present position without violating ethical practice.



PERSPECTIVE 12-1

Reflect on your personal ethics. How did you develop these standards for yourself? What influences helped you arrive at the ethical stance you now embrace? Equally important, what conditions might influence decisions to amend, alter, or violate your personal ethical code?

In instances when a counselor observes a violation of ethical standards, the guidelines encourage the use of available avenues within the school and school system to bring this problem to the attention of appropriate persons. If attempts to resolve the situation go unheeded or are rejected, the counselor's next step is to refer to an appropriate ethics committee in a school counselor association, first at the local level, then at the state level, and finally at the national association level. When school counselors receive information from a student, parent, or teacher about apparent unethical activity of a counseling colleague or other professional helper, they need to be clear about the nature of the complaint before determining a course of action. For example, a counselor who receives a criminal complaint about a colleague, such as selling drugs, would contact local law enforcement officials. By contrast, a parent who confides that another school counselor routinely breaks confidentiality by reporting private information to the school principal is encouraged first to confront the colleague to discuss the complaint and resolve the questionable practice. If such a resolution is not found, the counselor uses avenues established by the school or school system, and if still unresolved, should make a report to the ethics committee of the state counselor association. A final step would be to report to the ethics committee of ASCA. In most cases of reported violations, it is best for the person who has firsthand knowledge to make the report. In this way, school counselors need to support their clients in the reporting process. Documentation of all steps taken in these matters is also important.

The remaining standards in this section of the code speak to counselors' responsibility to use available channels to address work-related conditions that impinge on their ability to behave ethically and to use recommended models when making decisions about ethical dilemmas. Remley and Herlihy (2010), among other authorities, have noted the complexity of making ethical decisions and of endorsing any specific model to fit all situations. With that caveat in mind, Figure 12.3 offers a general model gleaned from various sources.

FIGURE 12.3 Example of an Ethical Decision-Making Model

1. Identify and describe the issue.
2. Consider the principles, beliefs, and merits involved.
3. Examine what has already happened.
4. Explore your emotions as they pertain to the issue.
5. Apply professional standards to which you adhere.
6. Consider applicable laws and policies.
7. Consider the people involved in this issue (e.g., culture, developmental needs, rights, authority).
8. Consult with colleagues or other authorities.
9. Explore your desired response(s) and consider the possible outcomes.
10. Select a course of action, proceed, and evaluate the result.

Whereas ethical standards are the guidelines for appropriate practice established by professional organizations, legal parameters are the policies and regulations set by governing agencies, statutes passed by legislatures, and ruling in courts of law. Ethical standards, as we have seen, seldom answer ethical dilemmas with specific recommendations. Professional codes of conduct are necessary guides for school counselors, but they do not replace knowledge and understanding of local, state, and federal laws and regulations. In the remaining sections of this chapter, we examine some legal aspects of school counseling practice.

The Nature of Law

Schools are vital institutions of society and reflect the legal standards demanded by the citizenry. In determining what these legal standards are, which ones apply to schools, and how they relate specifically to particular school programs and services, we first need to understand the nature of law.

The United States has a common-law tradition that exists beyond the simple declaration of specific codes of conduct. This tradition includes a continuous process of developing legislation at different levels of local, state, and national government; interpreting these statutes through legislative and judicial processes; and compiling legal rulings derived from specific court cases. The latter of these, known as *judge-made* or *case law* and sometimes referred to as *common law*, evolves from the common thoughts and experiences of people in a society (Fischer & Sorenson, 1996). The sources of laws in our society include federal and state constitutions, statutes, case law, and common law, which includes tort law. Tort law is an important part of common law for counselors because it consists of laws regarding malpractice (Remley & Herlihy, 2010). In addition, local school board policies and regulations, which must conform to state and federal laws, may also apply to the practice of school counseling. As local boards of education devise rules and regulations for their schools, they must do so according to the laws established by the legislature of their states (Alexander & Alexander, 2009a, 2009b).

The Law and Schools

Many factors relate to the interpretation and application of law as it pertains to education and schools. When considering a particular legal issue involving education, counselors review pertinent court cases, local school board policies, state and federal laws, government regulations, and constitutional questions, all of which are sources of law in U.S. society, and thus, they enable counselors to locate information and make appropriate decisions guided by current legal thinking. Because laws in U.S. society are the result of an evolving process, it is important that counselors consider all sources, not as absolute indications of what must be, but as origins of a particular law or guideline. By learning the background of law, counselors are better able to understand what needs to happen for a law to change or for a legislature to repeal it.

As counselors practice in schools, regulations influence and guide their actions. When appropriate, they attempt to challenge and change these rules to meet the needs of students, parents, and teachers. At the same time, school counselors seek a balance between legal requirements of their school boards, state legislatures, and the federal government

and the ethical standards of their profession. By having a clear understanding of the nature and history of law, counselors are in a stronger position to seek changes in regulations that conflict with ethical practice or, as the case may require, alter ethical guidelines to conform to legal precedent.

An initial source of legal information and understanding is the Constitution of the United States. Although no mention of education or counseling is in this historic document, it is clear that as the “supreme law of the land” this document supersedes all local and state regulations. As such, all rules, regulations, policies, and laws set by local school boards, school administrators, county commissioners, state legislatures, and other bodies must be congruent with the Constitution. When they are not, they are invalid (Fischer & Sorenson, 1996). Counselors who have basic knowledge of educational law can assist their schools in developing appropriate policies and regulations that are consistent with constitutional requirements. This is particularly important in areas of student services that make use of school records, honor the right to privacy, and protect against discrimination.

Other sources of information that help counselors learn about the law are state statutes, local policy manuals, websites, and legal briefs. School administrators, including principals, often subscribe to professional newsletters and other publications that summarize current legal rulings from court proceedings. In addition, state governments frequently publish general statutes pertaining to educational practice and schooling as references for school personnel.

School counselors want to be fully aware of local policies and regulations, especially those that apply to counseling and other student services in the schools. Local school board policy manuals are typically in every building of a school system. In some cases, counselors may have their own copy. Counselors want to be aware not only of written policies that may be in conflict with existing state or federal regulations, but also of policies that have been omitted from the school system’s current manual, particularly those needed to protect students. An example of a policy that might be unknowingly omitted is a statement about the professional obligation and duty to report suspected child abuse. Although the definitions vary, all states have laws regarding the duty to report suspected child abuse, and school systems support this legislation by developing clear policies and procedures to facilitate accurate and proper reporting in cases where abuse is suspected.

School counselors also obtain legal information and support from professional associations and attorneys who specialize in educational law, including their school board’s attorney. In some school systems, counseling supervisors assist in gathering information, planning workshops, and seeking legal guidance for counselors. As one example, school counselors occasionally testify in child custody hearings. Workshops to advise counselors about appropriate actions to take as court witnesses, including how to handle confidential information when testifying as a school counselor, can be helpful. Material and information presented in these workshops may differ from state to state because statutes regarding confidentiality and privileged communication vary, but the important point is that these types of workshops inform counselors about their legal responsibilities.

Having access to pertinent information and receiving preparation in appropriate aspects of law help counselors practice within legal boundaries and attain knowledge about laws that may be problematic for the school and school system. One area of preparation and information that strengthens a counselor’s knowledge of the law is learning about the court system and how case law affects educational practices.

The Courts

The legal system in the United States consists of federal and state courts. Both levels of the legal system adjudicate criminal and civil cases, and decisions from both state and federal levels could eventually be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. Federal courts hear only those cases pertaining to constitutional questions, such as equal protection under the law as granted by the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution. By contrast, state courts have broader responsibility for trying criminal and civil cases, as well as those pertaining to federal and state constitutional issues.

When people raise legal questions regarding educational practice and regulation, these inquiries often involve federal issues. As a result, people may choose either the federal or state court system in which to initiate their cases. The plaintiffs and their counsel determine which court has jurisdiction over the matter in litigation. Their selection of the appropriate court system is the first step in the judicial process.

State Courts. The 50 state court systems vary, but typically consist of four levels or categories of jurisdiction (Alexander & Alexander, 2009a): district (or circuit) courts, courts of special jurisdiction, small claims courts, and appellate courts. *District courts* generally have jurisdiction over all cases except those reserved for special courts. *Courts of special jurisdiction* include domestic relations courts, probate courts, and juvenile courts. *Small claims courts* handle lawsuits involving small amounts of money, and in some states, justice of the peace courts handle these cases. *Appellate courts* handle appeals of decisions ruled in lower courts of general jurisdiction. These appellate courts are called Courts of Appeals or Supreme Courts, and, in some large states, both Courts of Appeals and state Supreme Courts are found. The names used for the appellate court are not uniform from state to state, and as a result, in one state it may be called a Superior Court and in another the Court of Appeals. Furthermore, states with more than one appellate level, such as New York, are inconsistent in how they name these levels.

Federal Courts. The federal court system of the United States consists of nearly 100 District Courts, 13 Courts of Appeals, and the Supreme Court. Eleven of the 13 Courts of Appeals rule in the judicial circuit of the United States and its territories. One Court of Appeals deals with Washington, DC, and another handles special copyright and patent issues. Each state has at least one federal District Court, and the cases heard in these courts include issues between people from different states and litigation involving federal statutes or the Constitution. In addition, there are special federal courts that include courts in the District of Columbia, the Tax Court, the Customs Court, and the territorial courts.

