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Role of Counselling and Guidance for Students



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ABSTRACT

Counselors are certified, specially trained mental health professionals who focus on prevention and wellness through a counseling program that meets the needs of all students, not just a few. The counseling program addresses three areas: academic, career and personal/social. School counselors advocate, mediate, coordinate, consult, lead and collaborate with teachers, administrators, and parents to help students be successful. Professional school counselors also help children to understand themselves. A good counselor can help students to grow up with better decision-making skills, whether it is academic, personal, or professional. A well-trained student can understand that no decisions should come out of temporary emotions but it should be a well-thought one that can decide their future whether it is choice of course or career. A strong support when making decisions at crucial turning points of life can make remarkable positives in their future. A few encouraging words at needy times can boost their outlook towards family, school, and the future. The lack of confidence and the motivation to continue despite failures are the main reason for school dropouts. A good counseling group can give emotional and moral support to students to overcome failures and face situations with determination and confidence.

INTRODUCTION

Counseling and guidance¹, referred to as psychological and educational support, provided to students in nursery schools, schools and other educational institutions involve identifying students individual developmental and educational needs and psychological and physical abilities, and environmental factors which have an impact on their functioning in a nursery school, school or educational institution; and addressing the needs identified.

The assessment of children's and young people's developmental needs is one of the main responsibilities of teachers and specialists working with them.

Psychological and educational support aims to help students fulfill their developmental potential and create conditions for their active and full participation in the life of their (nursery) school or institution and their social environment.

The responsibilities of teachers, class/group tutors and specialists in (nursery) schools and educational institutions include in particular:

- assessing students individual developmental and educational needs and psychological and physical abilities;
- identifying students' strengths, predispositions, interests and aptitudes or talents;
- identifying reasons behind academic failures or difficulties in students' functioning, including barriers and constraints which make it difficult for them to function and participate in the life of their (nursery) school or educational institution;
- taking measures which help students develop their competences and potential to enhance the effectiveness of their learning process and improve their functioning;
- collaborating with a counseling and guidance center in diagnostic and post-diagnostic processes, in particular, regarding:
 - performance/functional behavior assessment;
 - barriers and constraints in the environment which make it difficult for students to function and participate in the life of their (nursery) school or institution;

- outcomes of measures taken to improve students' functioning and further measures to be planned.

Teachers, class/group tutors and specialists in (nursery) schools and other educational institutions undertake, in particular, the following activities:

- in nursery schools: pedagogical observation aimed at early identification of developmental disharmonies and early intervention; and for children in one-year pre-school preparatory education: pedagogical observation ending with an analysis and assessment of children's readiness for school (pre-school diagnosis);
- in schools: pedagogical observation during ongoing work with pupils/students which is aimed at identifying:
 - learning difficulties and for students in grades I to III of the primary school, competence deficits, language disorders and the risk of specific learning difficulties;
 - potential and interests;
 - special aptitudes or talents;
 - support for students in making education and career choices during ongoing work with them.

Where it is found that a child needs special education support because of his/her difficulties or special talents, the nursery school, alternative preschool education setting, school, or the institution initiates measures to meet these needs. This is an area where an educational institution provides counseling and guidance/educational and psychological support.

Counseling and guidance sessions offered to children and young people are a form of such support.

Psychological and educational support is also offered to students' parents and teachers in the form of counseling or guidance sessions, workshops and training sessions.

Counselors:

Counselors are certified, specially trained mental health professionals who focus on prevention and wellness through a counseling program that meets the needs of all students, not just a few. The counseling program addresses three areas: academic, career and personal/social. School counselors advocate, mediate, coordinate, consult, lead and collaborate with teachers, administrators, and parents to help students be successful. Professional school counselors also help children to understand themselves.

Today's school counselors²:

- Develop a guidance plan based on a campus needs assessment
- Counsel students individually and/or in groups
- Provide systematic and developmental classroom guidance to all students
- Respond to student needs in crises
- Orient students to new school settings
- Work with absentees, potential dropouts and other at-risk students
- Refer students to special programs and/or services when necessary
- Analyze test results to provide information about abilities, achievement, interests and needs
- Help with an individual school, college and career plans; coordinate school-to-work initiatives and with post-secondary institutions
- Coordinate efforts with other school specialists
- Conduct conferences with parents and facilitate parent discussion groups
- Coordinate staff support activities
- Adhere to ethical and legal standards
- Pursue continuous professional growth and development

- Conduct an annual evaluation of the guidance program

All of these activities and duties can make a real difference in student's lives, improving their self-understanding and self-confidence, motivation, decision-making, goal-setting, planning and problem solving, interpersonal relationships, communication skills, respect for others, and more. Parents contact a school counselor to help their children with a variety of issues, such as academic achievement; new school registration, orientation and transition; test interpretation; special needs; student crises; family transitions and higher education issues.

When contacting a school counselor, parents often have many obstacles to overcome, such as culture, language, their own bad experiences in school, a lack of understanding, or feeling intimidated. Some parents may feel if they speak up and disagree with educators, their children will have a harder time at school. Work schedules can also be barriers to meeting with your child's school counselor. However, schools encourage parental involvement and the school counselor is the primary contact for many parents to connect with the school.

