

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELLING MODEL



2021



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Introduction

Mission of the BC School Counsellor's Association:

The British Columbia School Counsellor's Association promotes high standards of professionalism by providing leadership and support to BC school counsellors in the delivery of effective school counselling services.

The BC School Counsellor's Association (BCSCA), in following the above mission, is often called upon to create, gather, collate, and disseminate sources which define the school counsellor's role and practice, and which facilitate access to resources for school counselling practice.

The executive of the BCSCA recognized the need for a resource manual which would serve to inform school counselling roles and practices in the province, and which could serve as a quick reference guide to many of the resources which are of frequent use by school counsellors.

School Districts in British Columbia hold the final decision regarding standards and practices of counselling in schools. This document is designed to provide guidance for school counsellors, but each individual school district is autonomous.

School Counselling

Entrance Level Qualifications of School Counsellors

The British Columbia School Counsellor's Association goal, in recommending education and experience standards for school counsellors, is to ensure the continuation of a quality counselling service to every school student in the province.

School counsellors must possess a professional teaching certificate, and should hold a Master's Degree in Counselling Psychology or a related area of study. Teaching experience is important in understanding the dynamics of the students in the school setting.

Professional Development

In-service and professional development opportunities must be provided to ensure that school counsellors upgrade their skills and knowledge so that continually changing demands placed upon them may be met. School counsellors must take advantage of opportunities for professional development activities, and financial assistance to counsellors for professional development experiences.

Counsellor Skill Development in the Following Areas is Essential

Communication
Conflict Resolution
Consultation

Group Facilitation
Leadership

Up-to-Date Knowledge of the Following Areas is Encouraged

Adolescent development
Developmental challenges
Family systems
Mental health wellness
Professional ethics

Behaviour modification
Exceptional children
Legal issues
Multiculturalism
Study skills

Up-to-Date Understanding of and Expertise in Dealing with the Following Issues is Encouraged

Anxiety
Child abuse
Divorce, separation, and loss
Human sexuality
Motivation
Self-harm
Stress management
Substance abuse

Career trends
Depression
Early psychosis identification
Loneliness
Self-esteem
Spirituality
Substance abuse
Suicide

Confidentiality

School Counsellors are Professional Counsellors

School counsellors are employees of the school district, and as such take direction from employers when provided. However, when ethical dilemmas occur around confidentiality, school counsellors are encouraged to consult.

School Counsellors work in the best interest of the students

The first priority is to student clients. Students should be directing the school counsellor on what information can and cannot be with others (within the limits of confidentiality).

Limits of confidentiality should be made known to students when meeting in private

Limits to confidentiality:

- When the student tells the counsellor that they (the student) or another person is at serious risk of being hurt or killed.
- When the student tells the counsellor that they (the student) or another person has been hurt or abused.
- In the rare event that a judge or court order requires a release of a student's file.

Keeping information students share in confidence private is the cornerstone of the role of school counsellors

If students don't feel that their school counsellor is protecting their privacy, they are unlikely to access school counselling services again.

Secondary School

THE ROLE OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

Introduction

The role of the secondary school-based counsellor is influenced by the needs of each school, school district, and community in coordination with the counsellor. The following is a description of services that could be provided by a junior and/or senior secondary school counsellor. This role description is intended to provide a framework for the consistent delivery of service for secondary school counselling throughout the province.

For clarity, the counsellor's role is divided into four major areas:

Counselling
Consultation
Coordination of services
Education

However, just as a student's growth and development is holistic in nature, the counsellor's role in assisting the student is multifaceted; therefore, these areas interrelate and are not viewed as separate and distinct. It is vital that a balanced counselling service encompass all four areas.