When cases are appealed, they move from the trial courts that make up the U.S. District Court System to the Court of Appeals in the respective judicial circuit, and then to the Supreme Court. In addition, a case in the state judicial system can move from the highest state court to the U.S. Supreme Court. When litigants lose their case at a state's highest level of appellate court, they may petition the U.S. Supreme Court to hear the case. If four of the nine Supreme Court justices vote to review, the Court orders the case sent forward, called a *writ of certiorari*. This usually happens when the constitutional validity of a state statute or federal law is in question. School law cases generally fall within this classification. Therefore, the *writ of certiorari* is the most common means of getting a school or education case before the Supreme Court (Alexander & Alexander, 2009a).

School counselors who read about the case decisions of these various federal and state courts want to know the effect that particular decisions will have on their schools and the practice of counseling. Ultimately, the question is whether a particular decision will be binding on a particular state and school district. Decisions of lower federal courts are binding only on those states and territories within their own circuit. Similarly, decisions handed down by state courts are binding only on those specific states. Although they are not legally binding beyond the jurisdiction of the ruling court, many state and lower federal court decisions help set precedent and often influence decisions in other jurisdictions (Linde, 2011). Generally, the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court are binding in every state and territory.

School Board Policies

School districts have broad responsibility for developing and implementing regulations that affect schools within the limitations and guidelines set by state statutes. As noted earlier, at no time does an individual school or school system have authority to legislate beyond the limits defined by the state. For example, if a state statute grants privileged communication to students in counseling relationships, a school system cannot deny that privilege through local policy unless the law expressly permits such authority.

Although school counselors need to be aware of state and federal court rulings and legislation regarding schools and the practice of professional counseling, they are particularly concerned about specific policies and regulations passed by their local school boards and administrators. Practically speaking, these are the day-to-day regulations that guide a counselor's actions and occasionally contribute to ethical and legal dilemmas.

School counselors are responsible for being familiar with their local board policies and understanding how these regulations govern their programs of services for students, parents, and teachers. When policies seem to be in conflict with state laws, counselors are duty-bound to raise these issues. In most instances, the appropriate channels for such discussions begin with school principals, counseling supervisors, and officers of state counseling associations.

A review of school board policies may reveal several areas of potential conflict, but there are particular topics of concern for most school counselors. These include students' rights to privacy, parents' rights, issues of gender equity, the use of school records, child abuse reporting, potential liability, and rights of exceptional students. We consider each of these issues briefly in the next section.



PERSPECTIVE 12-2

Have you ever been involved in a court proceeding? What recollection do you have of the experience, and what emotions affected your involvement? Do any of these recollections help you in being prepared for possible court appearances in the future?

Legal Issues for School Counselors

Many legal issues that arise in schools relate indirectly to the practice of counseling because school counselors, as discussed in this text, are responsible for a wide range of activities to serve all students. In this section, we review a few of the major topics involving legal issues

TABLE 12.2 Selected Court Cases in Public Education

1943 <i>Board v. Barnette</i> (319 US 624). U.S. Supreme Court ruled that students could not be forced to recite the <i>Pledge of Allegiance</i> or salute the flag against their will.
1954 <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> (347 U. S. 483). U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states could not segregate students solely on the basis of race. To do so violates the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.
1967 <i>Keyishian v. Board of Regents</i> (385 US 589). U.S. Supreme Court recognized the importance of free exchange of ideas in schools.
1969 <i>Tinker v. Des Moines</i> (393 US 503). U.S. Supreme Court ruled that schools could not force students to remove black armbands worn to protest a war. However, behavior that disrupts the educational process or violates the rights of others is not guaranteed freedom of speech.
1975 <i>Goss v. Lopez</i> (419 U.S. 565). U.S. Supreme Court ruled that students must be afforded an informal hearing before being suspended (due process).
1977 <i>Ingraham v. Wright</i> (430 U.S. 651). U.S. Supreme Court ruled that cruel and unusual punishment does not apply to corporal punishment in public schools. In addition, corporal punishment does not require a due process hearing.
1985 <i>New Jersey v. TLO</i> (469 US 325). U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the <i>in loco parentis</i> role of schools and upheld a school's search of student's purse for cigarettes.
1986 <i>Bethel School v. Fraser</i> (478 US 675). U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a school did not violate a student's right to free speech when suspending the student for using crude language in a speech to a school assembly.
1992 <i>Lee v. Weisman</i> (505 US 577). U.S. Supreme Court ruled that nondemonotional prayers in public schools are unconstitutional.
1992 <i>Franklin v. Gwinnet County Schools</i> (503 US 60). U.S. Supreme Court ruled students could seek monetary damages under Title IX from schools if they experienced discrimination, including sexual harassment.

and the practice of counseling in a school setting. Some of these issues fall under local policies, and state and federal laws regulate others. Counselors want to have appropriate background information about their school policies and district court rulings to make accurate decisions about these issues. Because court rulings frequently change current thinking and existing policies regarding these issues, counselors need access to accurate and up-to-date information. Timely textbooks on school law are excellent resources. In addition, legal references such as the *Journal of Law and Education* (law.sc.edu/jled), *Brooklyn Law Review* (www.brooklaw.edu), and websites of university law schools are helpful resources on current court rulings. Table 12.2 lists some historic court cases pertaining to education and counseling.

Students' Rights

Many aspects of students' rights relate to schooling, and counselors want to keep abreast of the latest rulings involving these issues. Some common issues include freedom of expression, the right to due process, appropriate/compensatory education, and the right to privacy. Of these, the most debated issue in the counseling profession is the student's right

to privacy when involved in helping relationships with counselors. Earlier, we considered the issue of confidentiality and its relationship to legal rights as granted by privileged communication statutes. School counselors need to know, from an ethical as well as a legal perspective, what rights students have in their states and schools.

Privacy rights are influenced by the nature of the confidential relationship and, as noted earlier, the age of the student. For example, current law suggests that students who seek information and guidance about sexual matters in counseling can expect their request to remain confidential unless their state has a relevant parental notification law, in which case, if the student is a minor, parental notification may be required. Linde (2011) noted that state laws regarding student consent about a variety of issues differ. This being the case, school counselors want to be informed about current state legislation, case law, and local policies. Once again, the Guttmacher Institute is an excellent resource about minor consent laws (see Figure 12.2).

Students' rights to privacy also affect policies regarding educational records and student searches. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment of 1978, and alterations by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (all of which are discussed in more detail under the section titled "The Buckley Amendment") have clarified students' and parents' rights regarding school records. In another area related to students' privacy, courts have restricted unreasonable searches of students in schools as further protection of their constitutional rights. Counselors want to be fully aware of the legal ruling regarding this issue so they know what constitutes a justified search of students or their property in schools.

The legal rights of young children in schools are, at best, uncertain (Remley & Herlihy, 2010). This may be particularly true when considering the issue of privacy. Although school counselors have an ethical obligation of confidentiality with young students, they frequently need to involve adults in the concerns of students who are minors. Students' understanding of and desire for confidentiality are sometimes offset by requirements to inform parents and guardians. In most instances, this is a judgment call by the counselor unless evidence of imminent danger or harm to the client exists. When counselors choose to inform parents and guardians or to involve them in helping relationships with students, it is advisable to tell students beforehand and include them in the process of notifying parents. Professional counselors maintain a delicate balance between the duty to protect the rights of students and their ethical and legal responsibilities to respect the rights of parents and involve them in the education of their children.

Another area of students' rights, the right to due process, covers a range of issues from discipline to minimum competency testing (Fischer & Sorenson, 1996). Essentially, the intent of due process, as provided by the Fourteenth Amendment, is to protect students from actions and regulations that are inherently unfair. The Supreme Court case of *Goss v. Lopez* in 1975 set the precedent for defining due process and the types of procedures schools must include in their disciplinary codes to protect students' rights. *Procedural due process* has subsequently come to include three basic elements: (1) the student must have proper notice about the regulations that have been violated; (2) the student must be given an opportunity for a hearing; and (3) the hearing must be conducted fairly (Alexander & Alexander, 2009a).

A second type of due process, called *substantive due process*, requires the state to demonstrate a valid objective and reasonable means for reaching this objective when imposing restrictions or punishments. Substantive due process restricts state officials from

imposing punishments that are arbitrary or unfair to students in schools. For example, a school that deprives a student access to an educational service for which the student qualifies simply because the parents have not kept scheduled appointments with the school might be demonstrating denial of substantive due process. Students have no control over the behaviors of their parents, and should not be penalized for actions over which they have no control.

Parents' Rights

Schools rely on cooperative relationships with parents to provide the most appropriate educational programs for children. For this reason, schools need to respect parents' rights in planning programs and making decisions for individual children and adolescents. Distinguishing the lines between students' rights, parents' rights, and the school's obligation to educate all children is not an easy task. This is particularly true when reviewing issues involving school counseling services. In an article about factors that affect school counselors' choices regarding confidentiality, Isaacs and Stone (1999) noted the inconsistent rules from state to state surrounding this issue. They also recognized that counselors have multiple responsibilities beyond the helping relationships formed with students, including respect for the rights of families, regard for teachers and other students in the school, and the duty to follow procedures and policies set by administrators and the school system.

Isaacs and Stone (1999) asserted that the courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, have maintained the legal rights of parents to provide guidance to their children according to values and directions they choose. At the same time, the authors noted that legal authorities in counseling do not fully agree on the extent of parental rights to have access to information revealed by students in counseling relationships, and question the legitimacy of rules that require mandating disclosure to parents (Prober, 2005).