By focusing on parents' concerns and respecting why these concerns matter to you, school counselors offer options, including better ways to communicate with your child. Both parents and counselors share information, an important part of establishing a helping relationship. School counselors are excellent resources; however, they do not provide therapy or long-term counseling. Referrals to outside agencies may be initiated at school. School counselors are also advocates for children and provide information on parents' rights, such as the right to request information.

Studies have shown that children have greater academic achievement when their parents are involved in their education. Motivation, positive attitudes about self and a sense of control over their environment improve with parental involvement in the schools. Children from minority and low-income families benefit the most from parental involvement.

You, the parent, are the most important resource for the school counselor. Your involvement is critical in helping your child to be successful. Ask the school counselor how you can be more involved in what is happening with your child's education.

Parents⁵ should provide information necessary in helping their children get proper guidance and counseling, for example, if a parent realizes that his or her child has a problem in a certain subject he or she can let the subject teacher know so that the teacher can know how to identify the weakness of the student.

To examine the students at home to know whether they benefit from the guidance services offered at school. A parent can know this by the seen change in the learner's behavior from the previous behavior he or she had.

A parent has the right to use the school guidance and counseling services at school to ensure that their children are offered the right guidance. By maybe, reading the materials provided to the learners by their school counselors.

Guidance and counseling are important for children, and schools have a huge role in bringing out the best in children. Good conduct is coveted³, but sometimes young minds need guidance to polish their personality. Through counseling, children are advised on how to manage and deal with emotional conflict and personal problems.

Proper counseling will help incorporate valuable lessons into their daily life. Some sessions should involve career guidance, where the students are advised on the selection of courses and different career paths. It's important to prepare them for life after school and what to expect in the different fields they might opt for.

Following are some of the benefits that students get from effective guidance & counseling:

1. Students are given proper guidance on how to deal with psychological problems which can badly impact their studies. Through these sessions, the students will be able to develop certain problem-solving skills which to an extent help them deal with particular issues surrounding their lives.
2. The students are advised on how to cope with different situations they tend to face in their school life. For instance, how should they talk politely or relate with their peers? This advice will give them perspective on how should they behave in certain scenarios.
3. It helps to shape a student's behavior and also instill enough discipline in them. Proper guidance helps them achieve their goals, well guided & counseled students to know what to do and how to do things in the best possible way.

4. Students learn how to live in peace and harmony with others in the school community. Thereby, they also learn to appreciate other people in their class.
5. It helps to bridge the gap between students and the school administration since they can guide their problems through a proper counseling channel in the office.
6. Students get comprehensive advice on careers, courses, and jobs that enable them to make a proper and informed choice and understand what they can do after they are done with school.
7. It allows students to talk to teachers about various experiences that make them uncomfortable. They can openly share problems that they cannot share with their parents.
8. Talks related to alcohol, drugs, personal feelings, or any kind of abuse, can be openly discussed. Guidance and counseling also make students better human beings since they are counselled on how to act and behave in a particular situation.
9. It enables students undergoing certain difficulties in their lives, to ask questions and clarify them through guiding and counselling. Therefore, counselling helps them, ask without any fear since the person in charge is willing to help.

India has one of the world's highest suicide rates among children belonging to the 15-29 age group. The main reasons include peer pressure, fear of failing in exam, depression, unemployment, and likewise. There are several suicidal stories making headlines during the board examination.

Especially in India, children are under extreme stress, trauma and anxiety related to examinations caused due to peer pressure wherein children are forced to perform better. Students are taught to be perfect and well-disciplined, as all teachers and parents want but it is also important to know the child's consent.

The Indian Education System is always under the hammer for being competitive and focusing more on quantitative learning, long school hours, heavy school bags, improper curriculum. With this type of system, students tend to become less creative, innovative and leave no room for self-learning which is the need of the hour.

According to a recent news report in The Times of India, about 1 student commits suicide in every 55 minutes in India. In the past three years, more than 26,000 students have committed suicides due to stress, anxiety, and depression.

Owing to huge competition and an expensive education system, parents pressurize their children to perform well by packing them into a room with books and switching off the TV, internet connection and reducing the time for sports and other outdoor activities.

But this does not work. Rather, this makes the child depressed which burdens them with fulfilling expectations of their parents.

Counseling helps in assisting the child in a proper direction so that he/she is well aware of what he/she wants to do in life. It is important to make your children understand the importance of education and guide them to pursue it.

School counselors know how to listen and help⁴. They'll take your problem seriously and work with you to find a good solution. School counselors are trained to help with everything and it doesn't have to be just school stuff. A counselor can help you deal with the sadness when someone has died as well as advise you on taking the right classes to get into your dream college.

It takes a lot of training to be a school counselor. Most not only have college degrees but also master's degrees, as well as special training and certification in counseling. One of the many good things about school counselors is that they are up-to-date on all the top things that affect students, including any trends that might affect your school.