Counselling

The mode of delivering services differs according to the counselling goals, time constraints, expertise of the counsellor, and available resources, as well as other variables. The counselling may be individual and/or group and may involve referral to school-based or district-based personnel, to specialized services or programs, or to community resources. The nature of the counselling may be considered:

1. Personal/social
2. Scholastic/educational
3. Career

1. PERSONAL/SOCIAL

Personal counselling focuses on the individual's self-exploration. One goal is to assist the student in taking responsibility for personal decision making. Social counselling

centers on the individual's social relationships. One goal of this type of counselling is to assist the student in examining personal issues in order to foster positive, constructive relationships with others.

The counsellor may facilitate the process of reaching these goals by:

- Modeling effective interpersonal skills and establishing relationships with others based upon mutual respect.
- Providing a trusting, understanding environment where students can discuss personal issues.
- Assisting students to explore and examine their own feelings, beliefs, and values and the concomitant effects upon behaviour and relationships.
- Helping students to understand, appreciate, and practice effective communication skills.
- Recognizing the characteristics of students at risk or in crisis and offering preventative and intervention services.
- Providing therapeutic support and education for mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and suicide.
- Conducting group counselling sessions in specific interpersonal skills such as assertiveness and active listening.
- Helping students to learn and practice effective problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Personal/Social Issues That May Be Addressed By Secondary School Counsellors

Addictions
Anxiety
Child Abuse
Child development
Conflict resolution
Crisis intervention
Decision making
Depression
Crisis intervention
Eating disorders
Family concerns
Friendship

Gangs
Gender expression
Healthy relationships
Integration &
mainstreaming
Multiculturalism
Parenting
Peer relations
Personal safety
Problem solving
School adjustment
Self-esteem

Self-harm
Separation/loss
Sexual health
Sleep
Social media
Stress management
Substance misuse
Suicide
Teacher support
Transitions

2. SCHOLASTIC/EDUCATIONAL

This area of counselling focuses on maximizing a student's scholastic achievement and educational opportunities.

The counsellor may play a role by:

- Assisting students in examining their scholastic/educational goals and revising these goals as necessary.
- Monitoring academic progress of students and working with parents and appropriate personnel in addressing any concerns.
- Helping students in making decisions about program and course selections.
- Targeting diverse needs students and specific student populations and supporting local initiatives to address their needs.
- Liaising with teachers of diverse needs students to help facilitate initiatives such as mainstreaming and integration.
- Assisting students to understand learning styles and to develop study methods and study environments that maximize personal potential.
- Facilitating students to internalize the connection of attitudes, motivation, interests, and work habits with educational results.
- Offering training in topics such as study skills and being a successful student.
- Supporting colleagues with resourcing.

3. CAREER

Career counselling involves exploring various experiences including continuing education, employment, post-secondary education, volunteer work, and work experience. It provides students with self-awareness and career awareness skills. Career counselling enhances student self-esteem and encourages students to plan for their future.

The counsellor assists by:

- Helping students to explore the relationships among personal goals, aptitudes, interests, achievement, and career plans.
- Assisting students to make career decisions based upon this exploration.

- Exploring with students the results of information gathered from these sources.
- Conducting groups in job search skills and job application strategies.
- Referring students to outside sources for information and testing regarding specific careers.
- Providing access to a career library of up-to-date information on aspects of career education.
- Maintaining a connection with post-secondary institutions to stay up-to-date on programs, admission requirements, scholarship opportunities, and financial aid.

Consultation

In the consultative role, the secondary school counsellor may obtain input from or share non-confidential information with others including teachers, parents, administrators or any individual significant to the student in order to further the counselling goals.

This may be accomplished by:

- Consultation with parents, teachers, and administrators to clarify student expectations.
- Mediating, as necessary, when different expectations are held.
- Strengthening collaboration among schools, community agencies, post-secondary establishments.
- Consulting with district and community resource personnel and making student referrals as appropriate.
- Consulting with administration regarding appropriate educational and social programs to meet student needs.
- Consulting with teachers of students requiring specialized services such as learning assistance, ELL, or behavioural programs.
- Working with school, school district personnel, and community resource personnel to develop programs and services in such areas as human development, sexuality, substance abuse, or other topics as identified.
- Consulting with community personnel to develop services and programs to augment the personal and educational needs of groups such as minorities and students with special interests.
- Facilitating the mainstreaming and integration of special needs students into the classroom.
- Participation in school-based team meetings.