Counselors in today's schools face an array of childhood, juvenile, and adult problems that require special relationships beyond the scope of educational and career guidance decisions. Substance abuse, family violence, sexual orientation and activity, and pregnancy are among the difficult issues school counselors confront with students. Knowing when and how to involve parents requires knowledge of current laws and clear understanding of local and state policies. A parent's right to be involved varies from case to case and from situation to situation. For example, if a child is in imminent danger of being harmed by someone, the school and counselor have an obligation to inform the parents. This course of action would change, however, if the parent were the suspected perpetrator of abuse. In this and other cases of abuse, the school is obligated to report to the appropriate child protective services.

Although the "Supreme Court guarantees minor children basic due process rights in juvenile court proceedings . . . and calls them 'persons' under the Constitution with fundamental rights . . . the constitutionality of parents' rights is not clear" (Kaplan, 1997, p. 337). As noted earlier, state rulings are inconsistent, and consequently confusing to parents and schools alike. All the more reason for school counselors to work closely with parents, keeping them informed of program services and educating them about developmental needs of their children. Remley and Herlihy (2010) encouraged use of written informed consent forms with minors and their parents to avoid misunderstandings about confidential counseling relationships.

State and federal courts have ruled that schools have the authority to design educational curriculum and require students to participate in instructional programs (Alexander & Alexander, 2009a). In certain instances, parents may object to their children's participation in particular activities and, based on objections, such as religious grounds, may ask to exclude their children. At this time, no federal court rulings have specifically addressed guidance and counseling activities and parents' rights to determine the appropriateness of these services for their children. As a result, school counselors follow state mandates and local board policies that may or may not include counseling services as an integral part of the educational program and school curriculum. Because the courts have ruled that parents have no constitutional right to deprive their children of an education and, at the same time, have delegated to schools the responsibility of determining appropriate curriculum and educational services, access to school counseling services may fall within this broad area of students' rights. How future courts will perceive this issue remains to be seen, but for now, a critical condition seems to be whether school counseling services are considered essential to the educational program, and if written documents verify this relationship in the state and local system.

Laws and court rulings have helped clarify some areas of parents' rights in schools, including access to students' records when children are under the age of 18 and involvement of parents in planning special education programs for their children. We consider each of these areas in the next two sections.

The Buckley Amendment

Chapter 5 introduced you to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is also known as the *Buckley Amendment*. Updated guidelines for FERPA passed in 2009 (Linde, 2011). This legislation gives parents of minor students (and students 18 years of age or older) the right to review all official school records related to their children (or themselves in the case of eligible students). Included in these records are cumulative folders, academic reports, test data, attendance records, health information, family background, discipline records, and other pertinent information. In reviewing these records, parents and eligible students may challenge the accuracy of information. If schools reject the challenge and refuse to alter the questionable information, parents or eligible students may ask for a hearing. Eventually, if the school continues to refuse the request for change, parents (or eligible students) may add a statement of disagreement, which the school is obliged to disclose whenever it shares a record with another person. Nonpublic schools that do not accept federal funding are exempt from FERPA.

FERPA also sets guidelines for disseminating educational records. In addition, schools are required to notify parents and students of their rights under the local policy regarding the use of educational records. Schools must ensure that procedures for disclosing educational records follow appropriate guidelines, and that they obtain prior written consent of parents or eligible students before disclosing records.

Counselors in schools are aware of FERPA regulations, as well as their ethical standards and current court rulings, to guide their conduct in matters dealing with student records. Of particular concern is how this law might control counselors' private notes and files regarding confidential counseling sessions. Generally, the implementation of FERPA, subsequent interpretations by legislators, and court rulings seem to indicate that the law

and its regulations do not necessarily require disclosure of private counseling notes. Private counseling notes are those in sole possession of the counselor, not shared with anyone else. However, general counseling notes about student participation and progress in programs may be part of the educational record. Once more, school counselors stay informed of interpretations and rulings regarding their services and activities as they relate to the Buckley Amendment. Services and activities of most concern to school counselors include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Letters of recommendation written on behalf of students
2. Taped recordings of counseling sessions
3. Correction of inaccurate information in educational records
4. Use of testing results
5. Records of students with handicaps
6. Destruction of outdated educational records
7. Development or revision of a school policy regarding educational records
8. Private counseling notes

Staying informed of current rulings about these and other types of counseling services helps practicing school counselors prevent litigation against themselves and their schools. Again, by participating in professional associations, attending workshops and conferences, and reading current resources such as those cited in this chapter, counselors keep abreast of these critical and timely issues.

Public Law 94-142

In Chapter 2, you learned of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, commonly referred to as *Public Law 94-142*. As noted there, the 1990 amendment renamed this bill the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, Public Law 101-476). Although the role of counselors in this law is not spelled out, school counselors offer many vital services to exceptional students of all categories. Counselors confer with teachers and parents, help develop the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each student placed in a program, provide counseling services when stipulated in a student's IEP, and consult with parents to help them cope with the exceptionalities of their children.

As coordinators of student services within their schools, counselors also have the responsibility of knowing how the federal law and its administrative regulations affect the school's financial obligations, student transfer policies, and referrals to outside agencies. Courts have ruled that the ultimate responsibility for costs related to the education of students with handicaps rests with the state (Fischer & Sorenson, 1996). This means that counselors, teachers, and other school personnel must be aware of local school board policies that govern how educational recommendations, which sometimes include a financial obligation, are made to parents and guardians of exceptional students.

Child Abuse

All states and the District of Columbia have passed legislation addressing child abuse and the obligation of school personnel to report suspected cases. The term *child abuse* covers a

range of behaviors that includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, general neglect, psychological and emotional torment, abandonment, and inadequate supervision. A majority of states stipulate a penalty for the failure to report suspected abuse, and all states require reporting by school personnel, including school counselors. As such, a state's desire to protect children from abuse supersedes any provision of privileged communication for students.

Responsibility for investigating reported cases of child abuse and neglect rests with children's protective services as defined by specific state statutes. The school's role—and, accordingly, the school counselor's role—is to report instances of suspected abuse. As such, school personnel should cooperate with protective service investigators who need to prove whether abuse exists in the cases reported. School systems should have clear policies and procedures that guide personnel in the process of following state laws for child abuse reporting.

Counselor Liability

In serving a wide audience of students, parents, and teachers, school counselors occasionally become concerned about malpractice and professional liability. *Malpractice* is the area of tort law that relates to professional conduct of counselors (Wheeler & Bertram, 2012). Generally, counselors may be liable if a client suffers some injury or damage because the counselor was negligent in providing services or otherwise failed in the duty to provide assistance expected by the client.

Counselors want to know what protection they have. In determining their liability coverage, professional school counselors learn about insurance carried by their school systems and whether they, as counselors, are exempt from coverage under these policies. If counselors find they do not have adequate coverage through their school systems, they may want to buy an individual policy through a professional organization such as the American Counseling Association (ACA) or the American School Counselor Association (ASCA).

Malpractice suits against school counselors have been rare, but the changing climate of schools and the seriousness of concerns being raised by children, adolescents, and families today elevate the risks counselors take given the wide range of services they provide. Malpractice suits typically address two types of liability—civil liability and criminal liability. The first, *civil liability*, occurs when counselors behave in inappropriate or wrongful ways toward others or fail to act when situations require a dutiful response. For example, school counselors risk civil liability if they neglect to inform parents of a student's threat to commit suicide, or if they disclose confidential information in violation of their ethical standards of conduct. These two examples illustrate harmful and inappropriate professional practice. By contrast, *criminal liability* occurs when counselors behave in unlawful ways, such as being an accessory to a crime, disobeying civil ordinances, and contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Although proof of criminal wrongdoing rests with the prosecuting office of the county, state, or federal government, the proof of malpractice in civil liability lies with the plaintiff bringing suit against the counselor. To be successful, suits typically demonstrate that harm occurred to someone as a direct result of a counselor's negligence or flagrant omission. In addition, the plaintiff is able to demonstrate a causal relationship between the injury suffered and the counselor's behavior. Furthermore, the plaintiff shows evidence

that the counselor failed to follow the profession's standards of practice (Remley & Herlihy, 2010).

Reaching a judgment of malpractice is difficult when dealing with professional counseling. In part, this is because not all states have licensing laws that control the practice of school counseling as they might for counselors in private practice, or in other helping professions such as psychiatry and clinical psychology. If states are unclear about what responsibilities school counselors have and the level of standards for their professional practice, it is difficult for jurors and judges to find fault. Nevertheless, as noted earlier and throughout this chapter, the practice of counseling is becoming more visible, and standards of practice are available through various accreditation and certifying bodies. In the future, school counselors will want to know how to prevent legal action against them. Some preventive measures might include the following:

- 1.** *A clear description of the school counseling program, and a counselor's job description that reflects a true accounting of daily functions.* School counselors provide services advertised in program statements, school brochures, and school system manuals. When counselors stray beyond the scope of their program or job description in offering services to students, parents, and teachers, they open themselves up for possible litigation. By the same token, when they fail to offer services described in their job descriptions, they are also vulnerable.
- 2.** *Reliance on other professionals for guidance and support in providing comprehensive service.* School counselors are highly educated professionals, but they cannot provide all the services needed by school populations. Having appropriate referral sources and professionals with whom to consult is good practice for all helping professionals.
- 3.** *Knowledge and understanding of professional standards of ethical practice.* Counselors are not protected by ignorance of the law or of their own ethical standards. Knowing about sound professional practices and behaving accordingly are essential conditions for preventing legal entanglements.
- 4.** *Knowledge and information about legal rulings and ethical interpretations.* Legal and ethical issues evolve and change every day. Counselors who read about current cases, attend workshops about legal and ethical practice, and participate in their professional associations take preventive action to avoid misconduct.