School counselors can give you all sorts of tips and support on solving problems and making good decisions. Chances are that whatever problem you have, your counselor has seen it before and has lots of good advice on how to help you work through it. Counselors can give you tips on standing up for yourself if you're being bullied, managing stress, talking to your parents and dealing with anger and other difficult moods. Counselors also can advise you on problems you may have with a teacher, such as communication difficulties or questions over grades.

School counselors are plugged into the rest of the school community and, in many cases, the outside community as well. So they can refer students to outside resources like substance abuse treatment centers, professional therapists, and even health clinics.

It can help to know the different types of support your counselor offers even if you don't think you need it now. Some schools and school districts use their websites to explain what the counselor does and how to get a counseling appointment. You may find their services listed under headings like "student resources", "student services", or "student counseling".

Your school's website may also explain the roles of other school staff members who can help students with problems or school issues. Depending on the size of your school, these people may include school psychologists, tutors, college or career counselors, and school nurses.

The counselor's role varies from school to school and district to district, so don't assume your counselor provides the same services as the counselor in a friend's school.

How Do I See the Counselor:

You may have been assigned a counselor when you started the school year. Or your school may leave it up to you to go to the counseling office on your own. A counselor might also visit your class to talk about certain subjects and let you know when he or she is available. In some schools, teachers or school nurses refer students to counselors if they think there's something the student needs to work through. Different schools have different policies on putting students in touch with counselors.

A trusted teacher can also tell you how to contact the counselor for an appointment. In many schools, there's a guidance secretary who coordinates appointments. Many counselors are willing to meet with students at times that fit into the student's schedule such as before or after school or during lunch.

It's probably a good idea to visit your counselor and get to know him or her even if you don't have a problem. This helps you feel comfortable with the counselor in case you ever do need to meet in a time of crisis. It's usually easier to talk about a tough issue or a problem when you already feel comfortable with the counselor. Meeting your counselor when you're not in the middle of a crisis also gives you a chance to discuss such issues as what the counselor will keep confidential and how he or she works with a student to resolve a problem.

How Confidential Is It:

When you meet privately with a school counselor, your conversation will most likely be confidential. The counselor isn't going to go blabbing your business around the school. Different schools have different policies, though. So talk directly with your counselor about what he or she considers confidential.

In very rare cases, a counselor is unable to keep the information confidential. A counselor who thinks that someone is at risk of being harmed is required by law to share that information. Even in these rare cases, the counselor will share that information only with the people who need to know.

People sometimes worry that other students will think they're seeing the counselor because they have major problems or they're in trouble. But in most schools, the counselor deals with lots of school issues as well as personal ones. So you could be meeting to get career counseling or advice on which classes to take for college. Your friends and classmates don't need to know why you're seeing the counselor unless you choose to tell them.

Your school counselor is separate from your life a neutral adult who isn't a parent, relative, or teacher. Your school counselor isn't a therapist. (So if you see your counselor, it's not the same as getting therapy.) If you need help in some way that the school counselor can't provide, he or she can give you information about other resources, such as the name of a therapist.

No matter what your problem, try to think of the counselor as someone who's on your side. Even if you've had a bad experience in the past with another counselor or a private therapist, don't hesitate to contact your school counselor or talk to the counseling office about seeing someone else if you don't click with your current counselor. Every counselor is different and most understand that it's natural for people to be more comfortable with some individuals than others.

Don't be surprised if your parents know your school counselor. They may even be in touch with each other. Sometimes counselors offer workshops for parents, with or without their kids, about topics such as study skills or preventing drug abuse. It's good for the counselor and your parents to know each other when everything is going OK. That way, if any

problems come up like if you're being bullied or there's a death in the family and you have to be out of school they'll be able to work together comfortably.

If you're seeing your counselor and your parents don't know about it, don't worry that the counselor will talk to them about your meetings. Unless you've given the counselor the feeling that you may harm yourself or others, what's said in your meetings will stay just between you and the counselor.

School counselors are all about helping to make your school experience the best it can be. The role of the school counselor today is very different from what it was like when your parents were in school. Instead of just focusing on schoolwork and careers, today's counselors are there for students in a broader way. They help students handle almost any problem that might get in the way of learning, guide students to productive futures and try to create a positive environment for everyone at school. A strong⁷ support when making decisions at crucial turning points of life can make remarkable positives in their future.

A few encouraging words at needy times can boost their outlook towards family, school and the future.

CONCLUSIONS

A good counselor can help students to grow up with better decision-making skills, whether it is academic, personal, or professional.

A well-trained student can understand that no decisions should come out of temporary emotions but it should be a well-thought one that can decide their future whether it is choice of course or career. A strong support when making decisions at crucial turning points of life can make remarkable positives in their future. A few encouraging words at needy times can boost their outlook towards family, school and the future. The lack of confidence and the motivation to continue despite failures are the main reason for school dropouts.

A good counseling group can give emotional and moral support to students to overcome failures and face situations with determination and confidence. Lack of comfortable school or classroom ambiance and bullying inside schools are also the reason for students dropping out of schools.

Counseling helps to study the concerns of students and make relevant conversations with teachers and school authorities to make any requisite changes to make school a comfortable place for them.

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