Coordination

As a coordinator, the secondary school counsellor provides leadership for facilitation of programs, services, and personnel that are related to the counselling function.

The counsellor may play a coordinating role by:

- Arranging such activities as post-secondary liaison and career days.
- Developing transition and orientation programs.
- Organizing learning and study skills programs that involve students, teachers and parents.
- Arranging and managing information and providing workshops.
- Coordinating services offered in the school with those offered by community agencies.
- Coordinating with school-based team services and education programs for exceptional students.
- Coordinating the development and maintenance of Crisis Response Plans for the school.
- Collaborate with team in Violent Incident Risk Assessments

Education

As an educator, the secondary school counsellor contributes to the goals of the counselling program through informational, organizational, and curricular means. The secondary school counsellor will maintain competency in teaching practices and promote competency in important skills through education. Educational approaches to issues may be with small groups of students or full classes.

The counsellor may provide an educational focus by:

- Monitoring and promoting student potential.
- Teaching skills for personal relating such as conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Organizing and maintaining a self-help information resource centre.
- Providing resources and training to staff and teaching components of programs that address current issues such as substance abuse, child abuse, loss, loneliness, self-esteem, gender identity, and other concerns as identified.

- Acting as an agent for change in encouraging self and others to integrate current trends in education.
- Facilitating the organization of teaching of a Peer Counselling program and/or Peer Tutoring program.
- Provide resources on brain development, Social Emotional Learning, and Trauma Informed Practice.

Elementary School

THE ROLE OF THE ELEMENTARY OR DISTRICT SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

Introduction

The terms 'District School Counsellor' and 'Elementary School Counsellor' are used somewhat interchangeably in BC school districts. We use the term 'District Counsellor' here for convenience.

The primary purpose of a district counselling service is to facilitate and support the social, emotional, and educational growth and development of all children in our elementary schools. District counsellors are teachers who have additional specialized training which enables them to assess mental health and behavioural challenges, facilitate preventative programs, and provide mental health service delivery.

An ongoing demand for such services reflects the number of social, emotional, and educational needs of children in our schools. This demand can be attributed to numerous factors, including the large number of families living in poverty and the changing nature of family structure and functioning. To address these needs, district counsellors offer valuable counselling and consultation services to children and their parents. They may also offer coordination of services to those who require access to district programs and services as well as to community resources.

The possible role of the district counsellor can be identified under six headings, each with a separate set of skills and responsibilities for the district counsellor.

District School Counsellor's Services

1. District counsellors provide individual counselling to those students who have been identified as having a specific need for counselling. Identification may be made by the student self-identifying, through the parent requesting service, through the classroom teacher, school based team, or counsellor of a sibling.

This may include:

- Providing a trusting environment to discuss personal issues.
- Modelling effective interpersonal skills, eg. respect for the individual, empathic understanding and genuineness.
- Helping individuals to explore their feelings, beliefs, and values and the effect these have in their relationships.
- Providing preventive and intervention services to individuals at risk.
- Providing individuals with skills to problem-solve and make decisions.
- Assisting in identifying individuals who may need other counselling services, eg. group counselling and referral to outside agencies.
- Providing individuals involved in the counselling process with the information and resources they need.

Service may also include using a range of techniques including expressive counselling, social skills training, art, and play.

2. District school counsellors work with families to facilitate the positive growth and development of their children.

This may include:

- Providing counselling sessions with families.
- Attending parent/teacher conferences.
- Initiating or promoting parent/teacher conferences when appropriate.
- Facilitating communication between parents and school.
- Facilitating communication between parents and community resources.
- Promoting the district counsellor's services and schedule to the school community through such means as the newsletter to parent meetings, staff meetings, etc. This may be in conjunction with the other members of the school-based team.