The following behaviors and services present the most risk for school counselors:

- 1.** *Administering drugs.* An increasing number of students come to school with prescription drugs to take during the school hours. In schools without nurses, clearly written policies help administrators delegate responsibility and require written instructions from the prescribing physician and written permission from parents (guardians) for the school to dispense medication. In most instances, school counselors are wise to resist accepting responsibility for administering drugs to students.
- 2.** *Student searches.* Students are protected under the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution from unreasonable searches. In the 1985 case of *New Jersey v. TLO*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that "Students' legitimate expectations of privacy . . . must be balanced against

that need for the search" (Fischer & Sorenson, 1996, p. 177). Searches of students and their property occur only when there is justification and reason to believe that a search will disclose a violation of school policy or law. Counselors who participate in unreasonable and unjustified searches may be liable.

3. Birth control and abortion counseling. Perhaps no areas of school counseling are more explosive and emotional in the responses they bring from counselors and laypersons alike than the issues of birth control and abortion. As attitudes continue to change and new judicial appointments are made to state and federal courts, legal views and answers to these topics will again be altered. The pendulum of public opinion is forever moving one way or the other. At this time, minors in some states have the right to seek abortions, but how the U.S. Supreme Court responds to future state laws that require parent notification will need the attention of school counselors, particularly those at the secondary level. Local school boards may pass policies regarding birth control and abortion counseling, and school counselors want to be informed of all current legislation, court rulings, and local policies regarding this area of counseling (Dahir & Stone, 2012).

4. Use of student records and violation of privacy. School counselors adhere to local, state, and federal regulations regarding the use and dissemination of students' records. This area of practice, as we have seen, is guided by FERPA and subsequent amendments. Generally, the major concern for schools is who has the legal right to see students' records. Two areas seem most problematic: noncustodial parents' rights to see educational records and "special files" for school personnel only. Both parents, custodial and noncustodial, in separated or divorced families have the legal right to see a child's records. An exception would be by a judge's order. Regarding the second issue, the law disallows any special educational files to be private for school personnel use only. Private notes kept by counselors, as indicated earlier, are not addressed by FERPA, and, therefore, may be held in confidence if, in the judgment of the counselor, it is best to do so (Linde, 2011).

5. Defamation. Related to the use of records and matters of student privacy, school counselors, as with other mental-health professionals, must be judicious about the confidential information they share with others without consent of students. Sometimes, school counselors provide recommendations or evaluations of students. This may place them at risk of *defamation*, which is any published statement that injures or damages another person's reputation. Counselors who act in good faith and serve their clients in a consistent manner will generally be protected under the law when they provide negative comments or evaluations about students.

Title IX

The original purpose of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 protects students against discrimination on the basis of sex. Accordingly, the law states, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." If schools violate this law, the penalty could be loss of federal financial assistance.

Courts have applied Title IX to the concept of equal access for both girls and boys to join athletic teams and enroll in courses in the school's curriculum. This law has been used to guarantee equity for students' participation in all aspects of school life, regardless of gender or marital status. Therefore, pregnant teenagers have the same rights to an education as all other students. In addition, application of Title IX and the Fourteenth Amendment have helped settle disputes over admissions policies that set different standards for girls than for boys.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and its emphasis on student achievement has encouraged innovative programs and some flexibility in Title IV regulations. For example, some adjustments in how the U.S. Department has applied Title IX have allowed schools to schedule single-sex classes. Such innovations are permissible when they are part of an unbiased attempt to offer a range of educational options for male and female students. They might also be acceptable when aimed at meeting specific educational needs of particular students (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012).

School counselors at all levels of education want to be aware of Title IX regulations and pertinent court rulings. As advocates of students, counselors are in an ideal position to monitor school policies and programs and protect against subtle and overt sex discrimination. In part, the counselor's role is to educate staff and administrators and guide them in developing policies and procedures that are free from discrimination.

Another way in which counselors prevent illegal action or stereotypical behavior is by helping schools select appropriate instructional materials and activities. Textbooks, media, and instructional activities that unintentionally or otherwise depict learning, career choices, or other aspects of student development in inequitable or stereotypical fashion are avoided. Workshops for teachers and other school personnel about gender issues and sex discrimination are appropriate vehicles for school counselors to become positive forces in helping develop and implement appropriate programs, policies, and instruction for all students.



PERSPECTIVE 12-3

Have you ever been discriminated against because of your sex or gender? How will that experience help you advocate on behalf of students in the future? What observations and lessons might be most helpful to you?

Title IX also regulates the professional relationships that counselors form on behalf of students, parents, and teachers beyond the schoolhouse doors. Counselors cannot cooperate with community organizations or persons who discriminate against people based on gender. Title IX includes criteria for exempting certain organizations such as Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts, but unless an organization is exempt, counselors should refer boys and girls alike. For example, if an employer is seeking weekend help from teenagers, a high school counselor is obliged to announce this opportunity to all students regardless of the nature of the work or the specific preferences expressed by the employer for either boys or girls to fill the positions. With this chapter, we complete a summary of the school counseling profession, including its brief history, a discussion of diversity issues related to school counseling practice, a description of comprehensive programs and responsive services, a synopsis about the professionals who are prepared and certified to be school counselors,

and ethical and legal guidelines that assist these counselors in their professional practice. The information presented thus far describes where we have been and where we are in the profession of school counseling. The final chapter of this text explores questions about professional directions for school counseling in the future.

Additional Readings

Fischer, L., & Sorenson, G. P. (1996). *School Law for Counselors, Psychologists, and Social Workers* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Longman.

Although published more than a decade ago, this text is a comprehensive guide to legal issues that confront school counselors and other student services professionals on a daily basis. Written in clear and understandable language, it presents each topic through a series of related questions and answers.

Remley, T. P., & Herlihy, B. (2010). *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in Counseling* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Another comprehensive yet readable text on ethical and legal issues for professional counselors. It covers topics that pertain to the practice of counseling in a variety of settings, including schools.

Wheeler, A. M., & Bertram, B. (2012). *The Counselor and the Law: A Guide to Legal and Ethical Practice* (6th ed.). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Another popular book that provides up-to-date information for professional counselors.

Websites

Brooklyn Law Review
www.brooklaw.edu

EdLaw
www.edlaw.org

Guttmacher Institute
www.guttmacher.org

Journal of Law and Education
law.sc.edu/jled

U. S. Constitution Online
www.usconstitution.net

Note: See also the American Counseling Association, American School Counselor Association, and the National Board of Certified Counselors listed elsewhere in this text and other websites in this chapter.

Exercises

1. Research recent court decisions and other legal sources to determine what rulings have been made regarding guidance activities for students in school. Look for decisions that affect students' rights, parents' rights, and the obligation of the school to provide a sound curriculum.
2. Interview a local attorney who concentrates on educational law and ask about important legal issues

pertaining to the practice of school counseling. Determine what the local perceptions and norms are about these issues.

3. Create a fictional situation in which a school counselor could find that ethical standards come in conflict with policies or regulations. Present your situation to the class for discussion.

CHAPTER 13

School Counseling Today and Tomorrow

Throughout its development, the school counseling profession has followed educational and social trends, both inside and outside the United States, and it has responded to these events by way of federal legislation, state initiatives, and changes within the profession itself. The early history of vocational guidance as a reaction to social ills and labor requirements of industrialization was the beginning. Demand for accurate assessment of military recruits in two world wars eventually led to the increased use of testing in schools by counselors. Likewise, public fear of Soviet domination in the late 1950s was reflected in national legislation to improve education, particularly in the areas of mathematics and science, which had historic impact on the training and employment of school counselors. Subsequent events, laws, and national reports from that time to the present day have shaped the direction and identity of the school counseling profession.

The work of Carl Rogers in the 1950s and 1960s on the counseling relationship and the helping process was the first notable influence that stemmed from a conceptual and theoretical perspective. His development of client-centered counseling, later to be called the *person-centered approach*, alerted counselors in schools and other settings of the need to view the entire person when establishing helping relationships, rather than dividing an individual's needs into compartments such as educational and vocational. This fresh approach, while itself a holistic and developmental perspective, began another series of reactions within the school counseling profession. Counselors and other educators began promoting the idea that counseling services were necessary earlier in students' lives. Thus, the profession expanded to the junior high school and later to the elementary level. It was common during this period to hear teachers and other people comment that counselors were needed in the "early grades rather than high schools" to help prevent problems before they began. Although complimentary toward the counseling profession, this conclusion offered a limited view of human development, because it overlooked the need for counseling at all stages of life. Students at all levels of education face challenges and barriers to development, and for this reason, it is appropriate to offer counseling services during all years of schooling and throughout the lifespan.

