

Professional SchoolCounselling

EDPY 442: Intro to Counselling

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School Counsellor Roles

- Counselling individual, groups and families
- Developing and providing educational and support services to parents
- Consultation and in-service programs for teachers and staff
- Facilitating referrals to outside agencies and collaborating with specialist who are working with specific children
- Academic advising and career counselling

ATA Guidance Council

The Guidance Council is a specialist group of the Alberta Teachers' Association which:

- advocates for school counsellors in Alberta
- facilitates professional development activities for practicing school counsellors and related helping professionals
- publishes current research on topics of interest and concern to school counsellors



ATA Guidance Council

- provides input to the Alberta Teachers' Association and Alberta Education on current educational issues from a guidance and counselling perspective
- supports comprehensive guidance and counselling program plan approach to school counselling



Vision

Establish Comprehensive Guidance and
Counselling Programs in every school
in Alberta



A Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Program

An integral part of every school curriculum and includes:

- Students
- School staff
- Parents
- Community agencies



Counselling Program Plan (CPP) Components

- Developmental guidance instruction
- Individual student planning
- School/ community support
- Responsive services



Developmental Guidance Instruction

- Preventative and proactive
- Assists students in educational, personal/social and career development
- Advocates for students
- Solicits and coordinates expertise from community agencies



Individual Student Planning

- School completion
- Student interests and needs
e.g., Special education
- Post secondary education plans
- Careers, career trends, scholarships
- Transition planning



Coordinate and Direct School/Community Support

- Interagency collaboration (social services, resource officers, post secondary institutions, employers, ...)
- Work with teachers and advisory councils to gather information and feedback concerning needs of students



Responsive Services

- Personal or crisis intervention
- Access community resources
- Referrals



A Proposal for Change:

Establishing Comprehensive Guidance
and Counselling Programs in every
school in Alberta



Proposal #1

- All students K – Grade 12 should have access to guidance and counselling services at their school



Proposal #2

- Counselling services should be provided by certificated teachers with specialized training in guidance and counselling



Proposal #3

- Personal and career counselling should be provided by guidance counsellors to ensure that advice and counsel are consistent



Proposal #4

- The ATA Guidance Council should be consulted regarding proposed changes to regulations or policies related to counselling



Action

- Strategic planning session (2007)
- Provincial survey (April 2007)
- Sought enhanced communication with Alberta Education
- Findings presented at Conference 2007
- Position paper (May 2009)



Process

- Position paper submitted for approval to ATA Provincial Executive Committee (PEC)
- Position paper sent to Minister of Education



Our Vision

- The village (school, home and community) collaborates to raise each child
- Schools create safe and caring environments
- At risk children, youth and families are supported
- Counsellor access assured to every student in Alberta



Our Expectations

- A Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Program in every Alberta School
- Revision of existing policy
- Move to Curriculum Branch



Our Expectations

- Certificated teachers with specialized training
- Increased funding
- Guidance and Counselling Curriculum
Educational Manager



Our Expectations

- Professional development
- Revision and development of resources
- Undergraduate school counselling courses at Alberta universities



Current Resource

- Program development and validation checklist

- Website address:

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/933341/ac-guidelines-webversion.pdf>



Model

- (Manitoba's Guidance and Counselling PowerPoint Presentations)
 - <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/guidance/resources.html>
- Manitoba's Guidelines for Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling
 - http://www.msca.mb.ca/downloads/msca_guidelines_2002.pdf

School Counselling: Primary Prevention

- Delivery of programs within community settings (such as schools, community health centers) with the aim of preventing the development of mental/physical health or educational problems.
- Typically target **“at risk” populations** and are most successful when they have a **specific focus**.
Examples include D.A.R.E. programs to prevent substance abuse problems in school age school; suicide prevention programs; after-school homework clubs.
- **Group oriented rather than focusing on individuals.**

School Counselling: Secondary Prevention

- Involves **working with identified problems with the aim of preventing further progression.**
- Work with groups of children with **identified social or behavioral problems** would fall into this category.
- Children who have **experienced losses or traumatic events** in their lives would benefit from support at this level.
- Problems are typically **not severe and are expected to resolve** with intervention

School Counselling: Tertiary Prevention

- Involves working with individuals with more **severe mental health difficulties** while ensuring the safety of the clients and preventing from becoming chronic (e.g. running an eating disorders program).
- Typically do not work alone at this level and often collaborate with specialists such as psychiatrists or psychologists if a child is able to attend school.

Play Therapy: Elementary Age Children

- A form of therapy that helps a child process and work through thoughts and feelings through the medium of play
- Based on the premise that play is how children express (symbolic substitution for words) themselves and learn about their world - is essential for healthy development.
- Counsellors observe and extract themes from a child's play in order to better understand the inner working of the child

Play Therapy: Elementary Age Children

- Play therapy is considered a child-centered approach as it meets a child where they are at developmentally rather than forcing them to enter the world of adults through verbal therapies.
- Types of Play Therapy: Child-Centered, Gestalt, Theraplay – all are based on theory
- In addition to play therapy, elementary school counsellors can also use games, drama, and various art activities to engage children

Arts-Based Approaches: Middle School Children

- Arts-based prevention and intervention programs are often used with this age group.
- Arts-based activities can be unstructured (child has freedom to draw or make whatever they want) or structured (counsellor gives specific instructions of what the child should draw).
- A key component of any arts-based work is to spend time reflecting on the art with the child. This allows the counsellor to understand the child's inner world.
- Arts-based activities are versatile as they can be used in work with individuals or groups of children.

Case Example: The Hope Project

- The absence of hope or an orientation to the future is reported as a most distressing factor that leads to difficulties in adjusting for individuals who have experienced a traumatic event or loss (Herman, 1992; Yule, 1998).
- Studies of hope with children suggest **hope to be essential for coping with adversity** (Herth, 1998; Yohani & Larsen, 2009).
- Counsellors collaborating with clients to **explore ways of making hope more visible in their lives has been linked to clients finding ways to increase personal resources** (Edey & Jevne, 2003)
- Builds on children' strengths



Hope & Art-Assisted Conversations Sample Questions

- Tell me about your photograph and how it represents hope to you
- Can you tell me how the people, things or events in this photograph reflect your hope(s)?
- What would you add to this photograph that would further show your hope(s)
- What would you add to this photograph that could enhance your hope(s)

Secondary School Students

- Work with students in areas relating to **career and life planning, mental health concerns, and interpersonal relationships**
- Counsellors design and run life skills programs to assist with transition into adulthood.
- Most life skills programs tend to focus on job searching (resume writing and interviewing skills) managing finances, time managements, interpersonal relationships, stress management, and sexuality education and sexual decision-making.
- Engage in career counselling and vocational interest testing