This could also include:

- Having space on report card interview request forms for parents to check for counsellor appointments.
- Letting teachers know that the counsellor is available to participate during or after parent/teacher conferences.
- Ensuring communication of recommendations of the school-based team to parents by a designated team member.
- Encouraging parent volunteers in school.
- Establishing a 'Counsellor's Corner' in each newsletter to provide information to parents, or establishing some other form of written communication to parents such as social media and/or school website.
- Offering drop-in programs for parents.
- Promoting parenting classes provided by a volunteer leader or the district counsellor.

3. District counsellors provide group counselling services organized to address identified special needs.

This may include:

- Assessing the need for preventive, remedial and social development counselling that can be effected through a group process.
- Collaboration with other staff members for –
 - defining the purpose of the group(s)
 - composing the group(s)
 - organizing the space, time, materials, and the involvement of other staff
- Either leading the group(s), facilitating, or coordinating the participation of other professionals as group leaders or co-leading the group(s) with other professionals such as family workers, childcare workers, special education assistants, learning assistance teachers, art and music therapists, and family services staff.
- Communicating with school staff and parents regarding the process of the group.

This could also include organizing such groups as –

anxiety/depression
children of separation and divorce
communication skills

gay straight alliance (or inclusion groups)
immigrant and refugee children

new students
peer counselling
resilience

social emotional learning
social skills
self-esteem building

4. District counsellors consult, encourage, and collaborate with teachers.

This may include:

- Collaborating with teachers both on a formal and informal basis and through school based teams.
- Cooperatively planning appropriate behaviour strategies for the classroom.
- Supporting the implementation of the individual education plan.
- Contacting resource personnel on behalf of teachers.
- Supporting teachers in their communication with families and other services.
- Consulting with teachers regarding implications of family situations.

This could also include:

- Utilizing opportunities to model or demonstrate intervention strategies.

5. District counsellors analyze the unique and changing needs of children in our community, recommend appropriate responses, and initiate appropriate action.

This may include:

- Supporting an ongoing group of area counsellors to collect, interpret, and analyze data.
- Agreeing to participate in the collection of such data.

This could also include:

- Taking the collected data forward to appropriate groups such as district administrators and trustees.
- Giving workshops based on collected data.
- Sharing current information gathered from the literature regarding needs of children.

6. District counsellors facilitate and assist in staff development that focuses on identified social and emotional needs within the school community.

This may include:

- Consulting with and assisting the professional development committee regarding their needs for staff development.
- Being knowledgeable about school district resources and resource personnel available to assist in staff development.

This could also include:

- Presenting or assisting in a staff development workshop.
- Assisting in coordinating and organizing a staff development activity.
- Providing staff with bibliographies or other materials such as journal articles on counselling-related topics.
- Modelling and/or team teaching programs.

Resources

All websites are subject to change. These links were all active in January 2021.

Anxiety

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/> - this is a great site because not only does it include information about anxiety, it also promotes the Mindshift app and has a great resource for building an anxiety plan.

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/resources/mindshift-cbt/> - this app uses CBT to help users learn to relax and take charge of anxiety.

Bullying

<http://bullyingcanada.ca> – provides a live talk feature for youth and on every page is a “leave site quickly” button for safety.

<http://erasebullying.ca> – local to BC. Promotes pink shirts, education materials.

Careers

<http://educationplannerbc.ca> – powerful search engine of all BC post-secondary institutions; links to applications; comprehensive coverage from thinking about a career to learning about requirements.

<http://itabc.ca> – learn about any trade possible in BC including trends and potential earnings.