The counseling profession continues to react to social, economic, and political forces of the times, but it also has begun to establish for itself a direction and focus on the future. National counseling associations under the auspices of the parent organization, the American Counseling Association (ACA), have become strong forces in encouraging state and national legislation on a wide range of social and educational issues, on developing national certification standards for the practice of professional counseling, in creating the

Council for Accrediting Counselor and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) to promote adequate preparation, and by giving counselors a unique identity and clear focus among other helping professions. With leadership from the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), one of the largest divisions of ACA, counselors in schools have benefited from these developments as well. This progress has occurred despite the fact that only a fraction of the counselors in the country belong to ACA and its divisions. The efforts of ACA and ASCA have helped chart a course for the future, but school counselors could do much more to establish themselves as a credible and valuable profession. The National Model created and promoted by ASCA (2005, 2012) is an attempt to transform the profession (Dahir & Stone, 2012; Erford, 2011a). Time will tell if counselors in schools will embrace this model or other examples of comprehensive programs to give their profession clarity of purpose and direction in the future.

In this chapter, we examine what the future holds and how emerging trends and conditions might affect the practice of school counseling. It is risky business predicting what will happen in years to come, but counselors who are in a profession of helping others prepare for the future want to be ready to meet the challenges of a changing world. There are numerous factors to consider in looking at the future of school counseling, some positive, and some negative. Each has a role in determining how counselors might practice in schools in the years to come. Futuristic projections for the school counseling profession include a wide spectrum of factors, including programmatic issues, technological advances, and an emerging global economy (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Bloom & Walz, 2000; Dahir & Stone, 2012; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Erford, 2011a; Sink, 2005). This chapter highlights a few of these factors. In particular, we consider two primary elements because they incorporate all the others—the students and schools of tomorrow.

Students of Tomorrow

Who will be the students of the future, and for what reasons will they seek assistance from school counselors? In its first century of development, the school counseling profession moved from a limited focus on vocational training and job placement, to a wider vision encompassing a broad range of personal, social, educational, and career services for diverse student populations. Will students in the twenty-first century continue to need an array of counseling and other responsive services to optimize their educational development and ensure success in life? If present trends in the U.S. family and culture are any indication, the answer is an unequivocal “Yes.” Students today are facing difficult conditions in many aspects of their development, and there appears to be no sign of this pressure letting up in the future.

In serving students of tomorrow, school counselors will offer a range of responsive and related services that address developmental needs, prevent learning difficulties, and remedy existing conditions that inhibit growth and development. As with students today, students in the future will require services to develop skills, acquire information, and attain knowledge to make appropriate decisions about relationships, educational goals, and career aspirations. There is no reason to believe that these developmental goals will be any less appropriate for tomorrow’s students than they are for today’s students.

Similarly, because we cannot forecast precisely what the future holds, tomorrow’s students have to be prepared to change their goals, make adjustments, and prevent major

problems that block their progress. Both preventive and developmental goals are necessary for assisting students in the future, but it is unlikely that these objectives will be sufficient. Most likely, tomorrow's students will not be spared the challenges of human existence and the expected hardship of forging successful careers. For this reason, future school counselors will create expanded visions to meet the needs of a wide range of students by balancing the need to remedy existing concerns with opportunities for students to experience optimal learning and realize healthy futures. Viewing counseling relationships as simply a remedy for conflict or personal misfortune is too narrow a definition, yet defining counseling in terms of self-efficacy without considering potential barriers to development seems impractical. Future students will demand a broader context for services provided by school counselors, which will include comprehensive programs of various helping relationships with leadership to address problems as well as focus on prevention and development.

Remedial Concerns

The changing U.S. scene includes a continuing redefinition and restructuring of the family. *Divorce, remarriage, cohabitation, dual careers, blended families, same-sex unions*, and a host of other terms have come to describe the array of family structures and lifestyles in U.S. society. Each family, with its own set of values and perspectives, contributes in unique ways to the culture, attitudes, and beliefs that students bring to school. Accordingly, each family, regardless of how we define it, lays a foundation for educational success. As noted in Chapter 2, counselors in the future probably will experience increased diversity in the types of families and groups from which students come, and they will need knowledge and skill to help schools adapt programs and create services to meet these challenges.

In addition to the changing family structure, students of tomorrow might exhibit a range of personal, social, physical, and educational concerns emanating from serious ills of society. For example, children born of drug-abusing and addictive parents enter preschools and elementary schools every day. If the future holds no promise of turning this destructive behavior around, students will require additional services from counselors to handle family dysfunction, prevent substance abuse, and help them develop healthy coping skills. Schools and counselors face a challenge in designing programs and delivering services to help young people infected by addictions realize their human potential and succeed in life.

Violence is another phenomenon that, unless curtailed, will have a significant impact on schools and learning in the future. As the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (www.colorado.edu/cspv) observed, every American, either directly or indirectly, feels the effects of violent behavior. In schools, we see that too many students resort to aggressive behavior in attempting to save face and resolve conflicts at any cost. At the same time, physical, sexual, and psychological child abuse is a disheartening characteristic of a society that prides itself on freedom, human worth, and dignity. If this society does not succeed in securing the rights of children and protecting them from abuse and neglect, professional counselors in the future can expect to serve more of these cases.

Added to the brutal violation of children's rights by some parents and caretakers is the growing number of students who resort to violent force as a means of addressing their own personal and social conflicts. Fights, homicides, and suicides are all too common among today's students. Simply passing policies to punish students for possessing weapons and fighting in school is not the answer. Helping students of tomorrow handle hostilities in

appropriate ways while maintaining an acceptable level of assertiveness to protect their interests and enhance their welfare will be a necessary aspect of school life and the curriculum. Counselors will take a lead role in this effort.

Suicide is a private form of violence that illustrates a desperate attempt to free oneself from psychological and emotional pain, fear, and distress. Students who remain incapable of finding acceptable avenues to resolve social and personal crises will continue to be at risk of hurting themselves or others. Teachers and counselors in schools are often the first-line helpers for young people in distress, and, therefore, need to be ready and skilled to assist in times of critical need.

Children and adolescents in the United States face many challenges that include traumatic experiences such as abuse, physical and mental disabilities, changing family structures, and social problems (Gladding, 2011a). School counselors who ignore threatening and debilitating situations, and thereby focus services only on students who require information or instruction, neglect a significant portion of their schools' populations. One danger of programs that adopt a philosophy entirely of developmental guidance is that counselors may neglect or ignore students who need individual attention. Future counseling programs will want to maintain a balance of responsive and preventive services to meet the needs of a wide spectrum of students, including those students with serious problems. Through either direct service or referral processes, school counselors can help these students alter behaviors, change environments, or enhance their situations in beneficial ways. At the same time, most other students will benefit from services that prevent problems as they progress through their school years.

Preventive Issues

It is difficult to forecast what personal and social issues will be most prominent for children and adolescents of the twenty-first century and beyond. For example, the alarming drug and alcohol problem pervasive in U.S. society during the past decades may escalate, despite efforts to educate people and provide treatment. Teenage pregnancy, another social issue, continues despite the availability of birth control information and contraceptives. Helping youth establish healthy relationships and choose responsible behaviors will remain an important role of the school. In all likelihood, substance abuse, sexual activity, violence, and other issues will continue to concern students, parents, and teachers, who will expect school counselors to offer preventive services in addressing these topics.

Students in the immediate future will need the same information and education as today's students about how to prevent abuse, disease, pregnancy, and other life-threatening and debilitating conditions. As new social issues develop, new preventive approaches will be necessary. Similarly, as old issues are resolved, new challenges will emerge to take their place. This means that future school counselors, as in the present, must be prepared to assess the needs of students accurately and design services to enable students to make healthy and sound decisions about the challenges before them.

Preventive services of comprehensive school counseling programs in the coming century probably will retain many of the elements and characteristics of present-day approaches. As such, educational programs and counseling services will include assistance for helping students learn decision-making skills, acquire knowledge about sexual development, establish beneficial peer relationships, and develop coping behaviors to deal with

the pressure of growing up in a complex and accelerated world. Adding to these direct services, future counselors will establish collaborative relationships with parents, teachers, and other professionals to ensure beneficial home and school environments for optimal learning and development.

One threat to student development in the future might be increased loneliness, as society relies on more automation and offers fewer opportunities for social interaction. Other challenges include fears fueled by media information about the risk of terrorism, environmental catastrophes, bacterial contamination, global warming, and other natural or human-made disasters. More common, perhaps, will be the uncertainty of career choices in light of a rapidly advancing technology that will leave no area of vocational development untouched. The future will require students to expand career options and learn ways to deal with automation and other elements of our changing world. A first step is to identify the knowledge and skills necessary to be employable in the twenty-first century and beyond; the next step is to design curricula that enable students to attain this requisite knowledge and skill.

Schools and counselors that maintain a futuristic vision will constantly seek ways and create methods that encourage students to alter their goals, acquire new skills, cope with transitions, and adapt to emerging trends. In sum, prevention will continue to consist of services that help students address potential changes in their home, school, and vocational environments and learn behaviors and skills to handle these transformations and variations smoothly and productively.

Developmental Needs

The future will not ignore the developmental needs of students. Students of the next century will have the same biological, emotional, social, and educational expectations, as do students of today. Acceleration of physical development seems to be occurring among our youth, and researchers are uncertain of the reasons. Nevertheless, the stages and elements of human development, as outlined and identified by theorists in the past, will likely be relevant for future generations of schoolchildren and adolescents. Although the general process of human development may remain unchanged, the impact of a changing world will remarkably alter specific aspects and elements of that developmental process.

Automation and technology undoubtedly will have an effect on the developmental concerns of students, particularly regarding career exploration and decision making. With the explosion of online learning, we have only to imagine what the impact will be on traditional teaching, curriculum, and the whole notion of “schooling” in America as well as worldwide education.

Other areas of students’ lives also will be affected by technology and scientific discovery. Medical science, for example, will likely make significant progress in enhancing an already ever-increasing lifespan. Although on one hand, we welcome this accomplishment, it raises questions of how to help families and children cope with terminal illnesses that no longer kill because advanced technology has given new meaning to the term *life-support system*. Counselors cannot view such issues in isolation, because they all relate to developmental aspects for tomorrow’s students. Counselors and teachers will need to provide services, design activities, and plan instruction to help children and adolescents work through these added dimensions of their development.

A prominent theme for the twenty-first century focuses on the triumph of individualism complemented by a belief in personal responsibility. Simultaneously, the embrace of individual worth and responsibility is strengthened by a collectivistic philosophy—a spirit of togetherness and community, two other qualities that schools environments should nurture. Recognition of individual worth and value, combined with responsibility for one's own behaviors, means that individuals must come together and contribute to the betterment of all humankind. This notion of community is a familiar theme to school counselors.

Developmental guidance and counseling activities reflect the belief that students benefit from lessons and relationships designed to enhance their individual dignity and worth. At the same time, their goal is to teach responsible behaviors. Indeed, the works of Rudolf Dreikurs, Don Dinkmeyer, William Glasser, William Purkey, and other theorists who advocated self-responsibility are the forerunners of developmental services and activities we can expect to find in future schools with tomorrow's students.

In addition to the issues already presented, two other phenomena will have a tremendous impact on the students of tomorrow. The first, poverty, will have a serious and divisive consequence on education if not curtailed by future economic policies and progress. The second, diversity, as emphasized in Chapter 2, is an inevitable characteristic that will define students of tomorrow and challenge schools in the future.

Poverty

A disparity of wealth across segments of the U.S. population threatens social equality and individual responsibility. Initiatives at local and national levels to move schools and students into the twenty-first century may fall short unless we pay attention to the growing economic gap that divides this country. This economic gap is a reflection of the achievement gap often cited in educational progress reports for the nation. U.S. Census figures from 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011c), indicated that between 18 percent and 22 percent of children under the age of 18 lived in poverty, depending on the statistical method used. This means more than 15 million children in the United States lived in families below the poverty level—\$22,050 a year for a family of four (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2011). Although the percentage of citizens living in poverty has declined dramatically since the early 1970s, too many subgroups suffer higher-than-average levels of poverty. For example, in 2010, more than 25 percent of African American and Hispanic families were below the poverty level, as were approximately 14 percent of White families. A high percentage of children suffer from poor nutrition, lack of health care services, and other deficiencies that inhibit their education and development as a result of their economic condition.

Poverty rates inside metropolitan areas were almost 20 percent, and about 12 percent in non-metropolitan areas (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011c). However, rural areas tend to provide fewer job opportunities, and unemployment rates for single-mother families are higher in rural areas. These findings have implications for schools and school counselors who work in either urban or rural areas. When one sociological factor, such as economic wealth, divides segments of a population, it compounds the challenge of bringing diverse groups together to work toward common goals like equal educational opportunities for all students.

If this economic wedge continues to separate and distinguish students in the future, the school counselor's role and responsibility might want to incorporate a posture of social activism to seek assistance for the disadvantaged. Such a role would include collaboration

with social workers, nurses, and a host of other service providers in the school and community. If counselors assume this role, they will give developmental and preventive services for a majority of students a lower priority because of the demand for remedial services to meet the needs of impoverished students.

Poor students are handicapped in many ways because of the association of poverty with health, learning, familial, and neighborhood problems. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty (2011), research shows consistently that poverty is the single most powerful hazard to children's welfare and development. The future of school counseling services will be influenced significantly by the success or failure of the United States to address this issue and turn around this gloomy economic forecast for students in years to come.



PERSPECTIVE 13-1

During your adolescent or young adult years, were you ever unable to help yourself financially? If so, what did you do? Where did you find assistance? If not, can you imagine what life would be without the financial support and stability you enjoy?

Diversity

If current trends continue, it is likely that the United States will more closely reflect the cultural and racial balance of the globe by the end of this century (Lee, 2012). Mitigating factors, such as immigration policies, worldwide economic depression, and unexpected changes in birthrates, may alter these forecasts. However, if this prediction comes true and schools eventually reflect this balance, cultural diversity will become the norm. How schools and counselors address the needs of culturally different populations and incorporate the concept of multiculturalism into the curriculum will determine their success in educating children and providing services to students, parents, and teachers. School counselors are in the vanguard of this movement, acting as advocates for all students, addressing issues of equity, designing appropriate services, and assisting teachers with educational curricula and instructional development.

Students of varied cultural backgrounds will require special attention to meet their individual needs and, at the same time, will benefit from learning about the multicultural community in which they live. Counselors in the future will play a pivotal role in helping teachers become aware of cultural differences and enabling schools to celebrate cultural diversity. Such celebrations will not be limited to a day, week, or month during the school year to recognize the backgrounds and heritage of different students. Rather, they will be integral to the philosophy and mission of the school, and they will encompass all aspects of school life from policy development to curriculum planning.

As with other issues related to tomorrow's students, diversity will influence the role of future school counselors (Lee, 2012; Pedersen & Carey, 2003). Included in this role will be one of a sentinel for appropriate assessment and evaluation. As noted in Chapter 9, counselors will guard against the inappropriate use of testing and appraisal instruments and procedures that exhibit bias culturally or socioeconomically. In addition, future counselors will incorporate multicultural activities and materials into their developmental guidance and

counseling services to heighten students' and teachers' awareness. Again, because this progression toward multicultural diversity will parallel the emergence of individual worth in the context of community, the leadership role of the counselor as a consultant and collaborator with teachers and administrators to create beneficial learning environments for all students is imperative. We can expect that group work, both instructional and therapeutic, will increase for school counselors in effecting this change in school culture and environment.

In summary, the future needs of students from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds will be addressed by a wide range of counseling and educational services that encourage students to establish an identity and accept a beneficial role within the school community. To accomplish this, counselors will promote the celebration of diversity and broaden the focus of their services to students. Counseling services should help students adopt new behaviors that will facilitate their educational progress while allowing them to retain pride and respect for their heritage. In this process, counselors will continually examine their own awareness and acceptance of diversity, encourage cultural opportunities in the school and community, monitor school policies and programs for prejudicial aspects, become actively involved with different cultural groups, and develop counseling skills that accommodate all types of diversity (Lee, 2012; Pedersen & Carey, 2003).

Portman (2009) offered the term *cultural mediation* as a process for school counselors to negotiate diversity issues and challenges intentionally in the future. The author purported, "Now is the time for counselors to attend to the lifelong process of gaining cultural competence as well as developing leadership and advocacy skills necessary to expand their professional development and role as cultural mediators" (p. 23). This view implies a broad definition to cultural diversity inclusive of demographic, socioeconomic, ethnic, religious, gender, and other variables that allow the application of multiculturalism in all counseling relationships and processes. As such, school counselors in the future want to be cognizant of all these cultural variables in attempting to explain student behaviors, mediate challenges, and design appropriate preventive, developmental, and remedial services to enhance learning and development.

Schools of Tomorrow

Schools are more than buildings, programs, and policies established by communities, organized by administrators, and implemented by teachers. They are defined and described by the students who enroll, attend, and, in effect, become the school. As such, we can expect tomorrow's schools to reflect the diversity of U.S. society. This diversity will include all the aspects predicted earlier for the students of tomorrow:

1. A need to adapt to technological changes and advances
2. An increasing lifespan that will simultaneously lengthen the dying process
3. Multiculturalism as a significant force in education
4. Concern about healthcare and new diseases, such as new forms of viral infections that are resistant to current medication
5. Poverty as a divisive force in schools and society
6. Continued changes in employment trends, technologies' impact on career development, and how society defines the workweek
7. Potential violence and loss of security in U.S. communities

Since the start of the twenty-first century, several authorities in the counseling profession have outlined trends that may affect how school counselors will plan programs and provide services (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Brown, 2012; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Erford, 2011a). Here, we adapt these forecasts and add population and employment trends for counselors (Population Reference Bureau, 2011; U.S. Department of Labor, 2010). As with all social and economic forecasts, consider these trends with some caution. With that caveat in mind, they provide a stimulus and opportunity for dialogue about the future practice of school counseling.