Child Abuse

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/public-safety/protecting-children/childabusepreventionhandbook_serviceprovider.pdf - the handbook on reporting in BC

<http://endingviolencecanada.org> – links to victim services and domestic abuse centers

Child development

<http://developingchild.harvard.edu> – large, searchable resource library on all aspects of child development

<http://howkidsdevelop.com> – developmental steps broken into small increments with links to further resources of each step

Conflict resolution

www.helpguide.org – search for conflict resolution under relationships and communication to find a personal lesson on conflict and management

<https://www.skillsyouneed.com/> - somewhat cluttered by ads for books but nicely organized skill information

Depression

<http://depressionhurts.ca> – hosted by the Mood Disorders Society of Canada, depression is the only topic addressed at this site

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/hw30709> - BC government website with links to local supports and resources

Drugs / alcohol

<http://ccdus.ca> – Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, includes hotline numbers for each province along wide-reaching information

<https://www.drugrehab.ca/> - information about drugs and alcohol, lists all rehab centres by province including for youth

Crisis intervention

<https://crisiscentre.bc.ca/> - online support for people in crisis or distress, includes resource information

<http://youthinbc.com> – an online site where youth can get resources, chat, text, or email with a trained volunteer

Eating disorders

<https://www.lookingglassbc.com/> - BC site for support for those with or dealing with loved ones with eating disorders

<http://nedic.ca> – National Eating Disorder Information Center, packed with resources and information

Emotional Intelligence

[Teaching Children About their brain](#) – article about teaching children to understand what causes emotional upset

Families

<https://neufeldinstitute.org/> - online courses, print and video resources addressing all aspects of parenting by Gordon Neufeld

<http://macnamara.ca/> - child development psychologist specializing in family development; site includes blog posts and articles on child development

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

<https://www.fasdoutreach.ca/> - home of the Provincial Outreach Program for FASD in BC; teacher and parent resources

<https://canfasd.ca/> - Canada FASD Research Network – reports on the latest research from around the world

Gender Identification

<http://qmunity.ca/> - an organization that works to improve queer and trans lives through support services, connection, and leadership.

<https://bc.sogieducation.org/> - specific to BC, includes policies and information relating to sexual orientation and gender identity as it pertains to BC schools

Grief and Loss

<https://rainbows.org/> - structured support to help children and youth recover after loss; information on meetings and facilitators

<https://childmind.org/> - follow the links to the guide to helping children grieve for information for parents and other adults wanting to help children

Parenting

<http://www.lapointepsychology.com/> - parenting expert, Dr. Vanessa Lapointe at The Wishing Star – blog, articles, videos

<http://www.parentscanada.com/> - home of Parents Magazine, full of articles of interest to parents

Self-Harm

<https://cmha.bc.ca/documents/self-harm-2/> - education about self-harm with links to external sites for treatment and support

Sexual Exploitation

<https://www.protectchildren.ca/en/> - Canadian Centre for Child Protection dedicated to the personal safety of children.

<https://projectarachnid.ca/en/> - a web crawler platform that monitors sites reported through cyber tips. Source of information and resources.

Sexting

<http://dontgetsextorted.ca> – education about sexting, downloadable and free-to-order materials for teachers and parents, all based on humour

Social Media

<http://cybertip.ca> – online reporting line for online potential illegal activities. Good information about internet safety for under and over 12 years of age

<https://protectkidsonline.ca/app/en/> - designed to help adults stay on top of the digital world

<https://www.thewhitehatter.ca/> - BC based information about internet safety, specializing in social media safety. Follow Darren Laur on Facebook for updates.

Stress management

<https://www.stress.org/> - American, but full of information about stress

Teacher support

<https://mindyourmindpro.ca/> - this website is the professional arm of mind your mind for youth which is full of legitimate information a wide variety of mental health topics as well as activities and events. Based in Ontario.

Threat/Risk assessment

<https://www.cctatr.com/> - training, protocols and conference information from the Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment

Trauma

<http://www.albertafamilywellness.org/training> - free online certification in The Brain Story, training about the effects of trauma on the developing brain

Transitions

<https://www.communitylivingbc.ca/> - for students with disabilities, this service will provide support as adults

Youth

<https://foundrybc.ca/> - services for young people ages 12-24 including online resources and mental health contact information throughout the province

Appendix