1. Population in the United States will continue growing. From 2000 to 2010, we experienced the third largest increase in the country's history (Population Reference Bureau, 2011). At the same time, a maturing population will complement this growth. Although kindergarten through high school enrollments might stabilize, college populations will continue to grow as nontraditional and older students pursue formal education. U.S. businesses will continue to demand a better-educated workforce. More accurately, they will require a workforce educated in the applied sciences with technical knowledge and higher-order thinking skills. Demands on education will invite alternative education programs such as year-round schools and preschool programs.
2. As noted earlier, cultural diversity will expand significantly. With current U.S. immigration trends, the workforce will reflect a multilingual and multicultural society. Schools will educate a diverse population of students, enabling them to adjust to a new society, become productive in the workforce, and realize self-satisfaction in their lives.
3. Increased demands for services, including education, will put greater strain on already overstretched state and federal budgets. Private resources will need to respond to social and educational problems. Signs of this response already exist. For example, the Gates Foundation (www.gatesfoundation.org) has contributed millions to assist schools. In 2011, *Facebook* CEO Mark Zuckerberg pledged \$100 million to the Newark, New Jersey, schools. These are just two examples. In the future, we might expect private enterprise and government to cooperate in ventures that address many of these issues. Schools may see more involvement from business and industry, with the expectation that student outcomes become more clearly stated and measured.
4. Ever-changing technology will have a continuous effect on communications and on how people work and live. Schools will require resources to keep up with technological advances as they become more important to instructional programs and student learning. Concerns about individual privacy will need attention as new technology becomes available to gather more data on how people live. The opportunity to work at home will increase for many people as access to home computers and the Internet expands, and home learning will become a normal part of the educational process for many students. Distance learning as well as home-schooling programs might have increasing impact on the way schools teach and students learn. We give additional consideration to the impact of technology, including online education, later in the chapter.
5. The United States' role as an economic, industrial, and military leader will change as the world moves further toward globalization. This process continues as a new world economy emerges and global telecommunications and travel rapidly expand. At the same

time, however, resistance to uniformity and a backlash toward asserting one's own culture and heritage is constantly evident. If this backlash persists, schools will feel the conflict firsthand. It has the potential to be a disruptive force in the future progress of our schools.

6. Medical developments and health care issues, on one hand, will improve the quality of life for people and, on the other hand, will be criteria that separate people according to their ability to pay for services. Personal health concerns will be connected to responsible behaviors, such as healthy eating habits and the prevention of bacterial contamination, and conflict between environmental responsibility and personal safety will increase. Communities will continue to struggle over where to locate hazardous waste disposal systems, garbage landfills, and power plants. Sources of electric power, environmental issues, and job security will continue to be topics that interact and sometimes conflict. As schools attempt to teach students about these social issues, it will be difficult to remain neutral amid emotional conflicts that pit neighbors against one another.

7. Economic, technological, and governmental changes in this and other countries will facilitate a restructuring of business and industry worldwide. Consumer markets will change, with an aging and multicultural population making up the major buyers. These and other changes will have an impact on career choices for the students of tomorrow. Schools of the future will want to implement learning programs that enable students to be flexible in their career development and vocational choices. More important, schools will realign curricula to teach the content and skills needed by workers in a technologically and scientifically sophisticated world.

8. The family unit will be a stabilizing factor amid all this change, yet the family itself will continue to take on new characteristics. Divorce is expected to decline, but two-income families may continue to grow in number. New technology and high-tech consumer services will alter traditional family behaviors such as mealtimes, television viewing, computer play and work activities, and family chores. Childcare will be an increasing concern, and schools will become more involved in preschool programs for younger students. Future school counselors will need the knowledge and skills to work with younger populations.

9. To a degree, social issues will replace concerns about economic growth and development that dominated most recent decades. As the nation becomes more involved in global issues, local communities will paradoxically pay attention to violence, homelessness, poverty, financial and business misconduct, terrorism, and other debilitating concerns. Schools will become central units of communication and education, much as they were in many communities at the beginning of the twentieth century, helping citizens address and solve local issues.

10. Demand for professional counselors to meet the needs of growing and diverse populations will likely continue. The U.S. Department of Labor (2010) anticipates that the employment of professional counselors will grow through the year 2018. Projected employment of educational, vocational, and school counselors will reach more than 314,000 by that year. However, budgetary constraints may dampen the number of actual jobs in the future. More important, if schools and school systems fail to use counselors to lead comprehensive programs of services for students, parents, and teachers, future counselors may not continue in these positions.

If these predictions come true, schools of the future will change in many ways. They will not be isolated from the concerns and needs of the community and society. Neither will schools remain autonomous organizations that ignore parents or discourage involvement of business and industry in matters of education. Restructuring of tomorrow's schools includes involvement of many aspects of society; cooperation with a multitude of community agencies and institutions of higher education; alternative programs to meet the needs of diverse populations; and shared governance among administrators, teachers, and parents. Elements of school restructuring that will have particular importance for school counselors in the future are technology, parental involvement, teacher collaboration, school-based community services, and youth service.

Technology

Expanded electronic and computer technology will continue to affect the broad context of learning for all students. As noted in Chapter 6, new and expanded technology will influence every aspect of learning and communication, including guidance activities and counseling services (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012; Sink, 2005). School counselors will be actively involved in planning and using new technology to deliver services to a wide range of students, parents, and teachers. Some current technology already available includes real-time video communication with students and parents through Skype®, Facetime®, or other platforms; expanded use of the Internet for career exploration and assessment; entering virtual worlds for shopping, education, entertainment, and other activities; and use of multimedia to present programs, webinars, and other information that relate to comprehensive school counseling programs.

Online education will become increasingly available to a greater number of students. Indicative of this phenomenon are the following examples already enrolling students and some used by public schools to supplement student learning: Khan Academy at www.khanacademy.org; K¹² Education at www.k12.com; and Ohio Connections Academy at www.connectionsacademy.com/ohio-school/home.aspx.

What this increasing demand for online educational programs will mean to school counselors and their delivery of comprehensive programs is speculative at best, but it will likely include use of up-to-date technology. Just as schools of tomorrow will adapt technology in restructuring learning environments and processes, counselors too will integrate new systems and services into their programs. As schools restructure for the future, it is inevitable that the programs within schools, such as counseling and related services, will need to change.

Technological advances affect every aspect of people's lives. This will be true for all aspects of education including school counseling. Figure 13.1 presents six predictions about future technology in everyday life. How could these advances relate to adjustments and changes in education and counseling?

As with many scientific, industrial, and other advances, growth and innovation in technology have risks and dangers. For students and the teachers and counselors who try to help them, one emerging problem has been *cyberbullying*. Numerous articles and programs have addressed this growing concern in recent years (Bauman, 2011; Paterson, 2011; Willard, 2007), and school counselors at all levels will want to be informed and skilled in helping students, parents, and teachers deal with phenomenon.

FIGURE 13.1 Six Technological Trends

1. Wireless synchronization between and among countless devices will be the norm.
2. Increasing Internet applications will provide limitless uses—for example, education, entertainment, and counseling.
3. Video streaming will continue to alter television viewing.
4. Automated services and technological advances will alter transportation options and home life.
5. eBook sales will continue to grow, changing reading habits and flow of information around the world.
6. Electronic financial transfers, deposits, and payments will continue to change how we transact business.

The future use of technology by school counselors depends on how counselors view the potential value of these tools. If viewed as a means of facilitating learning and involvement rather than diminishing human interaction, technology can become an asset. The difference may be as simple as the language counselors choose in adapting various technologies. Counselors who discover and use a positive language to describe innovative services will be able to transform their role in schools and integrate advanced technology with helping relationships and learning processes to benefit students.

Equally important as the language they choose to describe the use of technology in delivering services will be counselors' ethical understanding regarding the appropriate and inappropriate application of these advances. Future counselors will understand the ethical implications of using computers and other electronic technology to provide counseling services, locate resource information, and assess students' interests and abilities. Counselors' ethical understanding will be guided by professional associations and certifying organizations, such as the American Counseling Association, its divisions, and the National Board of Certified Counselors.

Parental Involvement*

Much educational research and literature in past years emphasized the importance of parental involvement in education (Dahir & Stone, 2012; Erford, 2011f). Overall, research shows that successful students have strong support from parents and guardians at home, and appropriate instructional programs at school complement this support. Supportive relationships between the home and school will continue as a requisite for the educational success of students in the years to come.

In the future, school counselors will play a significant role in establishing communication and strengthening relationships between parents and schools, one that will include the collaborative, consultative, instructional, and counseling services described here as components of a comprehensive school counseling program. Consequently, counselors will help schools assess parents' needs, set goals for increasing parental involvement, and design strategies to develop beneficial partnerships by encouraging parental involvement in a wide range of activities. These activities include inviting parents to sit on advisory

*In this section, when we refer to parents, we include all forms of parental and guardian relationships.

committees for school governance, recruiting parents as tutors in the instructional program, involving parents in fundraising and school development projects, and enrolling parents in educational programs to strengthen parenting skills and learn about child and adolescent development. In addition, future school counselors will continue to provide counseling, consulting, and referral services to parents as clients who are facing temporary barriers in their family life.

Some predicted changes in family lifestyles, including dual career roles and at-home work schedules for parents, will alter relationships between the home and school. As noted, more students may stay at home, at least part of the school day, learning through interactive media, with online instruction, and with their parents also at home working. Such arrangements will require more collaboration and cooperation between teachers in the school and parents as the at-home instructional supervisors. Tomorrow's counselors might have a role in facilitating and nurturing these relationships between the home and a virtual school environment.



PERSPECTIVE 13-2

What portion of your undergraduate and graduate study has been through online learning modalities? What do you foresee in the future for counselor education?

Teacher Collaboration

In addition to working more closely with parents, teachers in the future will collaborate with each other to ensure that all students have an opportunity to receive adequate instruction and achieve accordingly in their academic pursuits. Again, advanced technology, alternative school programs, flexible schedules, and home instruction are factors that will influence how teachers work together to create effective programs and design responsive learning environments.

To succeed in this cooperative venture, teachers will need relationship skills and support from the school community. School counselors are in an ideal position and have the background to assist teachers with these needs. Helping teachers focus on their combined efforts with each other to meet the needs of all students will be a challenge for future school counselors. By planning teacher workshops and leading support groups, counselors contribute to this collaborative process. The skills that teachers perfect for establishing strong working relationships with each other will also benefit their relationships with parents.

If, as predicted, parental involvement becomes an essential ingredient of future schools, teachers will be frontline collaborators with parents. To be successful in this role, teachers will need communication skills and empathetic understanding of the parent's perspective of the school, the child, and the learning process. Teachers will no longer be the sole experts in educating students; instead, they will become leaders among a group of experts, including parents, who strive to design appropriate learning programs for children and adolescents, enabling students to take charge of their futures. Of all the trends predicted, this partnership has the most potential for improving schools and education in the twenty-first century.

School-Based Services

One collaborative relationship emerging now and in future years is a closer union between school counselors and other helping professionals in local communities. In past years, school counselors have assumed the role of referral agents, helping students and families locate and receive appropriate services to address an array of challenges. As a result, a multitude of public and private agencies has offered a wide range of services from social welfare to psychiatric care for students and parents. As noted previously, there is reason to believe that extensive social, medical, and other services will be more crucial in the years to come. What may also change is the way these many services are coordinated and delivered by counselors, physicians, and other professionals.

Currently, most of these services occur outside the school setting. This arrangement requires considerable coordination and follow-up by the school to be certain that students and families keep appointments, certified professionals perform evaluations, and clients receive appropriate services. With divergent student populations and the likelihood additional and expanded services for these students and their families will be needed, school-based service models may provide an efficient and effective alternative to outside referrals. This assumes that schools, as physical entities, remain the predominant structures for educating children and adolescents. If such service-delivery models emerge, school counselors will have ready access to medical and social interventions for students and parents. In school-based approaches to comprehensive student services, physicians, physicians' assistants, nurses, social workers, mental-health counselors, and other helping professions will be scheduled at school to provide direct services to identified students and their families. Such models have the potential to improve referral and follow-up processes. School-based services are already operating in some areas of the country; for example, Illinois (www.sbpsillinois.com), South Carolina (www.state.sc.us/dmh/schoolbased/school.htm), and Wisconsin (www.forwardhealth.wi.gov/kw/pdf/sbs.pdf) offer sites pertaining to mental health, medical, and health services. In addition, private providers have websites advertising school-based services, such as www.schoolbasedservices.net and a private website serving several counties in West Virginia at www.fmrs.org.

School-based services allow counselors to retain their leadership roles in comprehensive programs. Counselors also continue to offer all the developmental, preventive, and remedial services extended in the past, but when additional services are indicated, other professionals are readily available to students and families.

Youth Service

Another trend in U.S. schools involves programs that combine classroom instruction with social service and activism. Known collectively as *youth service* or *service-learning programs*, many of these exist in schools across the country. They cover a range of projects, from performing environmental cleanup to operating day-care programs (Kleiner & Chapman, 2000). Youth Service America (www.ysa.org), founded in 1986, is an organization that supports communities in their efforts to engage young people in service projects. In states across the country, youth service programs have existed and early studies provided positive results (Carter, 1998; Veale & Morley, 1997; Warren & Fanscali, 1999). Outcomes have shown a relationship between youth services and dropout prevention and nonacademic

needs of students. At the same time, findings suggest when youth service programs expect to have an effect on academic development, they must include a strong educational component (Warren & Fanscali, 1999).

The idea of combining education with service is not new. Civic education, social studies, and other curricular areas have long proposed that students should participate actively in community service and government projects to learn firsthand about social responsibility. Since World War I, a number of government initiatives, university reports, and educational books have encouraged the incorporation of youth service into the schooling process (Boyer, 1983; Conrad & Hedin, 1991; Goodlad, 1984).

In some respects, youth service reflects the goal and spirit of peer-helper programs presented and promoted in the school counseling literature over the years. As with youth service programs, peer-helper services operate in part on the belief that such experiences raise social consciousness, develop understanding for fellow human beings, and create a learning atmosphere that enhances the overall development of students.

If community service has the potential to improve learning and foster student development to the extent that advocates assume, future school counselors will want to propose such programs. By establishing peer-helper programs, encouraging community service, and recognizing students who contribute and participate in such endeavors, counselors participate in and contribute to youth service initiatives. As with guidance activities in general, youth service is most effective when integrated into the curriculum as part of an ongoing educational program for all students.

This description of the schools of tomorrow merely scratches the surface of myriad ways that future trends might influence the role of school counselors. Technology, parental/guardian involvement, teacher collaboration, school-based services, and youth service are among many ideas that have the potential to expand, and in some ways redefine, the counselor's role in school. Whether counselors are prepared to meet these expanded demands or readjust their programs to include broader dimensions will, in part, determine the future of school counseling.

The Future of School Counseling

As students and schools move through the twenty-first century and confront the range of changes and challenges predicted for the future, counselors in schools must be ready to assist. Comprehensive programs and responsive services established and delivered by school counselors in the past need to be evaluated in light of the future. Traditional guidance and counseling services will no longer meet the needs of future students and families. School counselors at all levels—elementary, middle, and high school—can be expected to adjust their goals, create expanded services, develop new skills, and serve broader populations in the years to come. To meet these challenges, future counselors will need to do the following:

- 1. Develop a broader knowledge of human development throughout the lifespan.*** Clearly, counselors in schools will work with wider audiences of parents and teachers in helping students become successful. For this reason, communication skills and knowledge of adult learning and development will be required to establish beneficial collaborative relationships.

2. Adapt to new technology. The counseling profession will respond as dramatically as other professions to the technology explosion and advancement of the times. Computer-assisted learning, interactive media, voice-to-print capability, instant messaging, social networking, cybercounseling over the Internet, and other innovations will have a tremendous impact on all types of counseling services, from information dissemination to therapeutic interactions. At the same time, counselors will monitor the ethical implications of such advances on their professional role and functions in schools.

3. Increase the use of group processes. Parental/guardian involvement, teacher collaboration, and youth services will require additional group methods and processes by school counselors. Similarly, diverse student populations of future schools will demand services that bring individuals together in groups to increase understanding and facilitate helping relationships. This will be true for traditional as well as high-tech delivery models.

4. Expand their professional development. Counselor preparation programs will reflect the emerging trends and future needs of school populations. By ensuring closer collaboration with other professions, counselors will become better informed and more skilled at assessing needs, selecting interventions, and referring clients to other resources when appropriate. As noted earlier, technology will play an increasingly important role in assisting counselors with these functions.

5. Measure the outcome of their services. The school counseling profession can no longer rely on its legacy for survival. With so many demands placed on public funds and costs straining the fiscal limits of all schools, counselors will be required to demonstrate their value to the overall education, welfare, and development of students. This means that counselors will demonstrate how they serve students, parents, and teachers and whether these services make a difference in people's lives. The issue of measuring outcomes not only addresses the effectiveness of particular counseling services, but more important, it also elevates the efficacy of the profession.

6. Become professionally and perhaps politically active through state and national counseling associations to ensure the integrity of the school counseling profession. At the same time that the profession has attempted to give clarity and value to the role of school counselors, we have seen a diminished emphasis on program leadership and direct services to students, only to be replaced by testing coordination, administration of special education procedures, routine clerical tasks, and other functions. Future school counselors will be more visible, assertive, and persuasive in reclaiming the roles for which they have prepared and their professional associations promote.

With this chapter, we finish our journey through the past, present, and future of the school counseling profession. As a student of counseling who plans to assume the role of a school counselor, you will join the ranks of thousands before you who helped to establish this profession, as well as contemporary colleagues who with you are beginning to create the future. It is a noble venture. I have been fortunate to spend more than 40 years in the school counseling profession. In that time as a counselor, supervisor, counselor educator, and author, I have witnessed the benefits of having highly skilled counselors in schools. I commend you on your choice of career, and welcome you in this venture of providing beneficial school counseling programs and services for students, parents, and teachers in the future. You have my best wishes for success as a professional counselor.

Additional Readings

- Baker, S. B., & Gerler, E. R. (2008). *School Counseling for the Twenty-First Century* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall/Pearson.
Chapter 14 in this text gives an excellent overview of the transition that young counselors will make when moving from their graduate study to the role of a school counselor.
- Bauman, S. (2011). *Cyberbullying: What Counselors Need to Know*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Trolley, B., & Hanel, C. (2010). *Cyber Kids, Cyber Bullying, Cyber Balance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin. This book and the preceding one (by Bauman) provide comprehensive yet practical perspectives on cyberbullying—what counselors should know and techniques counselors can use.

Websites

- Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
www.colorado.edu/cspv
- Institute for Research on Poverty
www.irp.wisc.edu
- National Center for Children in Poverty
www.nccp.org

- National Multicultural Institute
www.nmci.org
- Youth Service America
www.ysa.org

Note: You will find other pertinent websites in the chapter.

Exercises

1. Visit a school and ask a small group of students to design a school of the future. In helping with their designs, you might suggest that they consider what school buildings of the future might be like, what elements classrooms will have that are not here today, and what students will be like.
2. In this chapter, we predicted some possibilities for school counseling in the future. What does your

future hold? Brainstorm and list at least 10 things that will be different about your life in the future. Share this list with a classmate. How many things on both of your lists will you control? How many things will be inevitable? What will these changes mean for you as a professional counselor?

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